

Jer. 42:1 ¶ 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,

Jer. 42:2 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:)

Jer. 42:3 That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

This chapter seems to continue in chronological flow from the last, so I would assume they are still at Chimham. It becomes clear at this point that Jeremiah is part of the group. All the recognized leaders of the people in the group came to Jeremiah and asked him to seek God's guidance for what they should do next. They appear to be humble in light of making this request and in identifying themselves as a small remnant.

Of note is the fact that they recognize Jeremiah as God's mouthpiece—and wouldn't they seem a bit stupid not to in light of recent events. It's also important to note that they wanted Jeremiah to ask "his" God on their behalf; they did not refer to "their" God.

Jer. 42:4 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 direction on their behalf. He also reminds them that it is "their" God—whether they choose to accept Him as such or not. When the answer comes, he will share everything he is told with them; he will not withhold one iota of the answer.

Jer. 42:5 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.

Jer. 42:6 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.*

Maintaining a position of humility, they call YHWH as their witness that they will be obedient to what he says—even if they don't like it. In their hearts they know that obedience equals blessing. They also acknowledge God as "their" God.

Jer. 42:7 ¶ And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

Jer. 42:8 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,

Jer. 42:9 And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;

Jer. 42:10 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.

Jer. 42:11 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.

Jer. 42:12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

Ten days later the LORD gives Jeremiah an answer. Jeremiah calls a meeting of the whole group—from the least to the greatest. He tells them that the God of Israel has given them an answer. If they will stay in Judah, He will bless them and protect them. They need not fear the king of Babylon because He will deliver them out of his hand. He will show them mercy and cause Nebuchadnezzar to show them mercy and allow them to return to their homes.

Jer. 42:13 But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,

Jer. 42:14 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:

Jer. 42:15 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;

Jer. 42:16 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.

Jer. 42:17 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.

If, however, they choose to go to Egypt in disobedience to the LORD according to their own reasoning of what seems to be the best thing to do, the LORD will judge them. They fear retribution from Babylon at the point of the sword; they will experience destruction at the point of the sword in Egypt. They fear going hungry because of the lack of abundant harvest in Judah; they will experience the hunger of famine in Egypt. Those who are determined to take refuge in Egypt will die in Egypt. Point is also made that these things will happen to them as an act of judgment from Almighty God.

Jer. 42:18 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.

This section seems to be Jeremiah's final words of warning in light of their decision to rebel against God once again. He declares that as the inhabitants of Jerusalem experienced God's declared judgment against them, they will just as surely experience God's fury poured out in judgment on them once they enter Egypt. The wording seems to indicate that once they enter Egypt they have crossed the point of no return. At that point they become (from the Hebrew):

- An execration - cursed
- An astonishment - ruined
- A curse - contemptible
- A reproach – disgraced and shameful

Emphasis is made that they will never be allowed to return to Judah.

Jer. 42:19 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.

Jer. 42:20 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*.

Jer. 42:21 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.

Jer. 42:22 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.

Jeremiah also emphasizes that they have been fully warned of the consequences of going into Egypt. He then accuses them of misrepresenting the sincerity of their desire to follow God's direction when they came to him asking for prayer. Though they promised to be obedient, they had chosen to totally disregard God's instruction. Because of their disobedience they would die in Egypt. Jeremiah emphasizes that they are acting according to their own desires and not according to God's desire for them.

This is truly an amazing bit of scripture. God had shown Himself true and faithful to His word in every possible way throughout Israel's history. Even in light of such recent history they still chose to disobey Him. They chose disobedience and destruction instead of obedience and blessing.

Sometimes I can't help but think, "How stupid can you get?" But then I have to ask myself a very sobering question—What does my life reveal when it comes to pursuing my desires vs. God's desires?