

# Jeremiah 37:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison.

## Analysis

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**Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people**—this phrase marks a brief window of freedom for the prophet. The Hebrew yatsa ( יצא, to go out) and bo ( בָּא, to come in) indicate normal movement and activity, suggesting Jeremiah exercised public ministry without restriction. **For they had not put him into prison**—the negative statement emphasizes what would soon change dramatically (vv. 15-16). This freedom was temporary and strategic.

The timing is crucial: this occurred during the Babylonian siege's brief interruption when Egyptian forces approached (v. 5). King Zedekiah's regime apparently hoped Jeremiah might revise his prophecies of doom now that circumstances seemed to be improving. They permitted his liberty, perhaps expecting him to declare Egypt's intervention as deliverance. Instead, Jeremiah would prophesy Egypt's retreat and Babylon's inevitable victory (vv. 7-10), making his subsequent imprisonment a certainty. This pattern repeats throughout Scripture: God's faithful prophets speak unwelcome truth regardless of personal cost (1 Kings 22:14; Acts 4:19-20).

## Historical Context

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This incident occurred in 588/587 BC during the final Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah had already endured persecution—beaten and imprisoned in stocks (20:2), threatened with death (26:8), opposed by false prophets (chapter 28). Yet between imprisonments, he continued public ministry. Zedekiah's vacillating treatment of Jeremiah reflects the king's tragic character: he feared the

prophet's words enough to consult him privately (37:17; 38:14-16) but lacked courage to obey publicly. The brief reprieve when Egypt approached created false hope that God's judgment might be averted without repentance—a hope Jeremiah would shatter.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

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

## Study Questions

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1. How did Jeremiah use his brief freedom to continue faithful ministry despite knowing it would lead to further persecution?
2. What does Zedekiah's treatment of Jeremiah reveal about fearing God's word while refusing to obey it?
3. When have you experienced a 'window of opportunity' for witness that required courage despite potential consequences?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיַרְמִיָּהוּ אָتָּה וַיֵּצֵא בֵּית וְעַמּוּד לֹא!  
Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people H3808

בְּכַלְיָא: אָתָּה בְּיַתְּנֵת וְיַתְּנֵת  
for they had not put him into prison H3628

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 37:15** (Parallel theme): Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison.

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