

Jeremiah

Chapter 43

Jeremiah Taken to Egypt

When Jeremiah finished speaking to all the people all these words of the LORD their God, with which the LORD their God had sent him to them, 2 Azariah the son of Hoshai and Johanan the son of Kareah and all the insolent men said to Jeremiah, “You are telling a lie. The LORD our God did not send you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to live there,’ 3 but Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may kill us or take us into exile in Babylon.” 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 remain in the land of Judah. 5 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to live in the land of Judah from all the nations to which they had been driven— 6 the men, the women, the children, the princesses, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan; also Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. 7 And they came into the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they arrived at Tahpanhes. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes: 9 “Take in your hands large stones and hide them in the mortar in the pavement that is at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah, 10 and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden, and he will spread his royal canopy over them. 11 He shall come and strike the land of Egypt, giving over to the pestilence those who are doomed to the pestilence, to captivity those who are doomed to captivity, and to the sword those who are doomed to the sword. 12 I shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall clean the land of Egypt as a shepherd cleans his cloak of vermin, and he shall go away from there in peace. 13 He shall break the obelisks of Heliopolis, which is in the land of Egypt, and the temples of the gods of Egypt he shall burn with fire.’”

Ch 43 The exiled prophet foretold the punishment awaiting the rebellious fugitives: they would perish in the land. Nebuchadnezzar would act as God’s servant in conquering and pillaging Egypt. In order to dramatize the certainty of this prophecy, Jeremiah was directed to lay large stones at the entrance to Pharaoh’s palace, symbolizing the Babylonian king’s throne and undisputed dominion in Egypt (vv 8–13). (TLSB)

43:2 *insolent men.* They demonstrate themselves to be such by their words. (CSB)

They violated their vow. (TLSB)

43:3 *Baruch.* See note on 32:12. Jeremiah’s opponents decide to put the blame on someone they consider less spiritually formidable than the prophet himself. (CSB)

It is not clear why the men believed Baruch would act as an agent of the Babylonians. (TLSB)

He is someone whom they suspected of sympathizing with the Chaldeans. (Kretzmann)

43:5 *from all the nations* – Moab, Ammon, and Edom are some of the countries from which people returned during Gedaliah’s governorship. (TLSB)

43:6 *princesses* Women who had been members of King Zedekiah's court, not necessarily daughters of the king himself. (CSB)

Jeremiah ... and Baruch. No doubt they went to Egypt unwillingly, in the light of 32:6–15; 40:1–6; 42:13–22. (CSB)

Because the commanders thought these men would betray them, they carried them off. Note that the commanders did not react by killing Jeremiah and Baruch, in contrast to the treacherous behavior of Ishmael (cf 40:14; 41:2). (TLSB)

All of these people were obliged to join the caravan of the refugees, whether they protested or not, for in this case also might made right. (CSB)

43:7 *Tahpanhes.* Border city and fort of Egypt manned by Greek mercenaries. (TLSB)

This was the city of Daphne on one of the eastern delta-arms of the Nile, one of the cities nearest to the border of Palestine. Here they halted for a time, in order to consider ways and means of making their sojourn in the strange country safe and profitable. When men deliberately set aside the commands of the Lord and choose their own way of doing things, they invite destruction and ruin upon themselves. (Kretzmann)

43:9 *large stones and hide them.* Preparing an illustration. (TLSB)

in the sight of the men of Judah – This was so that he would have trustworthy witnesses of his act. The palace of Pharaoh included not only the buildings proper, but their entire enclosure as well, which usually was surrounded by a high wall. Opposite the entrance of this enclosure the bricks for the building or for the repairing of the royal palace were made, and it was in the clay of this kiln that the stones carried by Jeremiah were to be hid. (Kretzmann)

Pharaoh's palace. Not necessarily his main residence. One of the Elephantine papyri, e.g., mentions the "king's house," apparently a more modest dwelling for Pharaoh's use when he visited Elephantine in southern Egypt. (CSB)

43:10 *Nebuchadnezzar...my servant.* He acted in this instance, in carrying out the Lord's purpose upon Egypt. (Kretzmann)

his throne. Symbolizing his authority. (CSB)

Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Egypt. (TLSB)

royal canopy. Set over the king's throne to make a comfortable meeting place. (TLSB)

The rich tapestry which formed the curtains of the throne. (Kretzmann)

43:11 *He shall ... strike the land of Egypt.* A fragmentary text now owned by the British Museum in London states that Nebuchadnezzar carried out a punitive expedition against Egypt in his 37th year (568–567 B.C.) during the reign of Pharaoh Amasis. (CSB)

A fragment from a Babylonian chronicle records Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt in 567 BC. (TLSB)

43:12 *he shall clean the land.* Routinely and confidently. (CSB)

The point of comparison is the freedom and the ease of the act; for just as easily and quickly as a shepherd takes up his mantle, practically his only garment, and wraps it about him, so easily will Nebuchadnezzar take hold upon Egypt and, with the whole country in his power, leave without hindrance, with no one opposing him. (Kretzmann)

clean ...cloak gods of Egypt. Just as a shepherd would pick the lice out of his cloak, the Babylonians would pick through and pillage the cities of Egypt. (TLSB)

43:13 *temples of the gods of Egypt.* Lit. “Beth Shemesh in Egypt,” with the qualifying phrase being used to distinguish the site from “Beth Shemesh in Judah” (2Ki 14:11). The Egyptian city is probably to be identified with Heliopolis, called *On* in Hebrew. (CSB)

This was the renowned Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, one of the greatest sanctuaries of the country. (Kretzmann)

Obelisks. "The images of Beth-shemesh are, above all, the obelisks, of which there was an unlimited number in the city. Of the oldest, which, however, were not the largest, one still remains in its place." In this manner would all the representatives of Egyptian idol-worship fall before the power of Nebuchadnezzar, and the hope and trust of the Jews who fled to Egypt would be found to be vain. Thus all the plans of the wicked according to which they leave the command of God are frustrated to their own confusion. (Kretzmann)

Ch 43 Johanan and the last of the royal family break their vow (42:5–6) and move to Egypt against God’s will, taking Jeremiah with them. Human reason often wins out over trust in God and obedience to Him. In grace, God preserves a faithful remnant of His people in Babylon. They will return to the Promised Land after many years, and from them the Lord will raise up a Savior, Christ the Lord. • Teach us to trust You, Lord, both in this life and for eternal salvation, through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)