

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 ¹ Then Shephatiah the son of Mat'tan, and Gedaliah the son of ² Pash'ur, and Ju'al the son of Shelemiah, and ³ Pash'ur the son of Malci'ah, heard the words that Jeremi'ah ⁴ had spoken unto all the people, saying,

2 Thus saith the Lord, He that ⁴ remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chalde'ans shall live; ⁵ for he shall have his life for a prey, and ⁶ shall live.

3 Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the ⁷ king of Bab'ylon's army, which shall take it.

4 ⁸ Therefore the princes said unto the king, ⁹ We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: ¹⁰ 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 ¹¹ 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 Jeremi'ah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malci'ah the ¹² son of Ham'melech, that was in the court of the ¹³ prison: and they let down Jeremi'ah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was no water, but mire: ¹⁴ so Jeremi'ah sunk in the mire.*

Revised Version—1 And Shephatiah: 2 Pashhur; for; 3 he: 4 army of the king of Babylon, and he 5 forasmuch as; 6 and Zedekiah; 7 king's son; 8 guard; 9 and Jeremiah sank; 10 an eunuch; 11 Omit for hunger; 12 because of the famine: for: 13 the.

7 Now when E'bed-mel'ech the Ethio'pian, ¹⁵ one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremi'ah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Ben'jamin;

8 E'bed-mel'ech 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 Jeremi'ah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die ¹⁶ for hunger in the place where he is: ¹⁷ for *there is no more bread in the city.*

10 Then the king commanded E'bed-mel'ech the Ethio'pian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremi'ah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

11 So E'bed-mel'ech 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 Jeremi'ah.

12 And E'bed-mel'ech the Ethio'pian said unto Jeremi'ah, Put now *these* old cast cloths and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremi'ah did so.

13 So they drew up Jeremi'ah with ¹⁸ cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremi'ah remained in the court of the ¹⁹ 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'al. . . 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.

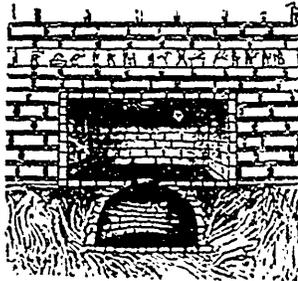
4. Let this man be put to death. Jeremiah was a brave man, and would speak God's word as long as he lived. This his enemies knew. For. . . he weakeneth the hands, etc. It is true that Jeremiah's words would make the soldiers less ready to fight, while the princes were all for war. But the prophet was 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; towards, 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 Ethio'pian; a negro attendant belonging to the court. The king then sitting in the



A Dungeon below a Dungeon