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JEREMIAH 39: 1 When Jerusalem was taken, (in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and besieged it;

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This chapter gives an account of the siege and taking of Jerusalem; the flight, capture, and punishment of Zedekiah; the burning of the city; and the carrying away of the people, (a few of the meanest excepted), to Babylon, Jer 39:1-10; also of the release of Jeremiah, and the special orders of Nebuchadnezzar concerning him, Jer 39:11-14. The remaining verses relate to the subject of the preceding chapter; and contain promises of personal safety to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian amidst the public calamities, on account of his piety, and his humanity to the prophet, Jer 39:15-18.

Verse 1

In the ninth year of Zedekiah - in the tenth month - This month is called Tebeth in Est 2:16. It began with the first new moon of our January, and it was on the tenth day of this month that Nebuchadnezzar invested the city.

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JEREMIAH 39: 2 in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city),

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Verse 2

The eleventh year - in the fourth month - This month in the Hebrew calendar is called Thammuz, and commences with the first new moon of our July. The siege had lasted just eighteen months.

The city was broken up - A breach was made in the wall by which the Chaldeans entered.

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JEREMIAH 39: 3 all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, Nergal Sharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal Sharezer, Rabmag, with all the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.

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Verse 3

Sat in the middle gate - The city of Jerusalem stood upon two hills, Sion to the south, and Acra to the north, with a deep valley between them. The gate of the center, as the term seems plainly to import, was a gate of communication in the middle of the valley, between the two parts of the city, sometimes called the higher and the lower city. The Chaldeans entered the city on the north side by a breach in the walls, and rushing forward and posting themselves in this gate, in the very heart or center of the city, became thereby masters at will of the whole. Zedekiah with his troop, perceiving this, fled out of the opposite gate on the south side. See Blayney. This is likely; but we know nothing positively on this subject.

Nergal-sharezer - These were the principal commanders; but Dr. Blayney thinks that instead of six persons, we have in reality but three, as the name that follows each is a title of office. Thus, Nergal-

sharezer, who was Samgar; Nebusarsechim, who was Rab-saris; and Nergal-sharezer, who was Rab-mag. As Nergal-sharezer occurs twice here, and we know that Nebuzaradan was general-in-chief, the first Nergal-sharezer is probably a mistake for Nebuzar-adan, or some other of the commanders. But these things are as uncertain as they are unimportant.

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JEREMIAH 39: 4 When Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, then they fled, and went out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls; and he went out toward the Arabah.

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Verse 4

Went forth out of the city by night - Probably there was a private passage under ground, leading without the walls, by which Zedekiah and his followers might escape unperceived, till they had got some way from the city.

The way of the plain - There were two roads from Jerusalem to Jericho. One passed over the mount of Olives; but, as this might have retarded his flight, he chose the way of the plain, and was overtaken near Jericho, perhaps about sixteen or eighteen miles from Jerusalem. He had probably intended to have passed the Jordan, in order to escape to Egypt, as the Egyptians were then his professed allies.

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JEREMIAH 39: 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; and he gave judgement on him.

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Verse 5

To Riblah - This city was situated on the northern frontier of Palestine, and Hamath was a large city belonging also to Syria. See Gen 10:18.

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JEREMIAH 39: 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon killed all the nobles of Judah.

JEREMIAH 39: 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

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Verse 7

Bounds him with chains - Margin: "Two brazen chains;" one for his hands, and the other for his feet.

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JEREMIAH 39: 8 The Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

JEREMIAH 39: 9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the residue of the people who remained in the city, the deserters also who fell away to him, and the residue of the people who remained.

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Verse 9

Those that fell away - That deserted to the Chaldeans during the siege.

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JEREMIAH 39: 10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, who had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

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Verse 10

Left of the poor of the people - The very refuse of the inhabitants, who were not worthy of being carried away; and among them he divided the fields and vineyards of those whom he took away.

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JEREMIAH 39: 11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon commanded Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard concerning Jeremiah, saying,

JEREMIAH 39: 12 Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do to him even as he shall tell you.

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Verse 12

Take him - look well to him - Nebuchadnezzar had heard that this prophet had foretold his capture of the city, and had frequently used all his influence to induce Zedekiah to pay the tribute, and not rebel against him; and on this account would be inclined to show the prophet especial favor.

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JEREMIAH 39: 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushazban, Rabсарis, and Nergal Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon;

JEREMIAH 39: 14 they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the guard, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he lived among the people.

JEREMIAH 39: 15 Now the LORD's word came to Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the guard, saying,

JEREMIAH 39: 16 Go, and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring my words on this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished before you in that day.

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Verse 16

Go and speak to Ebed-melech - The king's servant, the Cushite.

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JEREMIAH 39: 17 But I will deliver you in that day, says the LORD; and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid.

JEREMIAH 39: 18 For I will surely save you, and you shall not fall by the sword, but your life shall be for a prey to you; because you have put your trust in me, says the LORD.

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Verse 18

I will surely deliver thee - Thou hast feared the Lord, and not the king, nor his princes, and thou hast taken the part of the prophet, and become his intercessor. Thou shalt not be slain. Thou hast put thy trust in me; thou shalt therefore be safe whithersoever thou goest. They that fear God need fear nothing besides.