

Jeremiah

Chapter 42

Warning Against Going to Egypt

Then all the commanders of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, came near 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, “Let our plea for mercy come before you, and pray to the LORD your God for us, for all this remnant—because we are left with but a few, as your eyes see us— 3 that the LORD your God may show us the way we should go, and the thing that we should do.” 4 Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard you. Behold, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your request, and whatever the LORD answers you I will tell you. I will keep nothing back from you.” 5 Then they said to Jeremiah, “May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act according to all the word with which the LORD your God sends you to us. 6 Whether it is good or bad, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.” 7 At the end of ten days the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8 Then he summoned Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest, 9 and said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your plea for mercy before him: 10 If you will remain in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down; I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I relent of the disaster that I did to you. 11 Do not fear the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid. Do not fear him, declares the LORD, for I am with you, to save you and to deliver you from his hand. 12 I will grant you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and let you remain in your own land. 13 But if you say, ‘We will not remain in this land,’ disobeying the voice of the LORD your God 14 and saying, ‘No, we will go to the land of Egypt, where we shall not see war or hear the sound of the trumpet or be hungry for bread, and we will dwell there,’ 15 then hear the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If you set your faces to enter Egypt and go to live there, 16 then the sword that you fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine of which you are afraid shall follow close after you to Egypt, and there you shall die. 17 All the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to live there shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. They shall have no remnant or survivor from the disaster that I will bring upon them. 18 “For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so my wrath will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You shall become an execration, a horror, a curse, and a taunt. You shall see this place no more. 19 The LORD has said to you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Know for a certainty that I have warned you this day 20 that you have gone astray at the cost of your lives. For you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the LORD our God, and whatever the LORD our God says, declare to us and we will do it.’ 21 And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God in anything that he sent me to tell you. 22 Now therefore know for a certainty that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to live.”

42:1–3 Reaching the vicinity of Bethlehem, Johanan and all the people prevail on Jeremiah to pray. After 10 days, the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah (v 7). (TLSB)

42:1 *Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah*. Possibly the same as “Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite.” Apparently Jezaniah was also known as Azariah, as was King Uzziah. (CSB)

42:2 *Jeremiah*. Had probably been among the “survivors from Mizpah” (41:16). (CSB)

hear our petition. See v. 9; 37:20. (CSB)

Literally, "fall before thy face," as a petitioner on bended knee. (Kretzmann)

42:3 *LORD your God.* The commanders recognized Jeremiah's special relationship with the Lord. (TLSB)

The people may be asking the Lord to confirm what they sincerely believe to be their only option: flight to Egypt (see v. 17; 41:17). (CSB)

That is, what they should do now, where they should turn in this emergency, in order to escape the certain vengeance of the Chaldeans. The expression "thy God" in this connection emphasizes the peculiar, intimate relation in which Jeremiah stood over against Jehovah, as His servant and prophet. (Kretzmann)

42:4 *pray to the Lord your God* – Jeremiah's reply emphasizes that the people, too, are to know the Lord and claim Him as their God. (TLSB)

I will nothing back from you – His words implied that, whether Jehovah's answer were favorable or unfavorable to their plans, he would in any event proclaim it. It seems clear from the first that the leaders of the refugees had already decided not to remain in Judea, but to go to some neighboring country. They acted just as many people do in our days, who call upon the Lord to direct them, but only along the lines which they themselves have chosen. (Kretzmann)

42:5 *faithful witness* – The commanders make a vow with covenant language. (TLSB)

This is apparently an unconditional yielding to the guidance of God, whether they were at this time aware of their insincerity or not. (Kretzmann)

42:6 *we will obey the voice of the LORD our God.* Though they twice declare here their desire to do God's will, they soon demonstrate that they have already decided to follow their own inclinations (see 43:2). (CSB)

Their obedience being the reason for the Lord's good pleasure upon them. In every true prayer it is essential that both doubt and hypocrisy be absent, lest the supplication made defeat its own ends. (Kretzmann)

42:7 *end of ten days.* Jeremiah does not bring God's word to the people until he is sure of it himself (see 28:10–12). (CSB)

During which the caravan remained encamped in the same place, since Jeremiah did not presume to speak of himself, but awaited the inspiration of the Lord (Kretzmann)

42:10 *build you up ... pull you down ... plant ... not pluck you up.* The answer he was authorized to give consisted of advice to dwell in the land where God would protect them from the Babylonians, and a warning that certain death awaited them in Egypt. (TLSB)

42:11 *do not fear* – The Judeans apparently feared that the Babylonians would punish all the people because of the assassination of their governor. (TLSB)

42:12 *I will grant you mercy.* For similar examples see Ge 43:14; 1Ki 8:50. (CSB)

Literally, "I will give you to experience mercies." (Kretzmann)

42:13 *we will not remain in this land* – They would thereby once more becoming guilty of open rebellion against. (Kretzmann)

42:14 *sound of the trumpet* – This called the soldiers to the battle. (Kretzmann)

42:15 *then hear the word of the Lord* – the direct prophecy resumed after the parenthetical remark concerning the possibility of their resuming their rebellious ways. (Kretzmann)

remnant – This was the term applied to survivors in Judah as well as Judeans who were taken into exile. (TLSB)

42:19 *know for a certainty* – God's Word is faithful, not simply a rubber stamp for human aspirations. (TLSB)

I warned you. It was a last solemn warning, which, however, was bound to be disregarded by the obstinate Jews, just as so many similar warnings since have been neglected to the unbelievers' hurt. (Kretzmann)

Ch 42 Jeremiah promises God's blessings to Johanan and his band of refugees if they will stay in Judah, but warns of certain death if they go to Egypt. God does not want His people to place their confidence in Pharaoh or his army. Today, when you face questions in life, seek the Lord's will through the wisdom of His Word and by commending your life to Him through prayer. He will watch over you faithfully and be with you always. • Help us, heavenly Father, to trust in You above all earthly reason, might, and power, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (TLSB)