

Reading Sunday 12 July 2026

Jeremiah 38: 1 - 13

Jeremiah thrown into a cistern

Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal[Ⓜ] son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, ² 'This is what the LORD says: "Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians[Ⓜ] will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live." ³ And this is what the LORD says: "This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it."

⁴ Then the officials said to the king, 'This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin.'

⁵ 'He is in your hands,' King Zedekiah answered. 'The king can do nothing to oppose you.'

⁶ So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

⁷ But Ebed-Melek, a Cushite,[Ⓜ] an official[Ⓜ] in the royal palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. While the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate, ⁸ Ebed-Melek went out of the palace and said to him, ⁹ 'My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no longer any bread in the city.'

¹⁰ Then the king commanded Ebed-Melek the Cushite, 'Take thirty men from here with you and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.'

¹¹ So Ebed-Melek took the men with him and went to a room under the treasury in the palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from there and let them down with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. ¹² Ebed-Melek the Cushite said to Jeremiah, 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes.' Jeremiah did so, ¹³ and they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

