

The Flight to Egypt (c. November–December 587 BC)

Jeremiah 42:1–43:7

The People Ask Jeremiah to Speak to God on Their Behalf

42:1 Then all the commanders of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people both small and great approached

2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, “Please let our petition come before you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, *that is* for all this remnant; because we are left *but* a few out of many, as your own eyes *now* see us,

3 that the LORD your God may tell us the way in which we should walk and the thing that we should do.”

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard *you*. Behold, I am going to pray to the LORD your God in accordance with your words; and I will tell you the whole message which the LORD will answer you. I will not keep back a word from you.”

The People Promise to Obey God

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with the whole message with which the LORD your God will send you to us.

6 “Whether *it* is pleasant or unpleasant, we will listen to the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, so that it may go well with us when we listen to the voice of the LORD our God.”

Jeremiah Tells the People What God Said

7 Now at the end of ten days the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.

8 Then he called for Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him, and for all the people both small and great,

9 and said to them, “Thus says the LORD the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him:

10 ‘If you will indeed stay in this land, then I will build you up and not tear you down, and I will plant you and not uproot you; for I will relent concerning the calamity that I have inflicted on you.

11 ‘Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you are *now* fearing; do not be afraid of him,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I am with you to save you and deliver you from his hand.

12 ‘I will also show you compassion, so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your own soil.

13 ‘But if you are going to say, “We will not stay in this land,” so as not to listen to the voice of the LORD your God,

14 saying, “No, but we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the sound of a trumpet or hunger for bread, and we will stay there”;

15 then in that case listen to the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “If you really set your mind to enter Egypt and go in to reside there,

16 then the sword, which you are afraid of, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are anxious, will follow closely after you there *in* Egypt, and you will die there.

17 “So all the men who set their mind to go to Egypt to reside there will die by the sword, by famine and by pestilence; and they will have no survivors or refugees from the calamity that I am going to bring on them.””

18 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “As My anger and wrath have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so My wrath will be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation and a reproach; and you will see this place no more.”

19 The LORD has spoken to you, O remnant of Judah, “Do not go into Egypt!” You should clearly understand that today I have testified against you.

20 For you have *only* deceived yourselves; for it is you who sent me to the LORD your God, saying, “Pray for us to the LORD our God; and whatever the LORD our God says, tell us so, and we will do it.”

21 So I have told you today, but you have not obeyed the LORD your God, even in whatever He has sent me to *tell* you.

22 Therefore you should now clearly understand that you will die by the sword, by famine and by pestilence, in the place where you wish to go to reside.

The People Refuse to Believe Jeremiah

43:1 But as soon as Jeremiah, whom the LORD their God had sent, had finished telling all the people all the words of the LORD their God—that is, all these words—

2 Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘You are not to enter Egypt to reside there’;

3 but Baruch the son of Neriah is inciting you against us to give us over into the hand of the Chaldeans, so they will put us to death or exile us to Babylon.”

The People Travel to Egypt and Take Jeremiah With Them

4 So Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces, and all the people, did not obey the voice of the LORD to stay in the land of Judah.

5 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces took the entire remnant of Judah who had returned from all the nations to which they had been driven away, in order to reside in the land of Judah—

6 the men, the women, the children, the king’s daughters and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, together with Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah—

7 and they entered the land of Egypt (for they did not obey the voice of the LORD) and went in as far as Tahpanhes.

Jeremiah Confronts the Jews in Egypt for Their Idolatry (c. 587/586 BC)

Jeremiah 43:8–44:30

Jeremiah’s Prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar’s Triumph over Egypt

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

9 “Take *some* large stones in your hands and hide them in the mortar in the brick *terrace* which is at the entrance of Pharaoh’s palace in Tahpanhes, in the sight of some *of the Jews*;

10 and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Behold, I am going to send and get Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and I am going to set his throne *right* over these stones that I have hidden; and he will spread his canopy over them.

11 He will also come and strike the land of Egypt; those who are *meant* for death *will be given over* to death, and those for captivity to captivity, and those for the sword to the sword.

12 And I shall set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt, and he will burn them and take them captive. So he will wrap himself with the land of Egypt as a shepherd wraps himself with his garment, and he will depart from there safely.

13 He will also shatter the obelisks of Heliopolis, which is in the land of Egypt; and the temples of the gods of Egypt he will burn with fire.”””

Jeremiah Condemns the Jews’ Idolatry in Egypt

44:1 The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in the land of Egypt, those who were living in Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and the land of Pathros, saying,

2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘You yourselves have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they are in ruins and no one lives in them,

3 because of their wickedness which they committed so as to provoke Me to anger by continuing to burn sacrifices *and* to serve other gods whom they had not known, *neither* they, you, nor your fathers.

4 Yet I sent you all My servants the prophets, again and again, saying, “Oh, do not do this abominable thing which I hate.”

5 But they did not listen or incline their ears to turn from their wickedness, so as not to burn sacrifices to other gods.

6 Therefore My wrath and My anger were poured out and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, so they have become a ruin and a desolation as it is this day.

7 Now then thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, “Why are you doing great harm to yourselves, so as to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, from among Judah, leaving yourselves without remnant,

8 provoking Me to anger with the works of your hands, burning sacrifices to other gods in the land of Egypt, where you are entering to reside, so that you might be cut off and become a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

10 But they have not become contrite even to this day, nor have they feared nor walked in My law or My statutes, which I have set before you and before your fathers.”

11 “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Behold, I am going to set My face against you for woe, even to cut off all Judah.

12 And I will take away the remnant of Judah who have set their mind on entering the land of Egypt to reside there, and they will all meet their end in the land of Egypt; they will fall by the sword *and* meet their end by famine. Both small and great will die by the sword and famine; and they will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation and a reproach.

13 And I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine and with pestilence.

14 So there will be no refugees or survivors for the remnant of Judah who have entered the land of Egypt to reside there and then to return to the land of Judah, to which they are longing to return and live; for none will return except *a few* refugees.”

The Jews Reject Jeremiah’s Warning and Proclaim Their Allegiance to the Queen of Heaven

15 Then all the men who were aware that their wives were burning sacrifices to other gods, along with all the women who were standing by, *as* a large assembly, including all the people who were living in Pathros in the land of Egypt, responded to Jeremiah, saying,

16 “As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you!

17 But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for *then* we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune.

18 But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine.”

19 “And,” *said the women*, “when we were burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and were pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands that we made for her *sacrificial* cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

Jeremiah Condemns the People's Decision

20 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and women—even to all the people who were giving him *such* an answer—saying,

21 “As for the smoking sacrifices that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your forefathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them and did not *all this* come into His mind?

22 So the LORD was no longer able to endure *it*, because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed; thus your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as *it is* this day.

23 Because you have burned sacrifices and have sinned against the LORD and not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in His law, His statutes or His testimonies, therefore this calamity has befallen you, as *it has* this day.”

24 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt,

25 thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, as follows: ‘As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled *it* with your hands, saying, “We will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her.” Go ahead and confirm your vows, and certainly perform your vows!’

26 Nevertheless hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who are living in the land of Egypt, ‘Behold, I have sworn by My great name,’ says the LORD, ‘never shall My name be invoked again by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, “As the Lord GOD lives.”’

27 Behold, I am watching over them for harm and not for good, and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone.

28 Those who escape the sword will return out of the land of Egypt to the land of Judah few in number. Then all the remnant of Judah who have gone to the land of Egypt to reside there will know whose word will stand, Mine or theirs.

A Sign of Coming Punishment

29 This will be the sign to you,’ declares the LORD, ‘that I am going to punish you in this place, so that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for harm.’

30 Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I am going to give over Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt to the hand of his enemies, to the hand of those who seek his life, just as I gave over Zedekiah king of Judah to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *who was* his enemy and was seeking his life.’”