

# Jeremiah 39 - Fall of Jerusalem; Zedekiah's Prophecy Fulfilled; Jeremiah Goes Free

- V. Present calamity of Judah (Jer 34:1—45:5)
  - (2) During the fall (Jer 37:1—39:18)
    - (C) Destruction of Jerusalem (39:1-18)
      - (a) Description (39:1-10)
        - (i) Siege of Jerusalem (39:1-3)
        - (ii) Zedekiah captured and blinded (39:4-7)
        - (iii) Burning of Jerusalem (39:8)
        - (iv) Exiles (39:9)
        - (v) Poor left behind (39:10)
      - (b) Rescue of Jeremiah (39:11-14)
      - (c) Rescue of Ebed-Melech (39:15-18)

## Jeremiah 39

- (C) Destruction of Jerusalem (39:1-18)
  - (a) Description (39:1-10)
    - (i) Siege of Jerusalem (39:1-3)

**1** Now when Jerusalem was captured in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it;

**1** Now when Jerusalem was captured in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it;

**1** This is how Jerusalem was captured: In the tenth month of the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it.

**1** In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

**2** in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the city *wall* was breached.

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2 On the ninth day of the fourth month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, the wall of the city was breached.

2 *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up.

- The fall of Jerusalem. Up to now, we have been predicting it and talking about it; it now happens. The ninth day of the fourth month in the eleventh year of Zedekiah; that date is extremely important in the history of Israel. It is the date that Jerusalem fell.

— Recognize that this date is nailed down in the word of God 4x (Jer 52; 2 Kings 25; 2 Chr 36; here)

3 Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came in and sat down at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sar-ezer, Samgar-nebu, Sar-sekim the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer *the* Rab-mag, and all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon.

3 Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came in and sat down at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sar-ezer, Samgar-nebu, Sar-sekim the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer *the* Rab-mag, and all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon.

3 All the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the Middle Gate, including Nergal-sarri-usur, governor of Sinmagir, Nabu-sarrussu-ukin the high official, Nergal-sarri-user, the chief official, and all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon.

**3** And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, *even* Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

- Not sure how many people are really mentioned because some of these names, Rab is a chief, it is a title not a name. Nergalsharezer is both a title but apparently there are two of them. The first one was Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law and he succeeds him. Sarsechim is the chief of the eunuchs and Rab-mag is the chief of the Mages, possibly a predecessor to the Magi which the Persians subsequently develop into their Zoroastrianism.

#### (ii) Zedekiah captured and blinded (39:4-7)

4 And when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, they fled and left the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls; and he went out toward the Arabah.

4 When Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, they fled and went out of the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls; and he went out toward the Arabah.

4 When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled and went out of the city at night through the king's garden through the gate between the two walls. Then he went out on the road toward the Arabah.

4 And it came to pass, *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and they took him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him.

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and they seized him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him.

5 The Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah on the plains of Jericho. When they seized him they brought him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed judgment on him.

5 But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.

6 Then the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes at Riblah; the king of Babylon also slaughtered all the nobles of Judah.

6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes at Riblah; the king of Babylon also slew all the nobles of Judah.

6 At Riblah, the king of Babylon executed Zedekiah's sons right before his eyes. He also executed all the nobles of Judah.

6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

- He starts at the top and slaughters them, starts with the king's sons and then the princes.

- Ezek 12:13 - This is a strange prophecy, he is writing this while a captive in Babylon. Also, notice Ezek 17:12-21.

- Riblah: 34 years earlier Pharoah Necho bound Jehoahaz.

7 He then blinded Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in shackles of bronze to bring him to Babylon.

7 He then blinded Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in fetters of bronze to bring him to Babylon.

7 Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze fetters to take him to Babylon.

7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

- Can't blame the Babylonians, Judah has caused them nothing but grief. He has had to lay siege to this place almost two years to bring it to their knees and to clean this mess up.

- Bear in mind, Zedekiah was in power by Nebuchadnezzar, he was his boss so it is a rebellion situation as far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned. He had it with these guys.

- It is very common to put out the eyes of the defeated king. Often the championing king would do it himself, that was part of the zest. The last thing that Zedekiah would ever see would be his sons being killed by the Babylonians. It is so to speak deference that they didn't kill him because he was king, they put out his eyes, chained him and took him off to Babylon and he died there.

- They also slew all the nobles of Judah and started taking charge

### (iii) Burning of Jerusalem (39:8)

8 The Chaldeans also burned the king's palace and the houses of the people with fire, and they tore down the walls of Jerusalem.

8 The Chaldeans also burned with fire the king's palace and the houses of the people, and they broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

8 The Chaldeans burned the palace and the houses of the people with fire, and they broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

- When the Chaldeans burn the king's house, it marks the start of the "Desolation of Jerusalem"—a special period of time that lasts 70 years.

- The first siege of Nebuchadnezzar terminates the nation, the "Servitude of the Nations" begins in effect with the first siege.

- It goes 70 years to the day, under the authority of Cyrus the Persian they are allowed to go home and rebuild the Temple.

- They are released under Artaxerxes Longimanus.

- Nehemiah the cupbearer to the king is burdened by the fact that city of Jerusalem is still in rubble. Nehemiah goes to the king and gets the authority to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and triggers a prophecy that has a very important date. It happens to be 70 years to the day from the Destruction of Jerusalem of the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar.

- The "Times of the Gentiles" have begun by many peoples reckoning. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, there is one last Gentile ruler to be in charge and he is going to be a wild one.

(iv) Exiles (39:9)

9 And as for the rest of the people who were left in the city, the deserters who had deserted to him and the rest of the people who remained, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard took *them* into exile in Babylon.

9 As for the rest of the people who were left in the city, the deserters who had gone over to him and the rest of the people who remained, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard carried *them* into exile in Babylon.

9 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Babylonian guard, took into exile in Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city, those who had deserted to Nebuchadnezzar, and the rest of the people who remained.

9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

(v) Poor left behind (39:10)

10 But some of the poorest people, who had nothing, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard left behind in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at that time.

10 But some of the poorest people who had nothing, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard left behind in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at that time.

10 Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who did not have anything, and he gave them vineyards and fields on that day.

10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

- Princes are slaughtered, everybody else is taken captive and they are slaves for seventy years = worse than wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

- Zeph 3:12 - An interesting fulfillment of prophecy, God leaves a remnant of the poor there that trusted Him and had nothing. The captain of the guard of the Chaldeans was used to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy, God uses whatever instruments to fulfill His word.

— Zeph 3:9 - prophecy of the pure language, Hebrew brought back after people regathered

(b) Rescue of Jeremiah (39:11-14)

11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave orders regarding Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, saying,

11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, saying,

11 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave orders concerning Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard:

**11** Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,

- No surprise; Jeremiah has been prophesying for 40 years, Nebuchadnezzar's intelligence forces are pretty bright and reasonably well effective at their job and they found out that there is this strange prophet among the Hebrews that has been telling them not to fight but to give up. It is just a simple administrative act, he has been a friend to Babylon so he sets up the authority that they won't harm Jeremiah, they let him do whatever he wants. It is understandable, even in secular terms.

- What makes Nebuchadnezzar such a fascinating character is that he has a spiritual experience and he writes it as a testimony and orders that it be posted throughout the known world, we know it as Daniel 4.

12 "Take him and look after him, and do not do anything harmful to him, but rather deal with him just as he tells you."

12 "Take him and look after him, and do nothing harmful to him, but rather deal with him just as he tells you."

12 "Take him, look after him, and don't do anything to harm him. Rather, do for him whatever he tells you."

12 Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.

13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard sent *word*, along with Nebushazban the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer the Rab-mag, and all the leading officers of the king of Babylon;

13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard sent *word*, along with Nebushazban the Rab-saris, and Nergal-sar-ezer the Rab-mag, and all the leading officers of the king of Babylon;

13 So Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, Nebushazban, the high official, Nergal-sar-ezer, the chief official, and all the officials of the king of Babylon sent for Jeremiah.

13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabsaris, and Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;

14 they even sent *word* and took Jeremiah out of the courtyard of the guardhouse and entrusted him to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him home. So he stayed among the people.

14 they even sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the guardhouse and entrusted him to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him home. So he stayed among the people.

14 They sent for Jeremiah and took him from the courtyard of the guard. They handed him over to Ahikam's son Gedaliah, the grandson of Shaphan, to take him home. So he remained among the people.

14 Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

- Gedaliah becomes the governor. The Hebrews are taken as slaves but Nebuchadnezzar puts Gedaliah in charge, a military governor.

— In Jer 40-44, Gedaliah means well but is not too smart. He is very pious and is taking care of Jeremiah, but he is naive in that he trusts people he shouldn't and that becomes his undoing.

— There is a lesson there to be *wise as serpents but harmless as doves*. Gedaliah isn't and he ends up being killed as a result.

— He is apparently the man that saved Jeremiah's life back in Jer 26:24. He is friendly toward Jeremiah and so these guys, the princes that execute Nebuchadnezzar's instructions, commit Jeremiah to Gedaliah. Jeremiah is put under the charge of Gedaliah, keep in mind that he is probably getting on in years, and in poor health.

#### (c) Rescue of Ebed-Melech (39:15-18)

**15** Now the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was confined in the courtyard of the guardhouse, saying,

**15** Now the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was confined in the court of the guardhouse, saying,

**15** This message from the LORD came to Jeremiah while he was confined in the courtyard of the guard:

**15** Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

16 "Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'This is what the LORD of armies, the God of Israel says: "Behold, I am going to bring My words on this city for disaster and not for prosperity; and they will take place before you on that day.

16 "Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold, I am about to bring My words on this city for disaster and not for prosperity; and they will take place before you on that day.

16 "Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian: 'This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Look, I'm going to fulfill my promise against this city for disaster rather than for good, and on that day it will happen before your eyes.

16 Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee.

Flashback: This is a major insight into Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, an interesting point that which was not in the narrative before but here is confirmed. Ebedmelech went to Zedekiah to plead for Jeremiah's life in Jer 38:7. Ebedmelech is a senior guy on Zedekiah's staff and Nebuchadnezzar ultimately kills all the senior guys except for Ebedmelech because God is taking care of him.

Ebedmelech has the guts to stand up and free Jeremiah the prophet. The insight that is implied is that Ebedmelech is spiritually at standing for Jeremiah. God is rewarding Ebedmelech for his service to the Lord in effect by watching out for the Lord's servant by extracting Jeremiah from that slime pit.

God here tells Jeremiah to tell Ebedmelech, who is probably in bad shape here in two ways. He is not in favor with the Judean princes because he thwarted their plan to kill Jeremiah but he is caught between the two because he is certainly not a friend of the Chaldeans.

17 But I will save you on that day," declares the LORD, "and you will not be handed over to the men of whom you are afraid.

17 But I will deliver you on that day," declares the LORD, "and you will not be given into the hand of the men whom you dread.

17 But I'll deliver you on that day," declares the LORD. "You won't be given into the hands of the men you fear.

17 But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid.

18 For I will assuredly rescue you, and you will not fall by the sword; but you will have your *own* life as plunder, because you have trusted in Me," declares the LORD."

18 For I will certainly rescue you, and you will not fall by the sword; but you will have your *own* life as booty, because you have trusted in Me," declares the LORD."

18 For I'll surely deliver you, and you won't fall by the sword. Your life will be spared because you trusted me," declares the LORD."

18 For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.



- God will give him a life as a gift, which would normally be forfeit because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

### **Lamentations**

Appendage to the book of Jeremiah; it is a little five-chapter book attached to the book of Jeremiah. It bemoans the fall of Jerusalem and Lam 1:1 mentions an interesting Poetic mark. Israel (specifically the city of Jerusalem) is described as a widow, usually a widow is one whose husband has died. The husband here is God and He is not dead, but they are separated. The separation is poetically described a widow. There are other places also that Israel is described as a widow. She is widowed when Jerusalem fell and she is enslaved. That is just sort of the climatic act.

Rev 17-18 deal with Mystery Babylon, don't confuse it with literal Babylon, but there is something that God is dealing with that is spiritually or mystically Babylon. The harlot that emerges in Revelation has on her forehead a name written *Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots* and so forth. Mystery Babylon makes a boast that she is not a widow. No one said she was, she is contrasting herself with Israel, who is divorced and a widow. This is just a mystical link for further study.