

Journey through Jeremiah Part 45, Warning of Egypt

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Nov. 08, 2017

† Jeremiah 42:1-22

We pick up tonight in chapter 42 with a continuation of the saga of the remnant that was left behind in the Land of Judah after the siege of Nebuchadnezzar. There was a remnant of poor folks left that the Chaldeans didn't want. Among those was the Prophet Jeremiah.

As they were living in Judah under the rule of a fellow Jew named Gedaliah, that Nebuchadnezzar had installed as Governor, a man named Ishmael along with 10-mercenaries murdered Gedaliah and took the remnant as prisoners with intentions of driving them to Ammon to be sold as slaves. However, his plan was foiled when another fellow Jew named Johanan who was a soldier, found out about it and he, along with a group of soldiers, chased Ishmael down and saved the remnant. Ishmael along with 8 of his mercenaries escaped and fled to the Ammonites.

Then out of fear that Nebuchadnezzar would be angry because of the murder of Gedaliah, Johanan and the remnant of people journey to a place called, Chimham, which is an area just outside of Bethlehem in route to Egypt where they plan to escape to.

And, so, our story picks up from there tonight:

1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, 2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, *even* for all this remnant; (for we are left *but* a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) 3 That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

If this was the only thing we read, we would be congratulating them for finally seeking God's will for their lives. It certainly appears that they are ready to listen to the Word of God and they ask Jeremiah to pray and ask the LORD what he wants them to do so that they can do it. Oh, if that were only the case...

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, *that* whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

Jeremiah agrees to seek God's council for them and says he will pray and ask and then he will tell them exactly what God says and not hold anything back from them. I assume he knows that it will not be what they want to hear but he has sworn to tell them anyway.

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. 6 Whether *it* be good, or whether *it* be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

I really wish that they had meant what they said. They seem so sincere, and perhaps they really thought they would obey God. I think we do the same thing don't we? We sin and we pray and we promise the LORD we will never commit that sin again and at

the time we really mean it. But our repentance was not real because we turn back to that sin and commit it again. Our intentions were good but our flesh overrode our intentions.

7 And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

It takes 10 days before the LORD answers Jeremiah. Sometimes the LORD supplies answers to his prophets immediately, but other times there is a delay. There may be some significance in the number of days being 10. The number 10 in Bible numerology is usually associated with revelation and divine law. It is also considered the number of completeness.

- There were 10-commandments
- There were 10-plagues in Egypt
- There were 10-virgins
- There were 10-lepers
- There were 10-talents

Perhaps the LORD waited 10-days to give the people time to settle down and get over the fears. Or maybe he was wanting to prove to them that He was the One in charge and they needed to wait upon Him for answers.

8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9 And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; 10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.

Let's make something abundantly clear here. When it says that the LORD "repent me of the evil that I have done for you," it does not mean that he is sorry for what he has done and that he is repenting of his actions in the manner of repentance that you and I must do when we repent of sins. Here the word "repent" simply means that he will change the course that he had set for them. You might say it like this: "I will change my conduct toward you."

So, the LORD in his abundant grace and mercy has given them yet another chance to do the right thing.

11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

The LORD promises them that if they will remain in the land that he will cause Nebuchadnezzar to have mercy upon them and he will allow them to remain living in their own land. Sounds like a win-win situation to me! All it is going to take is for the people to have faith in the LORD and be obedient.

13 But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, 14 Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: 15 And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

16 Then it shall come to pass, *that* the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

17 So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

So, there you have it. Once again, they have free-will. They can choose which they would rather do. The same as we have free-will to choose today. We have the choice to repent and believe the Gospel to be saved and go to Heaven, or we have the choice to refuse to repent and reject the Gospel and die and go to hell. Despite what the Calvinists may say, God does not force someone to be saved. He gives an invitation, "whosever will."

The LORD informs them that if they choose to go into Egypt anyway that all of the bad things that they were so afraid of will follow them into Egypt. There will be famine, starvation, pestilence, and evil upon them.

18 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

Here we see the LORD's anger concerning disobedience. If they disobey him he will pour out his full fury upon them. He says that they will be "an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more." Those are some harsh words. You would think that would have been enough to convince them that they really, really, really, don't want to go to Egypt!

19 The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day. 20 For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do *it*.

This is Jeremiah now speaking to the people. He can't be any clearer. He flat out tells them "Go ye not into Egypt." And then he reminds them that they were the ones that asked him to go to the LORD on their behalf and ask him what they should do and that they would do whatever it was the LORD said.

21 And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath sent me unto you. 22 Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn.

It is obvious that even during the midst of Jeremiah delivering the message from the LORD that the people have already determined that they will not obey God but will instead do what they want to do and go to Egypt.

Jeremiah assures them that because of this they will die by sword, famine, and pestilence.

Jeremiah 43:1-13

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,

2 Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, 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: 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.

Now they accuse Jeremiah of lying to them. They have now crossed over the line. My friend, when you reject the truth of God's Word you are walking on a dark and treacherous path. These men are so prideful and arrogant that they refuse to believe the Word of God. They accuse Jeremiah of being under the influence of Baruch, the Scribe. Baruch was the one we studied about in Chapter 36, who Jeremiah had take the Scroll of the Words of God and read them before the people and the King.

That's the way the lost are today. I don't know if you are aware of this or not but there are people out there that absolutely hate this Church. They hate the messages I preach, and they hate us for our beliefs. They would just as soon kill us as look at us. They are so steeped in their sins that the Truth of God's Word offends them but instead of repenting they dig in deeper.

The truth is, we are in a war. Paul explained it like this: **Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

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.

What a sad statement. How dreadful for your name to go down in history as being one who "obeyed not the voice of the LORD."

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; 6 *Even* men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan 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.

So, they all pack up in disobedience and journey to Egypt. They also force Jeremiah and Baruch to also go with them. This was most likely for punishment but also it would give them legitimacy in the eyes of the Egyptians. If they think the man of God is coming along with them then it must be the right thing for them to be doing.

7 So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes.

The first place they stop is Tahpanhes. This is where Pharaoh's palace was at the time. They would probably have to stop here before going anywhere else in order to get permission to enter into the Land of Egypt.

8 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, 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; 10 And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar 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.

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.*

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.

13 He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that *is* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

God instructs Jeremiah to bury these bricks in front of the men of Judah as a vivid reminder to them that they disobeyed God and now he is marking the place where Nebuchadnezzar would soon be setting up his own headquarters, right smack dab where Pharaoh's palace is.

Then he tells of destruction in Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans would do to Egypt what they did to Jerusalem.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible