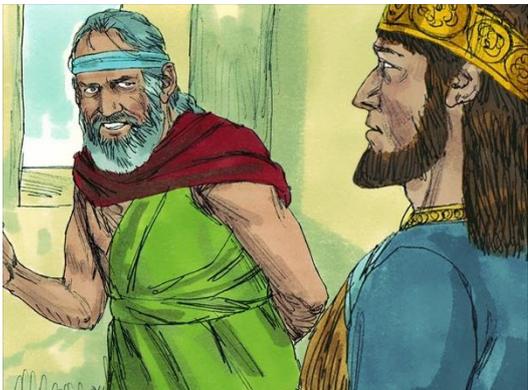
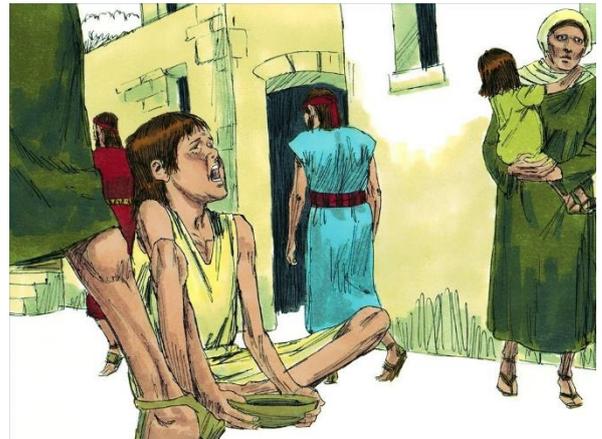


Description	Image
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah in a cistern</h2>	 <p>An illustration showing a man with a grey beard and a blue headband (Jeremiah) looking up from a dark, narrow opening in a stone wall. Above him, another man in a red and yellow tunic is visible, looking down from a higher level of the structure.</p>
<p>1. Just as Jeremiah and other prophets had been warning for many years, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Judah and the city of Jerusalem. He took ten thousand captives from Jerusalem, including all the princes and the best of the soldiers, craftsmen, and smiths. So only the poorest and least skilled people were left in the land.</p>	 <p>An illustration of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon riding a brown horse. He is wearing a blue and red striped tunic and a golden helmet. In the background, a large group of people is being led away from a city towards a distant landscape.</p>
<p>2. King Nebuchadnezzar appointed 21-year-old Zedekiah to be his puppet ruler of Judah with responsibility for collecting large tributes of crops and taxes to be paid to Babylonians each year.</p>	 <p>An illustration showing King Nebuchadnezzar, wearing a golden crown and a blue and yellow tunic, placing a golden crown on the head of a young man (Zedekiah) who is bowing before him. Zedekiah is wearing a blue tunic and a golden headband.</p>
<p>3. Jeremiah warned the king that unless the people of Judah repented, the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. But Zedekiah would not listen to God. Against the advice of Jeremiah, and others, in the ninth year of his reign, Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonians and made an alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt.</p>	 <p>An illustration showing Jeremiah, with a grey beard and a blue headband, wearing a green tunic and a red shawl, speaking to King Zedekiah. Zedekiah is wearing a golden crown and a blue tunic, looking towards Jeremiah.</p>

4. Nebuchadnezzar responded by invading Judah and began a siege of Jerusalem in December 589 BC.



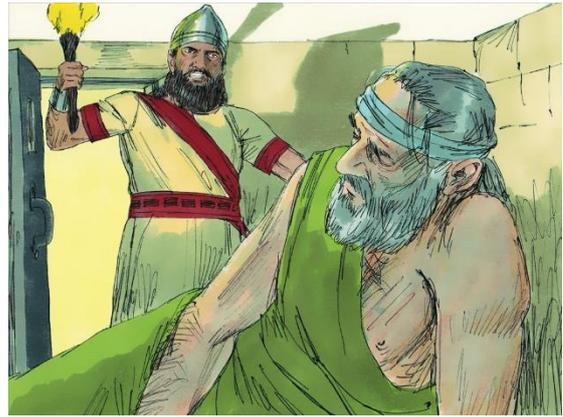
5. During this siege, which lasted about thirty months, those trapped in the city starved and suffered. The Egyptians did march to rescue them but were defeated by the Babylonians.



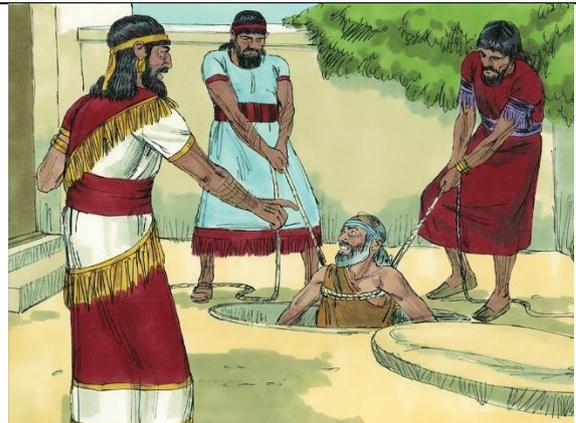
6. As the Babylonians surrounded the city, Jeremiah warned that those remaining in Jerusalem would die by sword, starvation, or disease, but anyone surrendering to the Babylonians would live. The city of Jerusalem would surely be captured by the king of Babylon.



7. As a result Jeremiah was put in prison. Four of the King's top officials who had always opposed the prophet, wanted him killed.



8. So they got the permission of King Zedekiah to deal with Jeremiah as they wanted. They took Jeremiah from his cell and lowered him by ropes into an empty cistern in the prison yard. There was no water in it, but there was a thick layer of mire at the bottom, and Jeremiah sank down into it.



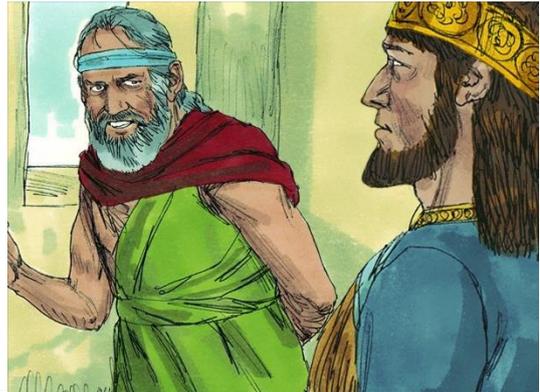
9. When Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, an important palace official, heard that Jeremiah was in the cistern, he rushed out to the Gate of Benjamin where the king Zedekiah was holding court. 'These men have done a very evil thing in putting Jeremiah into the cistern. He will die of hunger, for almost all the bread in the city is gone.'



10. Zedekiah relented and commanded Ebed-Melech to take thirty men and pull Jeremiah out before he died. Ebed-Melech called down to Jeremiah, 'Use these rags under your armpits to protect you from the ropes.' Jeremiah was pulled out and returned to the palace prison. God told Jeremiah that Ebed-Melech would be delivered when the city finally fell.



11. Some time later, King Zedekiah secretly sent to Jeremiah to see what the future held. Jeremiah declared, 'Almighty God says if you will surrender to Babylon, you and your family shall live, and the city will not be burned. 'If you refuse to surrender, this city shall be set afire by the Babylonian army and you will not escape.' Zedekiah listened but once again ignored God's advice. Jeremiah remained confined to the prison yard until the day Jerusalem was captured.



12. Finally the Babylonians knocked down sections of the city walls. That night, Zedekiah and his soldiers escaped from the city and slipped through the enemy lines in the darkness.



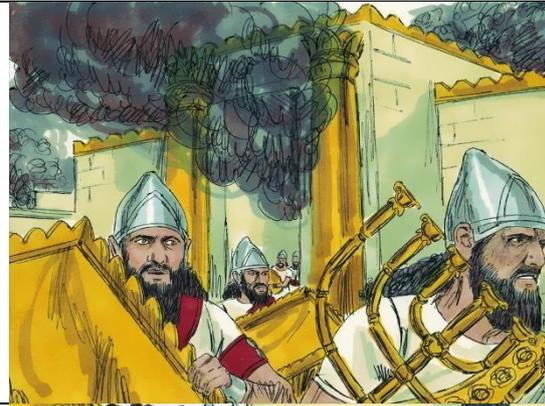
13. But they were discovered as they raced towards the Jordan valley. The Babylonians captured King Zedekiah near Jericho. All his soldiers deserted him and ran away.



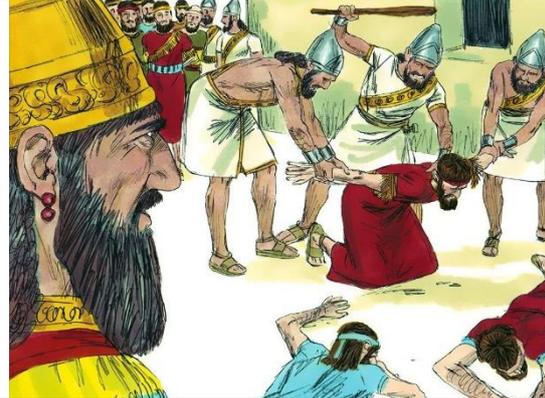
14. The cruel Babylonians made Zedekiah watch as they put his sons to death. Then they put out Zedekiah's eyes and led him off to Babylon in chains, a prisoner.



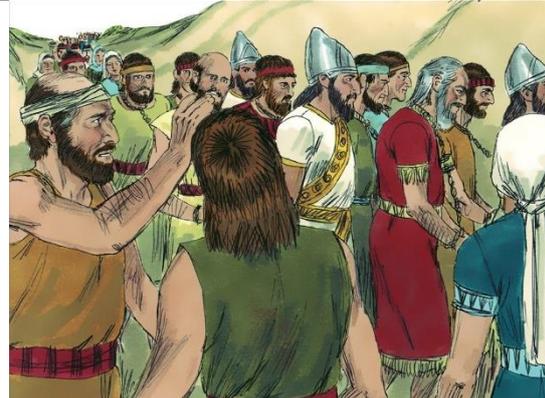
15. The Babylonians entered Jerusalem. They burned down the Temple of the Lord just as Jeremiah had warned. They looted the temple and then carried off all the objects made of silver, gold or bronze. They raided and burned the palace and other fine houses.



16. The Babylonian general took the most important priests and officials of the court and commanders of the army to Nebuchadnezzar's camp. There the Babylonians beat them to death.



17. The people of Jerusalem who were still alive were made captives and taken back to Babylon. Only the very poor were left behind to work in the fields and vineyards. Jeremiah however was released and given food and money by the Babylonians.



18. Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian escaped from the city just as God had said. It was his reward for trusting the Lord. Jerusalem and the temple lay in ruins. The people of Judah were taken into exile. The warnings God had given them through Jeremiah and other prophets had all come true. The Lord had punished His people for their sins.

