

Stuck in the Mud

Jeremiah 34:1-7

Jeremiah 38

Jeremiah 39:15-18

by Don Falkos

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Even while he was imprisoned in the courtyard of the palace guard Jeremiah continued to warn the people. "Stay in Jerusalem and you will die. Surrender to the Babylonians and you will live."

Some of the king's officials accused Jeremiah of being a traitor. They threw him into a disused cistern that was partially filled with mud, and he sank down into it. Another palace official went to the king to plead for the prophet's life. The king said, "Take some of my men and lift him up out of there before he dies." Jeremiah was rescued from the cistern and returned to imprisonment in the courtyard.

King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah, promised him safety, and asked, "What does the Lord have to say to me?"

The prophet told him, "If you surrender to the king of Babylon, you and your family will live, and the city will not be destroyed. But if you refuse to surrender, there will be consequences. Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonians, and they will burn it to the ground. All the women in your palace, your wives, and your children will be handed over to the officers of the Babylonian army to do with as they please." Zedekiah failed to heed this warning.

When the king's officials questioned Jeremiah about his conversation with the king, he responded as Zedekiah had instructed him. "I was pleading with the king to allow me to stay in the courtyard of his palace rather than being sent back to the horrible place I was first imprisoned."

Later, the Lord sent Jeremiah to tell Zedekiah, "Jerusalem is about to fall. You will be captured and meet Nebuchadnezzar face to face. Then you will be exiled to Babylon. But the Lord has decreed you will die in peace, and people will mourn your loss."