

Jeremiah 41:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:

Analysis

Johanan's recovery of 'all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam' emphasizes both rescue success and context: these survivors had witnessed Gedaliah's assassination and Ishmael's massacres, traumatizing events that would shape their subsequent choices. The detailed listing—'mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon'—shows comprehensive community preservation: soldiers ('mighty men of war') who had survived, women and children representing future generations, and 'eunuchs' (likely court officials, not necessarily castrated) representing administrative continuity. This cross-section demonstrates Johanan rescued the entire community structure, not just fighters or elites. The inclusion of 'women, and the children' particularly emphasizes vulnerability and the protective nature of Johanan's action. However, this rescued remnant faced impossible choices: remain in Judah fearing Babylonian reprisal for Gedaliah's murder, or flee to Egypt against God's revealed will through Jeremiah (chapters 42-43). Their

trauma and fear would tragically drive them to choose Egypt, abandoning the land and completing the catastrophe Ishmael initiated.

Historical Context

This remnant represented the final fragment of Judah's population remaining in the land after three waves of Babylonian deportations (605, 597, 586 BC) plus Jerusalem's destruction. That it included 'mighty men of war' shows Johanan commanded significant military force—not merely a rescue party but a substantial armed group capable of protecting the community. The 'eunuchs' (sarisim) likely represented surviving administrative officials—the term could mean court officers without implying castration, though some ancient Near Eastern courts did employ eunuchs. The mention of 'women, and the children' indicates families, not just individual fighters, showing this was a community fleeing, not an army maneuvering. The group's subsequent stop at 'Geruth Chimham, which is by Bethlehem' (v.17) on the route to Egypt shows their immediate impulse was flight rather than attempting to restore order at Mizpah. This decision, though understandable given trauma and fear of Babylonian reprisal, represented faithless pragmatism rather than trusting God's purposes. Their fear fulfilled Johanan's earlier warning to Gedaliah (40:15) about community scatter and remnant destruction.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the traumatic context of this remnant's experience help explain (though not justify) their subsequent faithless flight to Egypt?

2. What does the inclusion of women, children, and officials in this remnant teach about God's concern for comprehensive community preservation, not just 'important' individuals?
3. In what ways does trauma from witnessing evil and violence make believers vulnerable to fear-driven decisions rather than faith-based obedience?

Interlinear Text

וְקָח	יֹחָנָן	בֶּן	קָרֵחַ	וְכָל	שָׂרֵי	הַחֲיָלִים
Then took	Johanan	the son	of Kareah	H3605	and all the captains	of the forces
H3947	H3110	H1121	H7143		H8269	H2428
אֲשֶׁר	אֵת	כָּל	שָׂאֵר	יְהוֹשִׁעַ	הָעָם	
H834	H854	H853	H3605	that were with him all the remnant	of the people	
			H7611		H5971	
אֲשֶׁר	יְהוֹשִׁעַ	מֵאֵת	יִשְׁמָעֵל	בֶּן	נְתַנְיָהוּ	
H834	whom he had brought again	H853	from Ishmael	the son	of Nathaniah	
	H7725		H3458	H1121	H5418	
מִן	הַמִּצְפָּה	אַחֲרַי	הָרָח	אֶת	גְּדַלְיָה	בֶּן
H4480	from Mizpah	after	that he had slain	H853	Gedaliah	the son
	H4709	H310	H5221		H1436	H1121
אֲחִיקָם	גִּבְרִיִּם	אֲנָשֵׁי	הַמִּלְחָמָה	וְנָשֵׁי	וְטָף	
of Ahikam	even mighty	H376	of war	and the women	and the children	
H296	H1397		H4421	H802	H2945	
וְרָסִים	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוֹשִׁעַ	מִגִּבְעֹן:			
and the eunuchs	H834	whom he had brought again	from Gibeon			
H5631		H7725	H1391			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 42:8 (Parallel theme): Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,

