

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Jeremiah Chapters 41-42

3/11/15

Bible Study Notes - Chapter 41

Gedaliah Is Assassinated by Ishmael - Verses 1-15

¹In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood and had been one of the king's officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. While they were eating together there, ²Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. ³Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Babylonian soldiers who were there. ⁴The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, ⁵eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the LORD. ⁶Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam." ⁷When they went into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. ⁸But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley, olive oil and honey, hidden in a field." So he let them alone and did not kill them with the others. ⁹Now the cistern where he threw all the bodies of the men he had killed along with Gedaliah was the one King Asa had made as part of his defense against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the dead. ¹⁰Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah—the king's daughters along with all the others who were left there, over whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

¹¹When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, ¹²they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the great pool in Gibeon. ¹³When all the people Ishmael had with him saw Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him, they were glad. ¹⁴All the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. ¹⁵But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to the Ammonites.

41:1-3 This is a bloody account, an account of treachery, of jealousy. Ishmael was of the royal family, one of the chief officers of the king. Perhaps that accounts for his jealousy of the man who, though of humble origin, had been appointed governor of the land. So in a scene of apparent harmony, while they were eating bread together, he rises and smites him with the sword and kills him -- and not only Gedaliah but all the others who were with him in the palace at Mizpah. This is a picture of treachery and murder. This passage reveals what is down deep in each one of our hearts. God sees and knows our hearts.

41:4-10 This melancholy story is a warning to us never to be secure in this world. Worse may be yet to come when we think the worst is over; and that end of one trouble, which we fancy to be the end of all trouble, may prove to be the beginning of another, of a greater. These prisoners thought, Surely the bitterness of death, and of captivity, is past; and yet some died by the sword and others went into captivity. When we think ourselves safe, and begin to be easy, destruction may come in a way that we little expect it. We can never be sure of peace on this side heaven.

Flight to Egypt - Verses 16-18

¹⁶ Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the people of Mizpah who had survived, whom Johanan had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam—the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had recovered from Gibeon. ¹⁷ And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt ¹⁸ to escape the Babylonians. They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

41:16-17 Johanan and his group were already on their way to Egypt, headed south from Gibeon, stopping first at Geruth Kimham, near Bethlehem. Their visit to Jeremiah (42:1-6) was hypocritical, as Jeremiah later told them (42:20).

Bible Study Notes - Chapter 42

Jeremiah Warns the People of Judah Not to Go to Egypt - Verses 1-21

¹ Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached ² Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left. ³ Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do." ⁴ "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and 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 in accordance with everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us. ⁶ Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God."

⁷ Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ⁸ So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest. ⁹ He said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says: ¹⁰ 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I have relented concerning the disaster I have inflicted on you. ¹¹ Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. ¹² I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.'

¹³ "However, if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' and so disobey the LORD your God, ¹⁴ and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,' ¹⁵ then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there, ¹⁶ then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die.' ¹⁷ Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.' ¹⁸ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.'

¹⁹ "Remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Be sure of this: I warn you today ²⁰ that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, 'Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.' ²¹ I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you. ²² So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle."

42:5-6 Johanan and his associates spoke their own curse; Jeremiah merely elaborated on it. It was a tragic mistake to ask for God's guidance with no intention of following it. Be sure never to ask God for something that you know in your heart you really do not want. It is better not to pray than to pray hypocritically. God cannot be deceived.