

# Jeremiah 37:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days;

## Analysis

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**When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins**—the Hebrew *beit habbor* (בֵּית הַבּוֹר, house of the pit/dungeon) and *chanuiot* (חֲנִיּוֹת, vaulted chambers/cells) describe a particularly harsh underground prison, likely a converted cistern with vaulted side chambers. The *bor* (pit) often refers to cisterns or wells, dark, damp, and confining (38:6 describes such a cistern where Jeremiah later sank in mire). The *chanuiot* were arch-covered cells, essentially crypts or vaults.

**And Jeremiah had remained there many days**—the phrase *yamim rabbim* (יָמִים רַבִּים, many days) indicates extended imprisonment in these wretched conditions. The location was not merely confinement but designed to break the prisoner through physical misery. Darkness, dampness, isolation, and likely unsanitary conditions made survival difficult. Yet Jeremiah endured, maintaining faithfulness to his prophetic calling.

This imprisonment foreshadows Christ's suffering—unjustly condemned, physically abused, confined in darkness. It also anticipates Paul's imprisonments for gospel witness (Philippians 1:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:9). The faithful often suffer not despite their obedience but because of it. Yet God sustains His servants even in dungeons; Jeremiah was eventually rescued (vv. 17-21), and his prophecies were vindicated by their precise fulfillment.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern dungeons were notoriously harsh. Cisterns converted to prisons were common—underground chambers accessed through narrow openings, dark, cold, and damp. Jeremiah 38:6 describes being lowered into a cistern where he sank in mud, requiring rescue. Such conditions could kill prisoners through disease, exposure, or despair. That Jeremiah survived 'many days' testifies to either divine preservation or minimal care from sympathizers. His later private audience with Zedekiah (v. 17) suggests the king knew about and tacitly approved the prophet's harsh treatment while maintaining plausible deniability.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How did Jeremiah maintain faith and prophetic integrity during extended imprisonment in such harsh conditions?
2. What does this suffering teach about the cost of faithful prophetic ministry?
3. How should we respond when obeying God leads to unjust suffering rather than deliverance?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	בָּא	יִרְמְיָהוּ	אֶל	בֵּית	הַבּוֹר	וְאֶל
H3588	was entered	When Jeremiah	H413	into the dungeon	H953	H413
	H935	H3414		H1004		
וְהִנֵּה יוֹת	וְנָשַׁב	שָׁם	יִרְמְיָהוּ	יָמִים	רַבִּים:	
and into the cabins	had remained	H8033	When Jeremiah	days	there many	
H2588	H3427		H3414	H3117	H7227	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 38:6** (Parallel theme): Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, 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.