

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

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, Jeremiah 39:1-10; also of the release of Jeremiah, and the special orders of Nebuchadnezzar concerning him, Jeremiah 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, Jeremiah 39:15-18.

## Verse 1

In the ninth year of Zedekiah - in the tenth month - This month is called Tebeth in Esther 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.

## Verse 2

The eleventh year - in the fourth month - This month in the Hebrew calendar is called Tammuz, 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 Genesis 10:18.

## Verse 7

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

## Verse 9

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

## 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.

## 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.

**Verse 16**

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

**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.