

Jeremiah 37

Read Jeremiah 37:1-10: What is needed to get a people to listen to God? They need to *have some skin in the game and* face a personal threat to even listen to God. King Zedekiah did not pay attention to Jeremiah's messages. He knew the truth very well; but that is not enough to move our hearts into action. Zedekiah's dad was good King Josiah; and he likely heard scripture from his youth. He saw his dad crusade against all evil. Zedekiah's counselors and officials also did not pay attention to what Jeremiah had been saying. The people of Judah also did not pay attention to what Jeremiah said. We do not know how much time passed before their attitude changed...but suddenly, they are looking for their prophet Jeremiah! Suddenly they want intercession and prayer from a man who they disrespected over and over. What is up with that?

King Zedekiah told one of the priests to ask Jeremiah to pray for the nation. What about all of those times that the Kings let the false prophets have their say and abuse Jeremiah? The false prophets *got the microphone* and Jeremiah got jail time. How do we reconcile those two opposite realities? Why would an agonistic king seek prayer support? Because the Babylonians actually showed up. People might ignore their bibles and church services until a problem comes to *their own doorstep*. People will say "I found the Lord in a foxhole". God was their last option when all other options were not working.

At least the King did ask for intercession. God gave the people a momentary reprieve. Perhaps the gesture to bring in Jeremiah to help caused God to show his power. The Egyptians came riding in; and the Babylonians abandoned their siegeworks against Jerusalem. Any sane King would welcome more of this power and protection.

Next, God had Jeremiah communicate that this reprieve from Babylon would not last. He said the Babylonians are returning to burn the place to the ground. In fact, God points out that if Pharaoh wiped out the Babylonian army that God would rustle up the wounded Babylonian soldiers would return to finish the job. It all came true.

Read Jeremiah 37:11-21: Jeremiah had purchased property from his family in the land of Benjamin. He went there to claim his property. The locals accused him of being a Babylonian sympathizer. They were angry with him and threw him in scribe's jail.

Jeremiah is compared to Jesus. He said why are you abusing me? What have I done? What about all of those false prophets who claimed that the Chaldeans would never come? What about them? They did not really listen to him. They left him in jail a long time.

King Zedekiah snuck in a visit. The King pulled him outside for a secret talk. Jeremiah appealed to the King to take him out of the prison, before it leads to his death. The King was too worried about his reputation to humbly show himself and release Jeremiah altogether. When we are living a lie, we make all of the wrong moves. He pointed out that he was innocent and spoke words that exactly came true. He noted that all of the false prophets were obviously

wrong. He told the King that Zedekiah would be handed over to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah moved Jeremiah to the jail in his own courtyard. Jeremiah received meals as the city was starving. He was safe in his cell. He was one of the only protected men in town.