

Jeremiah 40:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

Analysis

This verse marks the transition from Jerusalem's fall (chapter 39) to the aftermath narratives. The phrase 'The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD' emphasizes divine revelation continuing even in catastrophe. Jeremiah's release 'after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah' demonstrates God's providence—the prophet who predicted judgment is miraculously preserved through it. The detail that Jeremiah was 'bound in chains among all that were carried away captive' shows he initially suffered with his people, experiencing the judgment he prophesied. Yet God ensured his liberation, fulfilling the promise of protection given throughout his ministry (Jeremiah 1:8, 19; 15:20). The historical irony is profound: Jerusalem's leaders who imprisoned and persecuted Jeremiah (chapters 37-38) are now themselves captives, while Jeremiah is freed by the very Babylonians they feared. This validates God's word through Jeremiah and demonstrates that opposing God's messengers ensures judgment while heeding them brings blessing. The verse establishes that even in exile's chaos, God's word continues to guide His people—a vital truth for those in Babylonian captivity and for all believers facing disorienting circumstances.

Historical Context

This event occurred in 586 BC after Jerusalem's destruction following an 18-month siege (2 Kings 25:1-12). Nebuzar-adan (whose name means 'Nebo has given seed') served as Nebuchadnezzar's rab-tabbahim (chief executioner/captain of the guard), responsible for implementing Babylon's policies in conquered territories. Ramah, about 5 miles north of Jerusalem, served as a collection point where Babylonians sorted captives for deportation. Archaeological evidence shows Ramah (modern er-Ram) was a major administrative center during this period. That Jeremiah was initially bound with other captives suggests confusion in the chaos following Jerusalem's fall—apparently the soldiers capturing him didn't recognize him or hadn't yet received Nebuchadnezzar's orders regarding his protection (Jeremiah 39:11-12). The phrase 'all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah' refers to the third major deportation to Babylon (following those in 605 and 597 BC), which included the final remnant after the city's destruction. Nebuzar-adan's recognition and release of Jeremiah demonstrates that Babylon's intelligence network knew about Jeremiah's pro-Babylonian counsel, which they viewed favorably as opposing futile resistance.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's experience of initially suffering judgment with his people, then being delivered, parallel Christ's identification with sinners while remaining sinless?
2. What does God's preservation of Jeremiah teach about His faithfulness to those who proclaim unpopular truth?
3. How should believers respond when God's word is vindicated through difficult circumstances we predicted but others rejected?

Interlinear Text

הָיָה הַ	מִאֵת	יְהִי הַ	מִאֵת	מִן	טָבֵחַ יָמִ
The word	H834	H1961	H413	that came to Jeremiah	H853
	H1697			H3414	from the LORD
					H3068
מִן	טָבֵחַ יָמִ	כְּבָ	כְּבָ	מִן	טָבֵחַ יָמִ
after	had let him go	H853	that Nebuzaradan	the captain	of the guard
H310	H7971		H5018	H7227	H2876
					H4480
בְּאַזְקִים	בְּאַזְקִים	אָס וְ	וְיֻהְוָה אֶת וְ	בְּקַחְתָּ וְ	בְּקַחְתָּ וְ
from Ramah	when he had taken	H853	H1931	him being bound	in chains
H7414	H3947			H631	H246
וְיְהִי הַ יְרוּשָׁלָם	וְיְהִי הַ יְרוּשָׁלָם	כָּל וְתָ	כָּל וְתָ	כָּל בַּת וְתָ	כָּל בַּת וְתָ
among	H3605	all that were carried away captive	of Jerusalem	and Judah	
H8432		H1546	H3389	H3063	
בְּבָבֶלְהָ	בְּבָבֶלְהָ				
which were carried away captive	unto Babylon				
H1540	H894				

Additional Cross-References

Acts 21:13 (References Lord): Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:15 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

Ephesians 6:20 (Parallel theme): For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Joshua 18:25 (Parallel theme): Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

Acts 28:20 (Parallel theme): For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Psalms 107:16 (Parallel theme): For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Psalms 68:6 (Parallel theme): God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

1 Samuel 7:17 (References Lord): And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

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