

Kids' Chronicle

Jeremiah escapes death

BY JOE SARNICOLA

King Zedekiah sent his soldiers to bring Jeremiah before him in the courtroom of the palace. The king said to him, "Do you have a message from the Lord for me?"

Jeremiah answered with one word: "Yes."

The king leaned forward. "What is it? Tell me."

"You shall be captured by the army of Babylon," Jeremiah said. "Your own prophets have told you that this would not happen, but I assure you, it will."

The king instructed his guards to put Jeremiah in a prison cell for protective custody to keep him safe. Jeremiah was allowed to leave his cell in order to speak with the people of the town. Some of the leaders of the council heard Jeremiah speak what they felt were words of treason.

"Hear the words of the Lord," Jeremiah said. "If you stay within this city you will either die of starvation or disease, or you will be killed by the soldiers of Babylon. If you surrender to the army first, your lives will be spared."

The men went before the king and demanded that Jeremiah be put to death. The king liked Jeremiah, but he did not know how to speak in his defense. He turned Jeremiah over to them. They took Jeremiah and lowered him into a deep, muddy cistern that was used to catch rain water and they left him there to die.

A man named Ebed-melech, who held a position of authority in the king's court, heard what



had happened to Jeremiah. He appealed to the king.

"You cannot allow one of God's prophets to die like this," he pleaded. "Let me pull him out."

The king told Ebed-melech to hire three men to pull Jeremiah out of the cistern. The men lowered a rope to Jeremiah. He tied a loop and wrapped it around himself under his arms and the men pulled him up and out.

The king once again called Jeremiah before him. "Tell me all that you know."

"If I tell you what I know you will not listen," Jeremiah answered. "If I say nothing, you will have me put to death."

"I promise I will not have you put to death and I will not allow

any other men to hurt you," the king said.

"If you surrender to the Babylonians, the city will still be burned, but you and your family will be safe," Jeremiah said. "If you resist, the city will be destroyed and you will be captured by the army."

The king asked that Jeremiah not mention to anyone what they had talked about.

READ MORE ABOUT IT.

Q&A

1. What was Jeremiah's first prophecy to the king?
2. How did Jeremiah get out of the cistern?

Bible Accent

Jeremiah means "raised up by the Lord" in Hebrew. Jeremiah tried very hard to please God and to serve him faithfully. Some of his prophecies and sermons were written down in small books while he was still alive and others were written down and collected after his death.

God told Jeremiah that he had chosen him to be a prophet even before he had been born. When Jeremiah protested that he was too young and not a very good speaker, God told him that he should not be afraid of anything and he only needed to have faith and God would give him the words he needed for every situation. "I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord of hosts.

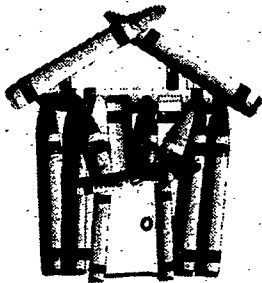
St. Clare

On her 18th birthday, St. Clare of Assisi, Italy, heard St. Francis preach at the Church of San Giorgio. St. Clare was inspired by St. Francis' message of a simple life devoted to God. After the sermon, she spoke with St. Francis and he suggested she strive to live as a servant of God. St. Clare followed St. Francis to the chapel where he was staying in a nearby village. He then brought her to a Benedictine convent, which she joined.

Since St. Clare took the rules of the order very strictly, she ate very little meat, slept on hard beds or the ground, and spoke no unnecessary words. St. Clare rose to become abbess of the order, a position that she held for more than 40 years. Clergymen from across Europe came to St. Clare for prayers, to which were attributed many acts of healing.

St. Clare died in the middle of the 13th century, and because she and her followers took a pledge of poverty, they were known as the Poor Clares. We honor her on Aug. 11.

Kids' Club



You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question: Both Jeremiah and St. Clare prayed often and God listened to them. What are some of the things you pray for?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic

Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is Aug. 20, 1998. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

No essays were submitted in response to last month's question: God blessed Abraham and Sara with a son. What does the Bible tell us about Isaac.

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Puzzle

Using the letters in this phrase from Jeremiah 1:8, how many books of the Bible can you name?

Answers on page 10.

"I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord.?"