

**Jer. 41:1** ¶ Now it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

**Jer. 41:2** Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

**Jer. 41:3** Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war.

This chapter continues in a chronological flow from the previous one. Just a few months later, Ishmael and ten other recognized leaders among the men presented themselves before Gedaliah. As they were eating, Ishmael and the ten men with him attacked Gedaliah and killed him. Point is made that they were killing the man that Nebuchadnezzar had appointed to serve as governor in Judah. They also killed all the other Jews in attendance as well as the Babylonian soldiers that had been stationed there.

**Jer. 41:4** And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*,

**Jer. 41:5** That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD.

**Jer. 41:6** And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

**Jer. 41:7** And it was *so*, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him.

**Jer. 41:8** But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

Gedaliah's death remained unknown on the next day. On that day 80 men were headed from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria to the site of the "house of the LORD." Though the temple was destroyed, the men evidently still considered it to be a holy location. There are those in Israel today who still believe that Jewish people should not set foot upon the actual location of the Temple and are careful not to go beyond an established perimeter.

The appearance of the men declared them to be in mourning, and they were carrying offerings and incense; one would assume they were mourning the destruction of the temple as well as the loss of their people and their sovereignty as a nation. Ishmael goes out to meet them appearing to be in sympathy with them and invites them to come before the governor. They comply; but once they enter the city Ishmael and his co-conspirators killed them and threw them in a pit.

It seems that 10 of the 80 begged for their lives and offered to give them their treasures of the field—wheat, barley, oil and honey. For some reason Ishmael spared their lives. He could just as easily have killed them and taken their treasures anyway. Some commentators are of the opinion that these men had hidden these treasures in the field in light of precarious times and that was the reason he spared them.

**Jer. 41:9** Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, *was* it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were slain*.

**Jer. 41:10** Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that *were* in Mizpah, *even* the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

We are now told that the cistern Ishmael used for disposing of the dead bodies was one that King Asa had made in response to a siege against Judah by Baasha, the King of the Northern Kingdom.

Then we are told that Ishmael took the rest of the people in Mizpah, including the king's daughters, as captives to Ammon. We know that Jeremiah had chosen to stay with Gedaliah, so it would seem that he would have been one of these captives.

**Jer. 41:11** ¶ But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,

**Jer. 41:12** Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that *are* in Gibeon.

When Johanan and his followers heard what Ishmael had done, they headed out to overtake him and did so at the great pool of Gibeon—about a mile outside of Mizpah.

**Jer. 41:13** Now it came to pass, *that* when all the people which *were* with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, then they were glad.

**Jer. 41:14** So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.

**Jer. 41:15** But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

When Johanan and his men showed up, the captives eagerly turned to follow him. It would seem that Johanan's forces must have outnumbered those following Ishmael. In the process, Ishmael and eight other men escaped and went to the Ammonites.

**Jer. 41:16** Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after *that* he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, *even* mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:  
**Jer. 41:17** And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,  
**Jer. 41:18** Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

Johanan proceeded to lead the group following him, including the captives from Mizpah, to Egypt by way of Chimham near Bethlehem. He disregarded Gedaliah's advice to submit to the Babylonians. They were evidently afraid that they would be held accountable for his death. Again, they were disregarding God's promise that those who submitted to the Babylonians would not be killed.

A verse in Proverbs is pertinent to this section of scripture.

*Proverbs 28:1 "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."*