

Jeremiah's Rescue

Key Verse: “Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies.”
—*Jeremiah 38:10, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 38:1-28

Of all God's servants throughout the course of human history, the Prophet Jeremiah stands uniquely prominent among them. Consider the remarkable nature of his call to be a prophet while he was still quite young. Jeremiah wrote of that event, saying, “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. Then said I: Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth. But the LORD said to me: Do

not say, I am a youth, For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”—Jer. 1:4-8, *NKJV*

We can well imagine the life-changing impact upon young Jeremiah. After all, God had spoken directly to him! Further, it was revealed to him that he was known of God before he was formed in the womb. Even more so, it likely amazed Jeremiah that he was sanctified by God before he was born and predestined to be a prophet to all nations. Perhaps Jeremiah staggered at this message. He may well have wondered how God's will would,

or even could, be accomplished. All doubt seems to have been removed when God empowered him. We read, “Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.” (vss. 9,10, *NKJV*) Empowered by these extraordinary promises, Jeremiah began his ministry, fearlessly and faithfully declaring the word of God to Israel, Judah, and the nations.

In the days of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, Jeremiah’s prophecies were rejected by Judah’s leadership. The prophet boldly told Zedekiah and his governors to accept the fact that God was going to bring about the end of their reign. Jerusalem would be destroyed. Their only chance for survival was to accept that Babylon’s invasion and conquering of Jerusalem was God’s punishment for their stiff-necked disobedience. If they acquiesced to the will of God, their lives would be spared. Instead, Zedekiah’s governors insisted that Jeremiah be incarcerated in an abandoned cistern. They said that Jeremiah was weakening the will of the people—an act of treason. The cistern that Jeremiah was lowered into was full of miry clay. (Jer. 38:1-6) We may imagine the internal struggles of faith that he experienced. Was he to die there? Had God abandoned him?

Perhaps Jeremiah reflected on Psalm 40. “I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.”—Ps. 40:1,2, *NKJV*

We believe that God continues to deliver his people from “miry clay” situations. Jeremiah’s example of faithfulness and trust continues to inspire the Lord’s people. “God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.”—Ps. 46:1,2, *NKJV* ■