

# Jeremiah 39:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.

## Analysis

**When Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them... then they fled** (וַיִּבְרַח, vayyivrach)—After 18 months of defiant resistance, Zedekiah's courage collapsed at the crucial moment. The verb barach (בָּרַח) denotes panicked flight, not strategic retreat. He escaped **by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls**—a secretive escape route through the southeast passage toward the Kidron Valley.

This flight fulfilled Ezekiel's symbolic prophecy: the prince would 'dig through the wall' and flee in darkness (Ezekiel 12:5-12). Zedekiah's cowardice contrasts sharply with Jeremiah's counsel to surrender and live (38:17-23). He chose political preservation over prophetic wisdom and lost everything. The way of the plain (עֲרָבָה, arabah) toward Jericho proved not an escape but the path to judgment.

## Historical Context

The 'king's garden' was located in the Kidron Valley at the southeastern corner of Jerusalem, providing a natural escape route away from the main Babylonian forces positioned at the northern gates. The double-wall system (likely the old Jebusite

fortification) created a narrow passage. Ancient military tactics anticipated such escape attempts and positioned forces accordingly.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does Zedekiah's flight illustrate the futility of resisting God's declared judgment?
2. When have you attempted to 'escape' God's correction rather than submit to His wisdom?
3. What does Zedekiah's failure teach about trusting political solutions over prophetic truth?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֵּהָיֶה י	כַּאֲשֶׁר ר	כִּי אָמ	צִדְקִי הוּא	הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵךְ	
H1961	H834	saw H7200	And it came to pass that when Zedekiah	of the king's	H4428
וְהוּדָה ה	וְכָל לֵן	אֲנָשִׁי י	הַמִּלְחָמָה ה	וַיִּבְרְחוּ	
of Judah H3063	H3605	them and all the men H582	of war H4421	then they fled H1272	
וַיֵּצֵא א	לַיְלָה	מִן	הָעִיר	דֶּךָ כֵן	גַּן
and he went out H3318	by night H3915	H4480	out of the city H5892	by the way H1870	garden H1588
					הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵךְ
					of the king's H4428
בְּשַׁעַר	בֵּין	הַחֲמֹתַיִם	וַיֵּצֵא א	דֶּךָ כֵן	הָעֲרָבָה:
by the gate H8179	H996	betwixt the two walls H2346	and he went out H3318	by the way H1870	of the plain H6160

## Additional Cross-References

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**Amos 2:14** (Parallel theme): Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself:

**2 Chronicles 32:5** (Parallel theme): Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.

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