

## Stepping Up

In the writing of Acts, Stephen, a servant of God, having been falsely charged with speaking “blasphemous words against Moses and against God,” was giving a defense before the council, and having outlined the history of the Jews from the time of Abraham to that of Solomon, turned his attention to his accusers, and said, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?” (Acts 7:1-53). For a moment let us turn our attention to just one of those prophets: Jeremiah.

Although Jeremiah is, to this day, considered to be a great prophet, it was not always so when he was alive. His writings were cut up and burned by the king, and his enemies “cast him into the dungeon...and there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire.” Jeremiah’s state of affairs was dire indeed.

But there was one Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, “was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon...Ebed-melech went forth out of the king’s house, and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die in the place where he is, because of the famine for there is not more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence rags and worn-out garments, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these rags and worn-out garments under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with the cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard” (Jeremiah 38:7-13).

Remember the words of the Lord, who said to John, “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ’s, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mark 9:41).