

Jeremiah 38:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon—(וְיִשְׁאַל אֶת־יְרֵמִיהוּ בְּתַבְלִים וְעַלְוֹ אֹתוֹ מִן־הַבּוֹר) The verb mashak (מִשָּׁךְ) means to draw, pull, or drag, emphasizing the physical effort required to extract a man from a deep pit. This successful rescue fulfilled God's protective purpose for His prophet, preserving Jeremiah to witness the very judgment he had prophesied and minister to the remnant afterward.

And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison—Though rescued from death, Jeremiah was not released. He stayed in chatsar hamattarah (חַצֵּר הַמַּתָּרָה), court of the guard), a more humane confinement than the cistern but still imprisonment. This partial deliverance illustrates an important principle: God's preservation doesn't always mean complete comfort. Jeremiah remained imprisoned until Jerusalem fell (39:14), enduring months more of confinement even after the rescue.

This pattern appears throughout Scripture. Joseph was delivered from the pit and slavery but spent years in prison before exaltation (Genesis 39-41). Paul was rescued from death multiple times but remained in chains (Acts 28:20, Philippians 1:13). God's faithfulness guarantees completion of His purposes, not exemption from suffering. Jeremiah's continued imprisonment served God's plan—keeping him safe during the city's chaotic final days while maintaining his prophetic witness.

Historical Context

The 'court of the prison' was likely part of the royal guard complex, offering better conditions than the dungeon—Jeremiah received daily bread there (37:21) until supplies ran out during the siege's final stages. He remained there until the Babylonians captured the city in July 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar's captain Nebuzaradan, informed of Jeremiah's pro-Babylonian prophecies, offered him asylum in Babylon or freedom in Judah (39:11-14, 40:1-6). Jeremiah chose to remain with the poor remnant in Judah, continuing his prophetic ministry. Ebed-melech, meanwhile, received the promised deliverance—he was not killed when the city fell (39:15-18). God keeps His word to those who trust Him.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Jeremiah's rescue from death but continued imprisonment teach about God's deliverance not always meaning complete comfort?
2. How does this passage demonstrate that God's preservation guarantees completing His purposes, not exemption from all suffering?
3. In what ways might partial deliverance or ongoing trials serve God's purposes better than immediate total relief?

Interlinear Text

מִן	אֵת	וַיַּעֲלֹה	בְּחֶבְלִים	יְרָמִיָּהוּ אֶת	יְמִשָּׁכָן
So they drew up	H853	Jeremiah	with cords	and took him up	H853 H4480
H4900		H3414	H2256	H5927	

הַמְּטֻרָה:	בְּחַצֵּר	יְרָמִיָּהוּ	וַיָּשָׁב	וּרְבָּה	מִן
out of the dungeon	remained	Jeremiah	in the court	of the prison	
H953	H3427	H3414	H2691	H4307	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 37:21 (Parallel theme): Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Acts 28:16 (Parallel theme): And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Acts 23:35 (Parallel theme): I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Acts 28:30 (Parallel theme): And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

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