

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' (sarism) 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

פְּחִילִים שָׁרֵי וְכָל קָרְאֵה בֶּן יְהוֹיָדָעַת וְקָרְאֵה
Then took **Johanan** **the son** **of Kareah** **H3605** **and all the captains** **of the forces**
 H3947 H3110 H1121 H7143 H8269 H2428

כָּל אֲתָת אֲשֶׁר יָתַר שָׁאָר יִתְּבָא
 H834 H854 H853 H3605 **that were with him all the remnant** **of the people**
 H7611 H5971

נְתָנָנָה בֶּן יְהֹשָׁעֵה מֵאָת אֲשֶׁר
 H834 **whom he had brought again** H7725 H853 **from Ishmael** **the son** **of Nethaniah**
 H3458 H1121 H5418

גְּדֹלִי הָעֵדָה אֲמִרְתָּה הַמִּצְפָּה מִן
 H4480 **from Mizpah** H4709 H310 H5221 H853 **Gedaliah** **the son**
 H1436 H1121

וְתַּרְבָּתִים אֲשֶׁר יָמְלֹךְ הַמָּלְכָה אֲשֶׁר יָמְלֹךְ אֲחִיקָם
of Ahikam **even mighty** H1397 H376 **of war** H4421 **and the women** **and the children**
 H296 H1397 H802 H2945

מְגַבְּעָזִים אֲשֶׁר יָבַרְתָּה וְאֲשֶׁר יָמְלֹךְ
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,

