

Jer. 44:1 ¶ The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,

Jer. 44:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein,

Jer. 44:3 Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods, whom they knew not, *neither* they, *ye*, nor your fathers.

This chapter begins with Jeremiah receiving a word from the LORD to deliver to the Jews living in Egypt. The wording indicates that they have been there a while at least. As is often the case, people misunderstand the circumstances in relation to God's prophecies as a result of timing. Babylon had not yet come to conquer Egypt, and the people had once again joined the culture around them in the worship of idols. Solomon addressed this thought process in his writings.

Ecclesiastes 8:11–13 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.”

So Jeremiah reminds them of the judgment that had so recently befallen Judah and Jerusalem at the hand of God. The people are reminded that this judgment from God was a direct result of their wickedness in turning to the worship of idols.

Jer. 44:4 Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.

Jer. 44:5 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.

Jer. 44:6 Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as at this day.

The LORD also reminds the people that He had been faithful to send them His prophets to warn them and plead with them to repent of their sin and turn back to Him in obedience. The people, however, chose to ignore the prophets and continue in idolatry. This infuriated the LORD and resulted in the destruction and devastation so evident in Jerusalem and Judah at that time.

Jer. 44:7 Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;

Jer. 44:8 In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to

dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

Jer. 44:9 Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jer. 44:10 They are not humbled *even* unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers.

Considering what they had experienced, the LORD questions how they could once again involve themselves in the worship of idols. Why do they insist on maintaining a lifestyle that causes Him to put them in a position of contempt and disgrace before the nations? Is it possible that they had already put such recent judgment of their nation and their people out of their mind?

You would think that they would have learned from the wisdom of Solomon.

Proverbs 8:36 "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

Jer. 44:11 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.

Jer. 44:12 And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt; they shall *even* be consumed by the sword *and* by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, *and* an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.

Jer. 44:13 For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:

Jer. 44:14 So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

Because of their continued disobedience, the LORD has determined to destroy all the Jews that had chosen to take refuge in Egypt in direct disobedience to Him. This judgment will add to the contempt and disgrace with which they are regarded among the nations. Their judgment will be commensurate with the judgment experienced by the people in Judah and Jerusalem through the actions of the Babylonians.

The wording of verse 14 makes me think that the few who are allowed to escape judgment would include only people who had not deliberately chosen to disobey God.

Jer. 44:15 ¶ Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all

the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

Jer. 44:16 *As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.*

Jer. 44:17 *But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.*

Jer. 44:18 *But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.*

Jer. 44:19 *And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?*

As is often the case with those who boldly choose their own way in rejection of God's way, they brazenly and publicly declared to Jeremiah that they were not interested in what God had to say. They intended to continue in their worship of idols. They even dared to say that they were better off worshipping idols than they were when worshipping God.

Again the words of Solomon apply.

Proverbs 1:32 "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Side note: Isn't it interesting that Pope Benedict refers to Mary as the Queen of heaven and earth: "Mary is taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, and with God and in God she is Queen of heaven and earth...." According to the research of the authors of "Queen of All," in one of her appearances she boldly and heretically proclaimed: "I alone am able still to save you from the calamities which approach. Those who place their confidence in me will be saved."
(www.eternal-productions.org/catholicism.html)

Jer. 44:20 ¶ *Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him *that* answer, saying,*

Jer. 44:21 *The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it *not* into his mind?*

Jer. 44:22 *So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, *and* because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.*

Jer. 44:23 *Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.*

I think my paraphrase of this section would be: Your thinking is warped. Don't you understand that Jerusalem and Judah were destroyed as a result of rejecting God and worshipping idols. Though in His mercy He allowed you time to repent, that delay in judgment was not due to the intervention of your false gods. Judgment came at the time determined appropriate by God, and it was a direct result of your idol worship and all the evil you practiced in association with those practices.

Burton Coffman referenced a very insightful quote from Hegel in his Philosophy of History: "What experience and history teach is this: people and governments never have learned anything from human history, or acted upon the principles deduced from it."

Jer. 44:24 Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt:

Jer. 44:25 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.

Jer. 44:26 Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth.

Jer. 44:27 Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

I think it is important to note that throughout this chapter Jeremiah is referencing the influence of the women on their husbands and families in encouraging their participation in idol worship.

Jeremiah's message at this point reveals that God understands that His people are determined to cling to their idols. Because of that, He is going to ensure that none of them survive to invoke His name for any purpose. He is determined to act against them in judgment and destroy them.

Isn't it sad that we are so determined to cling to our idols with such determined effort, but reject God with so little consideration. Why? Because serving idols fulfills the desires of the flesh; serving God requires that we deny the flesh. Serving idols allows us to stay on the throne; serving God requires that we place Him on the throne.

Jer. 44:28 Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.

Jer. 44:29 And this *shall be* a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:

Jer. 44:30 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.

Jeremiah reveals that a small remnant will escape to return to Judah to testify to God's faithfulness to His word. Again, I believe the wording indicates that this remnant will consist of those who were there against their will. The LORD declares that the Pharaoh would fall victim to his enemies just as surely as did King Zedekiah to Nebuchadnezzar.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is described in an excerpt from Scribner's Bible Commentary: "In the writings of Herodotus, Pharaoh-Hophra is called Apries; he was defeated by the people of Cyrene, and a mutiny followed, after which Amasis became Pharaoh; after treating Hophra kindly for some years, Amasis finally gave him over to his enemies, by whom he was strangled. Thus, the words of Jeremiah here were literally fulfilled."