

**JEREMIAH CAST INTO PIT (Jeremiah 37-38)**

**Parts:** Narrator,  
Jehucal,  
Jeremiah,  
Irijah,  
Zedekiah,  
Princes,  
Ebed-Melech

**Narrator:**

Then King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of Yehowah which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah.

**Jehucal:**

"Pray now to Yehowah our God for us."

**Narrator:**

And the word of Yehowah came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying:

**Yehowah:**

"Thus says Yehowah, the God of Israel, Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: `Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire.' "

**Jeremiah:**

"Thus says Yehowah: `Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained only wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.' "

**Narrator:**

Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left the siege of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet.

**Irijah** (*seizing Jeremiah the prophet*):

"You are defecting to the Chaldeans."

**Jeremiah:**

"It is false! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans."

**Narrator:**

But he did not listen to him. So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah entered the pit and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, then Zedekiah the king sent and took him out.

**Zedekiah** (*asked him secretly in his house*):

"Is there any word from Yehowah?"

**Jeremiah:**

"There is. You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!... What offense have I committed against you..., that you have put me in prison? Where now are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land?' Therefore please here now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

**Zedekiah** *(to a guard)*:

Let Jeremiah be put in the court of the prison, and give him a piece of bread from the bakers' street daily, until all the bread in the city is gone.

**Narrator**:

Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Now Shephatiah (the son of Mattan), Gedaliah (the son of Pashhur), Jucal (the son of Shelemiah), and Pashhur (the son of Malchiah) heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people.

**Jeremiah** *(shouting in the court of the prison)*:

"Thus says Yehowah: `He who remains in this city shall die...! But he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live...!' Thus says Yehowah: `This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army...!'"

**Princes** *(coming before Zedekiah)*:

"Please, O king, let this man Jeremiah, be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."

**Zedekiah**:

"Look, he is in your hand. For the king can do nothing against you."

**Narrator**:

So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the pit of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the pit there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the pit. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king.

**Ebed-Melech**:

"My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have cast him into the pit, and he is likely to die from hunger.... For there is no more bread in the city."

**Zedekiah:**

"Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the pit before he dies."

**Narrator:**

So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the pit to Jeremiah.

**Ebed-Melech** *(to Jeremiah):*

"Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes."  
*(and Jeremiah did so)*

**Narrator:**

So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the pit. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of Yehowah.

**Zedekiah:**

"I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me."

**Jeremiah:**

"If I declare it to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me."

**Zedekiah** *(swore secretly to Jeremiah):*

"As Yehowah lives, who made our very souls. I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."

**Jeremiah:**

"Thus says Yehowah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: `If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.' "

**Zedekiah:**

"I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me."

**Jeremiah:**

"They shall not deliver you. Please, obey the voice of Yehowah which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live."

**Zedekiah:**

"Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die. But if the princes hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, 'Tell us now what you have said to the king, and also what the king said to you; do not hide it from us, and we will not put you to death,' then you shall say to them, 'I presented my request before the king, that he would not make me return to Jonathan's house to die there.'"

**Narrator:**

Then all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him. And he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been heard. Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was there when Jerusalem was taken.

(The End)