

A Look into the Life of King Zedekiah

Jeremiah 38:17-18 & Jeremiah 27:12-13

Jeremiah 38:17-18 (KJV)

Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house:

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.

Jeremiah 27:12–13 (KJV)

I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?

PART 1

Here are the main points about King Zedekiah related to his rejection of prophetic warnings and seeking help from Egypt:

1. Rejected Prophetic Warnings (especially from Jeremiah):

- Jeremiah repeatedly warned Zedekiah that resisting Babylon would lead to destruction (e.g., Jeremiah 21, 27, 32, 34, 38).
 - Zedekiah often heard Jeremiah privately and showed interest, but lacked the courage to act on the prophet's words.
 - He refused to fully submit to God's message delivered through Jeremiah: to surrender to Babylon and avoid ruin.
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2. Sought Military Help from Egypt:

- Despite Jeremiah's warnings, Zedekiah looked to Egypt for support against Babylon (Jeremiah

37:5–10).

- This move was politically and spiritually misguided:
 - Egypt's help was limited and ineffective.
 - It showed a lack of trust in God's direction and a reliance on human alliances.
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3. Political Weakness and Indecision:

- Zedekiah was a weak ruler, torn between his officials, the people, and prophetic truth.
 - He feared rebellion from his own leaders more than obeying God's command (Jeremiah 38:19–22).
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4. Consequences of Disobedience:

- His failure to heed prophetic counsel and reliance on Egypt led to:
 - The fall of Jerusalem.

- His personal capture and suffering (sons killed, eyes gouged out, exiled to Babylon).
 - The end of Judah's monarchy before the Babylonian exile.
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Summary:

Zedekiah's reign is marked by spiritual compromise, political failure, and tragic consequences for rejecting God's word and trusting in foreign powers instead of divine guidance.

PART 2

The main scripture that clearly captures Jeremiah's repeated warnings to King Zedekiah about the consequences of resisting Babylon is Jeremiah 38:17–18 (KJV):

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Why This is the Main Scripture:

- It is directly addressed to Zedekiah by name.
- It presents a clear choice and consequence: surrender and live, or resist and be destroyed.
- It sums up the repeated messages Jeremiah had given earlier (chapters 21, 27, 32, 34).

Supporting Passages:

- Jeremiah 21:8-10 – Introduces the “way of life and death” message.
- Jeremiah 27:12-13 – Jeremiah urges Zedekiah to submit to Babylon.
- Jeremiah 32:3-5 – Zedekiah is told he will be captured and taken to Babylon.
- Jeremiah 34:2-5 – A warning that the city will be burned, but Zedekiah will not die by the sword.

God wanted Zedekiah to submit to Babylon as an act of obedience and judgment, because Babylon was being used as God’s instrument to discipline Judah for their long-standing sin and rebellion.

Let’s look at Jeremiah 27:12–13 (KJV) to understand the message:

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Reasons God Wanted Zedekiah to Submit:

1. Babylon Was God's Appointed Agent of Judgment

- Babylon's dominance was not just political, but divinely ordained.
- God had given Nebuchadnezzar authority over the nations (Jeremiah 27:6):

“And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant...”

2. To Avoid Destruction

- Submission meant survival: "Serve... and live" (v.12).
- Refusal would lead to sword, famine, and pestilence—the threefold judgment God warned of repeatedly.

3. It Was a Test of Faith and Humility

- God was calling Judah to humble themselves under His will—even if it meant surrendering to a foreign king.
- It required trusting that God's plan was just, even in hardship.

4. To Preserve a Future for Judah

- Through submission, God would preserve a remnant and eventually bring restoration.
- Resistance would bring unnecessary loss and delay redemption.

Summary:

God commanded Zedekiah to submit to Babylon because He was using Babylon to carry out divine judgment. Submission was the only path to life and eventual restoration. Resistance meant defiance of God's will—not just defiance of a foreign power.

MEDIA & COMMENTARY

The Tragic Fall of King Zedekiah: A Lesson in Obedience:

<https://youtu.be/KV-Dlpr1IAE>

PART 2 / QUESTIONS

1. Why would God tell King Zedekiah to submit to Babylon? How important is God's instructions compared to what looks right or wrong to us?
2. How important is it to hear God in this season of your life? How can an individual's judgment hinder their

future outcome if they rely on their understanding more than God's request?

3. How does not leaning to God, hinder our worship toward Him?
4. How many times in your life did you think a choice that you made was a God choice but it was actually the opposite and you had to live with it? What are you learning from this experience?
5. Who is truly worthy of all praise and worship?