

# Jeremiah 40:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan;

## Analysis

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The return of Jewish refugees from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and 'all the countries' demonstrates the spreading news of stability under Gedaliah's governorship and validates Jeremiah's message that survival lay in submission to Babylon rather than flight or resistance. These Jews had fled before or during Jerusalem's siege, seeking safety in neighboring territories. Their willingness to return shows they perceived greater security in Judah under Babylonian oversight than as refugees in foreign lands. The verb 'returned' (shuv) carries theological weight throughout Jeremiah—it's the standard term for repentance, meaning to turn back or return. While primarily describing physical return, their action embodied partial spiritual return as well: coming back to the land meant accepting the reality of God's judgment and the wisdom of Jeremiah's counsel they had previously ignored. Their hearing that Babylon 'had left a remnant of Judah' and appointed Gedaliah confirmed Jeremiah's prophecies that complete destruction wasn't God's final word—He preserved a remnant for future purposes. This gathering represented what could have been the beginning of restoration and renewed covenant faithfulness. Tragically, the assassination of Gedaliah and subsequent flight to Egypt (chapters 41-43) showed that even preserved remnants can squander God's merciful provisions through faithless choices.

## Historical Context

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The refugees returning from Moab, Ammon, and Edom had fled to these traditional enemy territories, ironically finding temporary refuge among peoples who had often opposed Israel. Moab lay east of the Dead Sea, Ammon northeast of the Dead Sea, and Edom south of the Dead Sea—all relatively close but outside Babylon's immediate military focus during Judah's conquest. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests these kingdoms maintained some autonomy by quickly submitting to Babylon and perhaps even aided the conquest of Judah. The phrase 'all the countries' indicates some Jews had fled as far as Egypt, Phoenicia, or even Mesopotamia, creating a diaspora that predated the official Babylonian exile. Their return 'to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah' shows Gedaliah's reputation as stable governor had spread throughout the region, offering hope that sparked reverse migration. This foreshadows the later return from Babylonian exile under Cyrus's decree (Ezra 1-2), though on a much smaller scale. The ingathering 'gathered wine and summer fruits very much' indicates successful harvest, fulfilling Gedaliah's promise that submission to Babylon would allow prosperity (40:10). This brief moment of restoration makes the subsequent disaster more tragic.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does the refugees' return teach about the relationship between physical restoration and spiritual repentance?
2. How does this passage illustrate that God's preservation of a remnant creates opportunity but doesn't guarantee wise response?

3. In what ways do believers sometimes squander God's merciful provisions through faithless choices even after experiencing His deliverance?

## Interlinear Text

כָּל־	וְגַם־	בְּנוֹן־	בְּמוֹאָב־	אֲשֶׁר־	יְהוּדִים־	כָּל־	גַּם־
	H1571			H834			H3605
		the son	that were in Moab		Likewise when all the Jews		
		H1121	H4124		H3064		
בְּכָל־	וְאִשְׁרֵי־	וּבְאֶדְוֹם־	עַמּוֹן־				
	H3605						
		and in Edom	and among the Ammonites				
		H123	H5983				
בְּבָבֶל־	מֶלֶךְ־	נָתַן־	כִּי־	שָׁמַע־	הָאֲרָצוֹת־		
of Babylon	that the king	had left	heard		and that were in all the countries		
H894	H4428	H5414	H8085	H3588	H776		
אֶת־	עָלֶיהָ־	וְהִפְקֵי־	יְדִי־	וְכִי־	לְיְהוּדָה־	שְׂאֵרֵי־	יֵת־
	H853						
	H5921	and that he had set			of Judah	a remnant	
		H6485			H3063	H7611	
שָׁפָן־	בְּנוֹן־	אֲחִיקָם־	בְּנוֹן־	גִּדְלִיָּה־			
of Shaphan	the son	of Ahikam	the son	over them Gedaliah			
H8227	H1121	H296	H1121	H1436			

## Additional Cross-References

**Isaiah 16:4** (Parallel theme): Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.