

**Jer. 39:1** ¶ In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

**Jer. 39:2** And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up.

Babylon held Jerusalem under siege for about 1.5 years before the city fell.

**Jer. 39:3** 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.

**Jer. 39:4** 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.

**Jer. 39:5** 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.

It's interesting to note that Jeremiah records the names of the main Babylonian princes that first entered the city taking control from a position at the middle gate, the gate separating the upper and lower parts of the city. When King Zedekiah realized what had happened, he tried to secretly leave the city during the night and headed in the direction of Jericho. It was not long before he was captured and taken before Nebuchadnezzar who had established his position in Riblah. One commentary identified this town as Antioch in Syria, another as 65 miles north of Damascus, another as 200 miles northeast of Jerusalem. I'm sure Neb took great delight in pronouncing sentence on this man who had rebelled against him.

**Jer. 39:6** 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.

**Jer. 39:7** Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

**Jer. 39:8** And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar immediately killed all of Zedekiah's sons and all the nobles of Judah whom he had captured. He then put out Zedekiah's eyes and placed him in chains to be taken captive to Babylon—the memory of the murder of his sons and nobles being the last thing he ever saw. The Hebrew supports the conclusion that his eyeballs were removed.

The Babylonians burned down the palace and all the other homes in the city. They then completed their destruction by tearing down the walls of the city. Jeremiah 52 gives some additional information concerning this time that affirms that the temple was destroyed by fire at this time also.

*Jeremiah 52:12–14 “Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of the LORD, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about.”*

This final fall of Jerusalem to Babylon occurred in 586 BC.

**Jer. 39:9** 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.

**Jer. 39:10** 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.

Only a few of the poor people were left in Judah and not taken captive to Babylon. They who had the least were given vineyards and fields of their own by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Babylonian guard.

**Jer. 39:11** ¶ Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,

**Jer. 39:12** Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar had been told of the prophet Jeremiah’s attempts to get the people to surrender. He instructed Nebuzaradan to treat him well and let him choose what he wanted to do.

**Jer. 39:13** So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabsaris, and Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon’s princes; **Jer. 39:14** 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.

The captain sent his top aides to rescue Jeremiah from the court of the prison and put him in the care of Gedaliah, whose father had previously befriended Jeremiah, and whom Neb appointed ruler. So Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem with the poor people left behind.

*2 Kings 25:22 “And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.”*

**Jer. 39:15** Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

**Jer. 39:16** 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.

**Jer. 39:17** 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.

**Jer. 39:18** 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.

This section of verses is sort of like a PS at the end of a letter. Evidently, Jeremiah had access to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian while in the court of the prison. The LORD gave Jeremiah a special message to deliver to Ebedmelech before he was released. He was to tell Ebedmelech that when the city fell, God would deliver him from harm at the hands of the Zedekiah's evil advisors or the Babylonians because he had put his trust in Him as LORD.

Again, this truth echoes through the words of the psalmist.

*Psalms 37:37–40 “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.”*

I can't help but think of the prophecies of scripture screaming out today's headlines, and how the masses have the same disdain for them as did the people of Judah as a whole. Just as surely as Jeremiah was proven to be declaring God's truth, so too will the rest of the prophecies of scripture. Just as surely as God rescued those that were obedient to Him then, so too will He do the same for those who obey Him in faith when that time comes. Just as surely as those who rejected the LORD received His declared judgment then, so too will those who reject Him as LORD at the time decreed for that judgment to fall.