

# Jeremiah 38:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.

## Analysis

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**So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans**—God's prophecy specified the capture of Zedekiah's entire family, a detail that proved tragically accurate. His sons were executed before his eyes, and he was blinded (39:6-7). The verb yatsa ( יצא, "to bring out") ironically echoes verse 17's command that Zedekiah himself "go forth" to surrender. His refusal to go forth willingly guaranteed his family would be brought forth as captives.

**Thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire**—The causative Hebrew construction makes Zedekiah personally responsible for Jerusalem's destruction. Though Babylonian soldiers would light the fires, Zedekiah's disobedience would be the true cause. His one decision—refuse to surrender—would condemn the entire city. This crushing weight of responsibility makes his choice even more inexcusable: one man's pride would destroy thousands of lives.

## Historical Context

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The capture and abuse of royal families was standard ancient Near Eastern practice, serving both to eliminate rival claimants to the throne and to humiliate the defeated king. Nebuchadnezzar executed Zedekiah's sons at Riblah, ensuring

no Davidic heir could rally resistance, then blinded Zedekiah so the sight of his sons' execution would be his last memory (2 Kings 25:6-7).

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does making Zedekiah causally responsible for Jerusalem's burning emphasize the weight of leadership decisions?
2. What does the ironic reversal (refusing to "go forth" leads to family being "brought forth" as captives) teach about consequences?
3. How might this prophecy's specificity have served as a final plea for Zedekiah to obey before it was too late?

## Interlinear Text

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אֶל	מִזְצָאִים	בְּתִ יִם	וְאֶת	נֶשֶׁי יִבְכֵל	כֹּל	וְאֶת
H413	H3318	H1121	H802	H853	and thy children	So they shall bring out
all thy wives						
H3605	H853	H3808	H3778	H859	and thou shalt not escape out	by the hand
						H3588
to the Chaldeans						
		H4422				H3027
לֹא	תִּמְלַט	בְּ יַד	בְּ יַד	וְאֶת	בְּ יַד	בְּ יַד
and thou shalt not escape out						
by the hand	of the king	of Babylon	but shalt be taken			
H3027	H4428	H894	H8610	H853		
בְּאָשָׁה	תִּשְׂרַף	בְּזַעַם	בְּעֵין יָרֵךְ			
and thou shalt cause this city		H2063				
H5892			to be burned			
					H784	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 41:10** (Kingdom): Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

**Jeremiah 39:6** (Kingdom): Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

**Jeremiah 38:18** (Kingdom): But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

**2 Kings 25:7** (References Babylon): And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

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