

# Jeremiah 38:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

## Analysis

**Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,** This verse introduces the hostile officials who would orchestrate Jeremiah's persecution. The careful genealogical identification establishes these men as prominent figures in Zedekiah's court—not random opponents but influential leaders. Their collective opposition represents institutional resistance to God's word, paralleling Jesus' confrontation with the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65).

The phrase "heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken" (vayishme'u... et-hadevarim) emphasizes they had direct knowledge of the prophecy. Their response wasn't based on rumor but firsthand hearing—making their opposition more culpable. They understood the message clearly yet rejected it, illustrating the hardness Jesus describes: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15). Hearing without heeding demonstrates spiritual deafness.

Theologically, this verse illustrates:

1. True prophecy often provokes institutional opposition
2. spiritual blindness can afflict the educated and powerful

3. collective agreement against God's word doesn't validate opposition—truth isn't decided by majority vote
4. those entrusted with leadership bear greater responsibility for response to revelation (James 3:1).

The Reformed emphasis on the noetic effects of sin finds vivid illustration here—these officials' minds were darkened, preventing right response to divine truth.

## Historical Context

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These officials served in the final chaotic years of Judah's monarchy under Zedekiah (597-586 BCE). Gedaliah son of Pashur was likely related to the Pashur who earlier persecuted Jeremiah (20:1-6). This suggests an ongoing pattern of familial and institutional resistance spanning years. The repetition of opposition across generations demonstrates entrenched spiritual rebellion.

Archaeological discoveries, including the Lachish Letters (ostraca from this period), reveal the military and political desperation during Jerusalem's final siege. Officials like these faced impossible choices: surrender to Babylon (as Jeremiah advised) or resist to the death (the nationalistic position). Their opposition to Jeremiah reflects not merely theological disagreement but political calculus—his prophecies undermined war morale. Yet their pragmatic concerns couldn't justify rejecting God's revealed will.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does institutional or group opposition to biblical truth today mirror these officials' resistance to Jeremiah?
2. In what ways might pragmatic or political concerns tempt us to compromise or silence unpopular biblical truths?
3. How does understanding the genealogical continuity of opposition (Pashur's son continuing his father's hostility) warn us about generational spiritual patterns?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיִּשְׁמַע עֲשָׂרֶנֶסֶת וְשְׁפָטִי הַזֶּה בְּבֵן מַתָּן וְגֵדָלִי הַזֶּה בְּבֵן וְפָשָׁח וְרִיכָּלִי הַזֶּה בְּבֵן וְפָשָׁח וְרִיכָּלִי הַזֶּה בְּבֵן  
heard Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan and Gedaliah the son and Pashur

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וַיַּיכְלֵל וְיַעֲשֵׂה לְמִתְּהִלָּה וְפָשָׁח וְרִיכָּלִי הַזֶּה בְּבֵן אֶת מַלְכִי הַזֶּה  
and Jucal the son of Shelemiah and Pashur the son of Malchiah H853

H3116 H1121 H8018 H6583 H1121 H4441

וְיַדְבֵּר אֲלֹהִים בְּבֵבָר יִמְשָׁל אֲשֶׁר יְרַמֵּי הַזֶּה בְּבֵבָר  
the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people H5971

H1697 H834 H3414 H1696 H413 H3605

לְאָמָר:

saying

H559

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