

# Jeremiah 40:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when all the captains of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon;

## Analysis

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The arrival of 'all the captains of the forces' who 'were in the fields' to Gedaliah at Mizpah marks a crucial moment—these military leaders who had fled Jerusalem before its final fall now emerge from hiding to assess the new situation. Their willingness to come to Gedaliah signaled potential for stability under Babylonian oversight. The phrase 'heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah...governor in the land' shows they recognized legitimate authority structure even under foreign domination. The detailed list of names (Johanan son of Kareah, Jezaniah, Seraiah, etc.) and their men demonstrates this wasn't abstract political theory but real people making concrete choices about survival and governance. Their coming to Mizpah represented cautious cooperation rather than continued resistance—a vindication of Jeremiah's long-standing counsel that submission to Babylon offered survival while resistance brought destruction. This gathering also fulfilled the possibility Jeremiah articulated: a remnant could indeed remain in the land if they accepted God's disciplinary judgment and worked within the new political reality. The tragedy that unfolds in subsequent chapters (Gedaliah's assassination, flight to Egypt) shows how fragile this opportunity was and how deeply rebellion was ingrained even in survivors.

## Historical Context

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These 'captains of the forces' were commanders of irregular troops and guerrilla fighters who had operated 'in the fields' (open country) during Jerusalem's siege and after its fall. Similar groups operated throughout Judah's hill country, raiding Babylonian supply lines and avoiding direct confrontation. Their survival demonstrated military competence and knowledge of the terrain, making them potentially valuable for maintaining order—or dangerous if they opposed Gedaliah's government. The names listed (Johanan son of Kareah, Jezaniah/Jaazaniah, Seraiah, and others) appear in various forms in Jeremiah 40-43, indicating these were real historical figures whose actions shaped post-destruction Judah. Archaeological evidence from this period shows that while Jerusalem lay in ruins, surrounding towns like Mizpah, Bethel, and Gibeon maintained limited habitation. The power vacuum after Babylon's departure (leaving minimal garrison forces) created opportunity for local leadership to emerge, but also instability as various factions competed for influence. These captains' decision to recognize Gedaliah rather than establish independent fiefdoms showed initial wisdom, though later events proved their ultimate unreliability.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. What does this gathering teach about the tension between political pragmatism and covenant faithfulness in complex situations?
2. How should believers navigate situations where submission to imperfect or even hostile authorities becomes necessary for survival and service?
3. Why do people often resist wise counsel until after disaster strikes, and how can church leaders help people accept hard truths before crisis?

## Interlinear Text

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אֲשֶׁר בְּחִיל יְמִינָה  
when all the captains of the forces  
H3605 H2428 H834

הַפְּקָד יָד בְּשַׁד הַמִּפְּהָר וְאֶנְשִׁיָּה מִן הַמִּפְּהָר  
and had committed  
H1992 H376 H3588 H6485

אֲחִיק מִן בֶּן מֶלֶךְ בְּבָבֶלְתָּה אֲתָה גְּדֹלֵי הָוֹן  
the son of Ahikam the son of the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah  
H296 H1121 H1436 H853

וְנְשִׁים אֲבָשׁ יְמִינָה אֲתָה וְהַפְּקָד יָד וְכֵן יְמִינָה  
and women and had committed and the land  
H802 H376 H6485 H3588 H776

לֹא מִאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ וּמִן־תַּחַת בָּאָרֶץ וּמִן־לְתַחַת  
in the land and of the poor and children  
H3808 H776 H834 H1803 H2945

בָּבֶלְתָּה  
of Babylon  
H894 H1540

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 39:10** (Parallel theme): But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.