

## Lesson IX.

## JEREMIAH IN THE DUNGEON

August 27, 1905

Jeremiah 38: 1-13. Commit to memory vs. 8-10. Read chs. 37 to 39.

GOLDEN TEXT—Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matthew 5: 10.

1 Then Shephatiah the son of Mat'tan, and Gedaliah the son of Pash'ur, and Ju'cal the son of Shelemiah, and Pash'ur the son of Maltai'ah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

2 Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.

3 Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you.

6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Maltai'ah the son of Ham'melech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

Revised Version—1 And Shephatiah; 2 Pashhur; 3 spake; 4 abideth; 5 and his life shall be unto him for; 6 he: 7 army of the king of Babylon, and he shall; 8 Then; 9 Let this man, we pray thee, be; 10 forasmuch as; 11 and Zedekiah; 12 king's son; 13 guard; 14 and Jeremiah sank; 15 an eunuch; 16 Omit for hunger; 17 because of the famine: for; 18 the.

7 Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;

8 Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,

9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.

10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

11 So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast cloths and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

12 And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast cloths and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

**Time and Place**—Shortly before 587 B.C.; Jerusalem.

**Connection**—Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, had reigned only three months over Judah when he was dethroned by Nebuchadnezzar and taken captive to Babylon, 2 Kgs. 24: 8-16. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah (2 Kgs. 24: 17-20) in 598. In 587, the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, after a siege of a year and a half. It was during the siege that the events of the Lesson occurred.

**I. JEREMIAH ACCUSED.**—1. Shephatiah... Gedaliah... Ju'cal... Pashur; four princes, who were among the closest counselors of King Zedekiah. They were enemies to Jeremiah, because he had advised the king and people to surrender to the Chaldeans or Babylonians, who were besieging Jerusalem. For this the prophet had been put in a dungeon before (ch. 37: 15, 16), but the king had ordered him to be taken out "into the court of the prison" (ch. 37: 21) that is, the place where the sentries stood who guarded the king's palace. This was a public place, and he would have an opportunity of speaking unto all the people.

2, 3. Thus saith the Lord. Jeremiah did not speak as he did, because he had no love for his country, but because the Lord had commanded him. He that remaineth in the city, etc. God had determined to give it into the hands of the Chaldeans,

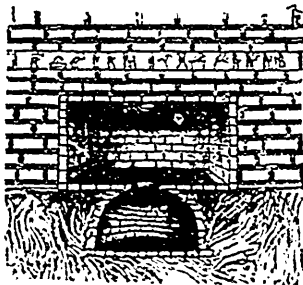
for the sins of its rulers and people. He that goeth forth... shall have his life for a prey; as if it were something suddenly snatched from great danger.

4. Let this man be put to death. Jeremiah was a brave man, and would speak God's word as long as he lived. This his enemies knew. For... he weakeneth the hands, etc. It is true that Jeremiah's words would make the soldiers less ready to fight, while the princes were all for war. But the prophet was on God's side.

**II. JEREMIAH CONDEMNED.**

—5, 6. Then Zedekiah the king. This poor, weak king yielded to the persuasion of the princes; as Ahab did to Jezebel (1 Kgs. 16: 31), and Herod to Herodias, Matt. 14: 3. Behold, he is in your hand; to put to death if they wished. For the king, etc. He had only the shadow of power, not the reality. Then they took Jeremiah; onwards, every one of them, with a heart to kill the prophet, but not bold enough to strike the blow. They would let hunger and cold do it for them. Cast him into the dungeon; an underground cistern, in which there was no water, but mire. The long siege had exhausted the water supply.

**III. JEREMIAH RESCUED.**—7-10. Ebed-melech the Ethiopian; a negro attendant belonging to the court. The king then sitting in the



A Dungeon below a Dungeon