

JEREMIAH 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 to the greatest, came near,

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Johanan and the remnant of the people desire Jeremiah to ask counsel of God what they should do, Jer 42:1-3. The prophet assures them of safety in Judea, but destruction in Egypt, Jer 42:4-18; and reproves their hypocrisy in asking counsel with which they had no intention to comply, Jer 42:19-22.

Verse 1

The captains of the forces - The different leaders of the small bands or companies, collected from different parts of the land. The principal are those here named.

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JEREMIAH 42: 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, Please let our supplication be presented before you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, even for all this remnant; for we are left but a few of many, as your eyes do see us:

JEREMIAH 42: 3 that the LORD your God may show us the way in which we should walk, and the thing that we should do.

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Verse 3

That the Lord thy God may show us - They all thought there was no safety in Jerusalem or in Judea, and therefore determined to leave the land: but they did not know which might be the safest direction to take; for though they inclined to Egypt, yet they wished to know the mind of God on that point.

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JEREMIAH 42: 4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall happen that whatever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it to you; I will keep nothing back from you.

JEREMIAH 42: 5 Then they said to Jeremiah, the LORD be a true and faithful witness among us, if we don't do according to all the word with which the LORD your God shall send you to us.

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Verse 5

The Lord be a true and faithful Witness - The Lord is such; and as ye have bound yourselves to obey his voice, he will register the covenant, and bless or curse according as ye shall conduct yourselves in this matter.

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JEREMIAH 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 you; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

JEREMIAH 42: 7 After ten days, the LORD's word came to Jeremiah.

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Verse 7

After ten days - All this time he was waiting upon God; for it is evident the prophets could not prophesy when they pleased, any more than the disciples of our Lord could work miracles when they wished. The gift of prophecy and the gift of miracles were both dependent on the will of the Most High, and each of them was given only for the moment; and when the necessity was over, the influence ceased.

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JEREMIAH 42: 8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces who were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,

JEREMIAH 42: 9 and said to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your supplication before him:

JEREMIAH 42: 10 If you will still live in this land, then I will build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I grieve over the distress that I have brought on you.

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Verse 10

For I repent me of the evil - The meaning is, As I have punished you only because you continued to be rebellious, I will arrest this punishment as soon as you become obedient to my word. You need not fear the king of Babylon if you have me for your helper; and I will so show mercy to you that he shall see it, and cease from afflicting you, as he shall see that I am on your side.

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JEREMIAH 42: 11 Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; don't be afraid of him, says the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.

JEREMIAH 42: 12 I will grant you mercy, that he may have mercy on you, and cause you to return to your own land.

JEREMIAH 42: 13 But if you say, We will not dwell in this land; so that you don't obey the LORD your God's voice,

JEREMIAH 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:

JEREMIAH 42: 15 now therefore hear the LORD's word, O remnant of Judah: Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, If you indeed set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to live there;

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Verse 15

If ye - set your faces to enter into Egypt, etc - Every evil that ye dreaded by staying in your own land shall come upon you in Egypt.

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JEREMIAH 42: 16 then it shall happen, that the sword, which you fear, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are afraid, shall follow close behind you there in Egypt; and there you shall die.

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Verse 16

The sword - and the famine - shall follow close after you - Shall be at your heels; shall overtake and destroy you; for there ye shall die.

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JEREMIAH 42: 17 So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go into Egypt to live 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 on them.

JEREMIAH 42: 18 For thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath has been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall my wrath be poured out on you, when you shall enter into Egypt; and you shall be an object of horror, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.

JEREMIAH 42: 19 The LORD has spoken concerning you, remnant of Judah, Don't you go into Egypt: know certainly that I have testified to you this day.

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Verse 19

Go ye not into Egypt - Why? Because God knew, such was their miserable propensity to idolatry, that they would there adopt the worship of the country, and serve idols.

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JEREMIAH 42: 20 For you have dealt deceitfully against your own souls; for you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us to the LORD our God; and according to all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare to us, and we will do it:

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Verse 20

For ye dissembled in your hearts - What a most miserable and incorrigible people! Ingratitude, hypocrisy, rebellion, and cruelty seem to have been enthroned in their hearts! And what are they still? Just what their fathers were, except in the mere article of idolatry; and that they do not practice because they are indifferent to their own religion and to that of all others. Examine their devotions and their lives, and see whether Charity herself can say they believe in the God of Abraham!

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JEREMIAH 42: 21 and I have this day declared it to you; but you have not obeyed the LORD your God's voice in anything for which he has sent me to you.

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Verse 21

Ye have not obeyed the voice - Though ye have requested to have this particular revelation of the Divine will, and promised obedience, yet have ye not done one thing for which ye sent me to inquire of the Lord.

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JEREMIAH 42: 22 Now therefore know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place where you desire to go to live there.

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Verse 22

Now therefore know certainly - As ye have determined to disobey, God has determined to punish. Ye may now follow the full bent of your wicked devices, and I will follow the requisitions of my justice. Ye shall die by the sword, by the pestilence, and by the famine, in the place whither ye desire to go to sojourn. Thus was their doom sealed.

With such dispositions and with such rebellion of heart, it is strange that they should put themselves to any trouble to inquire of the Lord relative to their future operations. They did not intend to obey; but as a matter of curiosity they would inquire to hear what the prophet might say; and if according to their own inclination, they would obey.