

Tuesday, October 22

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Jeremiah 39:1 - 41:18

39 1 In January of the ninth year of King Zedekiah's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with his entire army to besiege Jerusalem. **2** Two and a half years later, on July 18 in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, a section of the city wall was broken down. **3** All the officers of the Babylonian army came in and sat in triumph at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sharezer of Samgar, and Nebo-sarsekim, a chief officer, and Nergal-sharezer, the king's adviser, and all the other officers of the king of Babylon. **4** When King Zedekiah of Judah and all the soldiers saw that the Babylonians had broken into the city, they fled. They waited for nightfall and then slipped through the gate between the two walls behind the king's garden and headed toward the Jordan Valley. **5** But the Babylonian troops chased them and overtook Zedekiah on the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who was at Riblah in the land of Hamath. There the king of Babylon pronounced judgment upon Zedekiah. **6** The king of Babylon made Zedekiah watch as he slaughtered his sons at Riblah. The king of Babylon also slaughtered all the nobles of Judah. **7** Then he gouged out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in bronze chains to lead him away to Babylon. **8** Meanwhile, the Babylonians burned Jerusalem, including the royal palace and the houses of the people, and they tore down the walls of the city. **9** Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took as exiles to Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city, those who had defected to him, and everyone else who remained. **10** But Nebuzaradan allowed some of the poorest people to stay behind in the land of Judah, and he assigned them to care for the vineyards and fields. **11** King Nebuchadnezzar had told Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, to find Jeremiah. **12** "See that he isn't hurt," he said. "Look after him well, and give him anything he wants." **13** So Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard; Nebushazban, a chief officer; Nergal-sharezer, the king's adviser; and the other officers of Babylon's king **14** sent messengers to bring Jeremiah out of the prison. They put him under the care of Gedaliah son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, who took him back to his home. So Jeremiah stayed in Judah among his own people. **15** The LORD had given the following message to Jeremiah while he was still in prison: **16** "Say to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will do to this city everything I have threatened. I will send disaster, not prosperity. You will see its destruction, **17** but I will rescue you from those you fear so

much. **18** Because you trusted me, I will give you your life as a reward. I will rescue you and keep you safe. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

40 **1** The LORD gave a message to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, had released him at Ramah. He had found Jeremiah bound in chains among all the other captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being sent to exile in Babylon. **2** The captain of the guard called for Jeremiah and said, “The LORD your God has brought this disaster on this land, **3** just as he said he would. For these people have sinned against the LORD and disobeyed him. That is why it happened. **4** But I am going to take off your chains and let you go. If you want to come with me to Babylon, you are welcome. I will see that you are well cared for. But if you don’t want to come, you may stay here. The whole land is before you—go wherever you like. **5** If you decide to stay, then return to Gedaliah son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. He has been appointed governor of Judah by the king of Babylon. Stay there with the people he rules. But it’s up to you; go wherever you like.” Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, gave Jeremiah some food and money and let him go. **6** So Jeremiah returned to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah, and he lived in Judah with the few who were still left in the land. **7** The leaders of the Judean guerrilla bands in the countryside heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor over the poor people who were left behind in Judah—the men, women, and children who hadn’t been exiled to Babylon. **8** So they went to see Gedaliah at Mizpah. These included: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, Jezaniah son of the Maacathite, and all their men. **9** Gedaliah vowed to them that the Babylonians meant them no harm. “Don’t be afraid to serve them. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and all will go well for you,” he promised. **10** “As for me, I will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to meet with us. Settle in the towns you have taken, and live off the land. Harvest the grapes and summer fruits and olives, and store them away.” **11** When the Judeans in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the other nearby countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a few people in Judah and that Gedaliah was the governor, **12** they began to return to Judah from the places to which they had fled. They stopped at Mizpah to meet with Gedaliah and then went into the Judean countryside to gather a great harvest of grapes and other crops. **13** Soon after this, Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. **14** They said to him, “Did you know that Baalis, king of Ammon, has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?” But Gedaliah refused to believe them. **15** Later Johanan had a private conference with Gedaliah and volunteered to kill Ishmael secretly. “Why should we let him come and murder you?” Johanan asked. “What will happen then to the Judeans who have returned?”

Why should the few of us who are still left be scattered and lost?" **16** But Gedaliah said to Johanan, "I forbid you to do any such thing, for you are lying about Ishmael."

41 **1** But in midautumn of that year, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, who was a member of the royal family and had been one of the king's high officials, went to Mizpah with ten men to meet Gedaliah. While they were eating together, **2** Ishmael and his ten men suddenly jumped up, drew their swords, and killed Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor. **3** Ishmael also killed all the Judeans and the Babylonian soldiers who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah. **4** The next day, before anyone had heard about Gedaliah's murder, **5** eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria to worship at the Temple of the LORD. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves, and had brought along grain offerings and frankincense. **6** Ishmael left Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he reached them, he said, "Oh, come and see what has happened to Gedaliah!" **7** But as soon as they were all inside the town, Ishmael and his men killed all but ten of them and threw their bodies into a cistern. **8** The other ten had talked Ishmael into letting them go by promising to bring him their stores of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey that they had hidden away. **9** The cistern where Ishmael dumped the bodies of the men he murdered was the large one dug by King Asa when he fortified Mizpah to protect himself against King Baasha of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with corpses. **10** Then Ishmael made captives of the king's daughters and the other people who had been left under Gedaliah's care in Mizpah by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard. Taking them with him, he started back toward the land of Ammon. **11** But when Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders heard about Ishmael's crimes, **12** they took all their men and set out to stop him. They caught up with him at the large pool near Gibeon. **13** The people Ishmael had captured shouted for joy when they saw Johanan and the other guerrilla leaders. **14** And all the captives from Mizpah escaped and began to help Johanan. **15** Meanwhile, Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan into the land of Ammon. **16** Then Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders took all the people they had rescued in Gibeon—the soldiers, women, children, and court officials whom Ishmael had captured after he killed Gedaliah. **17** They took them all to the village of Geruthkimham near Bethlehem, where they prepared to leave for Egypt. **18** They were afraid of what the Babylonians would do when they heard that Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the Babylonian king.

2 Timothy 1:1 - 18

1 **1** This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus. **2** I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace. **3** Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. **4** I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again. **5** I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. **6** This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. **7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. **8** So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. **9** For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. **10** And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. **11** And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News. **12** That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return. **13** Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. **14** Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you. **15** As you know, everyone from the province of Asia has deserted me—even Phygelus and Hermogenes. **16** May the Lord show special kindness to Onesiphorus and all his family because he often visited and encouraged me. He was never ashamed of me because I was in chains. **17** When he came to Rome, he searched everywhere until he found me. **18** May the Lord show him special kindness on the day of Christ's return. And you know very well how helpful he was in Ephesus.

Psalms 90:1 - 91:16

90 **1** Lord, through all the generations you have been our home! **2** Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are

God. **3** You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals!" **4** For you, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours. **5** You sweep people away like dreams that disappear. They are like grass that springs up in the morning. **6** In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered. **7** We wither beneath your anger; we are overwhelmed by your fury. **8** You spread out our sins before you— our secret sins—and you see them all. **9** We live our lives beneath your wrath, ending our years with a groan. **10** Seventy years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and we fly away. **11** Who can comprehend the power of your anger? Your wrath is as awesome as the fear you deserve. **12** Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom. **13** O LORD, come back to us! How long will you delay? Take pity on your servants! **14** Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives. **15** Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good. **16** Let us, your servants, see you work again; let our children see your glory. **17** And may the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!

91 **1** Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. **2** This I declare about the LORD : He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. **3** For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. **4** He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection. **5** Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. **6** Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday. **7** Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you. **8** Just open your eyes, and see how the wicked are punished. **9** If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, **10** no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. **11** For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. **12** They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone. **13** You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet! **14** The LORD says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. **15** When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. **16** I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation."

Proverbs 26:1 - 2

25 **1** Honor is no more associated with fools than snow with summer or rain with harvest. **2** Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse will not land on its intended victim.