

Jeremiah Chapter 43

Verses 1-7

“When Jeremiah had made an end of speaking”:

The incorrigible, disobedient leaders accused him of deceit and forced Jeremiah and the remnant to go to Egypt, despite the fact that all his prophecies regarding Babylon had come to pass.

In so doing, they went out of God’s protection into His judgment, as all who are disobedient to His Word do.

“Johanan” and the other officers continue the sins that had brought the fall of Jerusalem, they disregard the prophet, charge him and Baruch with treason (38:4), and make Jeremiah a prisoner by taking him and Baruch to Egypt with them.

Jeremiah 43:1 "And it came to pass, [that] when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, [even] all these words,"

The princes and the people, the whole body of them, who had desired the prophet to seek the LORD for them.

And whom he called together to relate his answer, and declare his will (see Jer. 42:1).

They heard him out, and that was as much as they did.

For as soon as he had done, they rose up and contradicted him.

However, he faithfully declared:

"All the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, even all these words”:

Which are related in the preceding chapter, which were the words of the LORD, and so ought to have been regarded.

Rather, they were the words of their God, whom they professed.

Which he had sent his prophet to declare unto them.

And who had kept back nothing, but had made known the whole truth.

He had told the truth, and nothing but the truth, and all the truth.

In the last lesson, they had promised Jeremiah that whatever message he gave them from God, they would follow it completely.

Now God has spoken through Jeremiah a message that is not pleasing to them at all.

The words were not Jeremiah's, but God's.

Jeremiah 43:2 "Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshai, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:"

These captains belonged to the party who had all along resisted Jeremiah's counsels, and had led Zedekiah astray.

Now, however, that events had proved that the prophet's counsels had been wise and true, they cannot, for shame, find fault with him.

But they affirm that he is under the influence of Baruch, a traitor who has sold himself to the Chaldaeans, and seeks only the hurt of the people.

We see since they did not get the answer they wanted, they are saying God did not send the message.

Why did they come to Jeremiah in the first place if they did not believe him to be a truthful prophet?

They proclaimed Jeremiah a false prophet when they said he spoke falsely.

It seemed there was a handful of proud men speaking for all of them.

They should have been aware that Jeremiah's unpopular prophecies about Judah and Jerusalem had come true.

They have no reason to doubt him now except they do not like the message he gave them.

The leaders had already made up their minds to go to Egypt before Jeremiah prayed.

They did not accept his warning because it went against their own desires.

Verses 3 and 6

“Baruch”:

The faithful recorder of chapter 36 was still with Jeremiah, kept safe as God promised him at least 20 years earlier (45:5; compare 605 B.C. in verse 1).

Jeremiah 43:3 "But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon."

First, they charge the prophet with a lie, and deny his mission from the LORD.

And now to lessen the prophet's crime they charged him with, they lay the blame on Baruch, as if he, out of ill will to them, had instigated the prophet to deliver such a message.

Which is not at all likely, that he could be prevailed upon by a younger person, and his secretary, to take such a step.

Nor can it be thought that Baruch should have any interest to serve by it.

And, besides, both he and the prophet were two good men.

The one to instigate, and the other to be instigated, to declare a falsehood in the name of the LORD.

"For to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon":

Either that he or the prophet might deliver them into the hands of the Chaldeans, to be put to death by them, or be carried captive.

Which is not at all probable, it being inconsistent with that piety and humanity which were conspicuous in them both.

And with their conduct, who chose rather to abide in their own land, with this small and despicable handful of people, than to go and live in the court of Babylon.

Where good care would have been taken of them.

Their fear of the Chaldeans was greater than their fear of God.

Baruch had been a close friend of Jeremiah's.

He had acted as secretary to Jeremiah when he wrote the prophecies down.

There are two apocryphal books which have been attributed to the pen of Baruch.

Just why Baruch was thought to be for the Chaldeans is uncertain.

Even if he was, Jeremiah would not be influenced because he is a prophet of God.

Jeremiah's instructions do not come from man, but God.

I believe this was just another excuse because they wanted to go to Egypt.

Jeremiah 43:4 "So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah."

The generality of them, at least, all agreed together, were of the same mind, and in the same sentiment.

"Obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah":

It was the command of the LORD they should dwell there, and not go into Egypt.

But they would not believe this was the voice of the LORD, only a scheme concocted between the prophet and Baruch.

Or which the former was instigated to deliver as the word of the LORD by the latter, and therefore would not give heed unto it.

Though the truth of the matter was, it was contrary to their inclination and resolution.

Therefore, though they had reason to believe it was the will of God they should abide in their own land.

Yet they were determined they would not, but go into Egypt, as they did.

They did exactly what they had sworn they would not do.

They went against God's wishes.

They would not live in Judah as the LORD had commanded them to.

Jeremiah 43:5 "But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;"

Who were united in their resolution to go into Egypt, contrary to the declared will of God.

"Took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah":

Both such who were left in the land, when the rest were carried captive into Babylon.

More particularly mentioned in (Jer. 43:6).

And those, who upon the invasion of the land, and siege of Jerusalem, had fled to other countries, but now were returned from thence, in order to settle in it.

Having heard that a governor from among the Jews was appointed over it; as from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and other countries (see Jer. 40:11).

These, some of their own accord, others through persuasion, and others by force, went along with, or were taken and carried by the above captains into Egypt.

Johanan was their leader and this time is leading them to destruction.

It is so dangerous to listen to anyone who discredits the Word of God.

God's Word is absolute Truth.

We must know enough of God's Word so we cannot be fooled into following a false prophet.

Jeremiah 43:6 "[Even] men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah."

This, according to the supplement of our version, explains who they were that were taken into Egypt.

Persons of every sex, age, and rank.

Though rather these words design and describe persons distinct from the former that came out of other countries (see Jer. 41:10).

"And every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan":

Even the poor of the land to till it.

And to whom he gave fields and vineyards, and committed them to the care and government of Gedaliah, when the rest were carried captive to Babylon.

And now these, in some way, may be said to be carried captive by their own brethren into Egypt.

"And Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah":

Whom they forced with them, partly to punish them, and partly to give countenance to their conduct.

But not without the will of God, who so ordered it in his providence.

That they might have the prophet with them, to reprove them for their sins, and warn them of their danger and ruin, and so leave them inexcusable.

They were just like sheep headed for the slaughter.

They were all following Johanan.

All of those who had been spared from Ishmael, were now following Johanan to their deaths.

God will not force them to believe Him.

He will let them of their own free will, choose the world over Him.

Jeremiah 43:7 "So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they [even] to Tahpanhes."

They set out from the habitation of Chimham, where they were (Jer. 41:17).

And proceeded on their journey, till they entered the land of Egypt.

"For they obeyed not the voice of the LORD":

To continue in Judea, and not to go into Egypt.

And though the prophet of the LORD, who was with them, might, as they went along, advise them to go back, they regarded him not, but still went on.

"Thus came they even to Tahpanhes": The same with Hanes (Isa. 30:4); and might be so called, as here, from a queen of Egypt of this name (1 Kings 11:19). The Septuagint version, and others after that, call it Taphnas.

It was a seat of the king of Egypt, as it appears from (Jer. 43:9); and at no less a place would these proud men stop or take up with, but where the king's palace was.

They all did exactly what the LORD told them not to do.

They went into Egypt.

Tahpanhes was a city at the Egyptian frontier.

They would not go further into Egypt until the Pharaoh sends a welcoming committee.

Verses 8-13

Jeremiah placed large stones near “the entry of Pharaoh’s house”, representing the foundation of the “throne” that “Nebuchadnezzar” would establish when he invaded Egypt.

The Jewish refugees could not avoid God’s judgment simply by changing their geographical location, because the LORD’s sovereignty extends everywhere.

Jeremiah 43:8 "Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,"

Where he was with the rest the captains as he was carried there with them.

And, as soon as they arrived, the word of the LORD came unto him, declaring the destruction of this place, and of the whole land.

Notice that Jeremiah went with them to keep bringing messages to them from God.

They probably forced Jeremiah to go along, but really it was the will of God for Jeremiah to go and prophesy.

Verses 9-13

“Take great stones”:

Stones, placed in the mortar of the brick pavement in the courtyard entrance of the Pharaoh’s house, signaled the place where the conquering king of Babylon would bring devastation on Egypt and establish his throne.

This was fulfilled in an invasion (ca. 568/567 B.C.).

Jeremiah 43:9 "Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which [is] at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah;"

“Tahpanhes”, a frontier town in the eastern delta area, was the location of a state building or governor’s residence used by the Pharaoh on his visits.

A paved area in front of the entrance to the official building, discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie, may have been the scene of the activities described here.

The hiding of the stones perhaps, has something to do with the hidden time of God's judgement against them.

All of Judah sees Jeremiah hide the stones.

These stones will be a witness against these disobedient children of God.

The stones will be there until all of the prophecies against this people are fulfilled.

Verses 10-11

This prophecy was once cited by critics as an example of unfulfilled prophecies in the Bible.

However, a text found in the British Museum indicates that Nebuchadnezzar did actually invade Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Amasis of Egypt's Twenty-sixth Dynasty (568-525 B.C.).

Jeremiah 43:10 "And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them."

As all men are by creation, and as he was in a very eminent sense.

Being an instrument in his hand of executing his designs, both on the Jews and other nations.

Him he would send for, and take to perform his counsel.

Secretly work upon and dispose his mind to such an undertaking, and lay a train of providences, and, by a concourse of them, bringing him to Egypt to do his will.

"And will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid":

Which he had ordered the prophet to hide, and which he did by him.

Signifying, that the king at Babylon should come with his army against this city, and should take it, and set up his throne, and keep his court here.

"And he shall spread his royal pavilion over them":

His tent; he shall place here his beautiful one, as the word signifies.

This should be set up where these stones were laid, as if they were designed for the foundation of it, though they were only a symbol of it.

And would be a token to the Jews, when accomplished.

Of the certainty of the divine foreknowledge, and of prophecy, with respect to future events.

Even those the most minute and unforeseeable.

The very people they had been afraid of, will now follow them into Egypt where they had gone to find safety.

There is no safety in the world.

The only true security is in God.

Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt occurs for more than one reason.

One reason of course, is to fulfill this prophecy.

The other is because Egypt is an idolatrous nation.

Judgement begins at the house of God, as it did in Judah, but it extends to all who are disobedient to God.

Egypt's worship of false gods was a constant hurt to God.

Jeremiah 43:11 "And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, [and deliver] such [as are] for death to death; and such [as are] for captivity to captivity; and such [as are] for the sword to the sword."

Here is a reading from "Cetib", or textual writings, "when it cometh, it shall smite".

Which Kimchi rightly interprets of the camp or army of Nebuchadnezzar.

And the "Keri", or marginal reading is, "when he cometh, he shall smite".

That is, the king of Babylon.

Both are to be received: when Nebuchadnezzar should come with his army to Tahpanhes, he would not only take that, but go through the land of Egypt, and subdue and destroy the inhabitants of it, all that dwelt in it.

Sojourners as well as natives.

And so, the Jews that were come hither to dwell, against the express command of God, to whom this prophecy was delivered, and to whom it has a particular respect.

"And deliver such as are for death to death":

Who are appointed to death, either by pestilence or famine.

That is, he shall oblige them to flee to, or block them up in places where they shall perish by one or other of those.

"And such as are for captivity to captivity":

Such as are designed to be carried captive, these shall be taken by him, and carried captive into Babylon, and the provinces of it.

"And such as are for the sword to the sword":

Who are destined to fall by the sword, these should be slain by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, and his soldiers.

So that, what by one way or another, a general destruction should be made.

This is the very same punishment God had Nebuchadnezzar to bring on Judah and Jerusalem.

God is no respecter of persons.

For the same sin, the punishment is the same.

Jeremiah 43:12 "And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives; and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace."

The change of person is full of significance.

Jehovah Himself kindles the fire which is to destroy the temples of the gods of Egypt, and the Chaldean king is but His instrument.

"As a shepherd putteth on his garment":

A very simple and easy task describes how quickly and easily Nebuchadnezzar will conquer Egypt.

This kindling of fire in the houses of the false gods is to do away with them.

This is very similar to what happens to the earth when the wrath of God is poured out on it.

It is no problem for a shepherd to wrap himself in his garment.

It will be no problem for Nebuchadnezzar to take Egypt.

Jeremiah 43:13 "He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh, that [is] in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire."

"Images of Beth-shemesh":

Hebrew "house of the sun".

This refers to a temple for the worship of the sun.

Located north of Memphis, east of the Nile, these images were said to be 60-100 feet high.

God is a jealous God.

He will have Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the false gods of Egypt and burn them up.

The Babylonians had their own false gods.

They did not recognize Egypt's false gods, so they destroy them.

At a later time, God will destroy Babylon's false gods too.

Jeremiah Chapter 43 Questions

1. What had the people promised in the last lesson, to get Jeremiah to pray for them?
2. Who were two of the proud men specifically mentioned?
3. What did they accuse Jeremiah of doing?
4. Who were the proud men speaking for?
5. When did the leaders make up their minds to go to Egypt?
6. Why did they not accept the warning that Jeremiah gave them from God?
7. Who did they accuse of influencing Jeremiah?
8. Their fear of the _____ was greater than their fear of _____.
9. Who was Baruch?
10. What books are attributed to the pen of Baruch?
11. Who was leading them to destruction?
12. Johanan had spared their lives from whom?
13. Where, in Egypt, did they stop?
14. Why did they not go further into Egypt?
15. Why did Jeremiah go with them?

16. What did the hiding of the stones mean?
17. Where was Jeremiah to hide them?
18. Who will the stones be a witness against?
19. Who will bring the actual punishment on these disobedient children?
20. Where does judgement begin?
21. What is their punishment to be?
22. Why does Babylon destroy Egypt's false gods?
23. God is a _____ God.