

Jeremiah 42:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

Analysis

No; but we will go into the land of Egypt—The remnant's reply reveals their predetermined decision, rejecting Jeremiah's prophetic word despite their earlier vow to obey (42:5-6). The emphatic Hebrew *lo* (אַל, no) introduces outright refusal of God's command to remain in Judah. Their reasoning exposes the root sin: **where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet** (shofar, שׁוֹפֵר, the ram's horn signaling battle). They sought safety through human calculation rather than divine protection.

The threefold appeal—**no war... no trumpet... no hunger**—demonstrates pragmatic self-reliance. Egypt represented military power, agricultural abundance (the Nile's fertility versus Judah's drought), and distance from Babylon. Yet this 'wisdom' directly contradicted God's revealed will. Like Israel's earlier desire to return to Egypt's 'leeks and onions' (Numbers 11:5), this generation preferred Egypt's perceived security to trusting Yahweh's provision in the land of promise.

Their declaration **there will we dwell** seals their apostasy. Jesus later warned, 'He who seeks to save his life will lose it' (Matthew 16:25)—exactly what befell these refugees. By fleeing to Egypt for safety, they ran into the very judgment they hoped to escape (v. 17).

Historical Context

This occurred circa 582 BC, after Gedaliah's assassination left Judah's remnant leaderless and fearful of Babylonian retribution. Egypt, under Pharaoh Apries (Hophra), had recently provoked Babylon by supporting Zedekiah's rebellion (588-586 BC). Despite Egypt's disastrous failure to save Jerusalem, the remnant viewed Egypt as a safe haven. Historically, Egypt had been Israel's repeated temptation—Isaiah condemned alliances with Egypt (Isaiah 30:1-3, 31:1), and Hosea denounced Israel's diplomatic overtures there (Hosea 7:11). Archaeological evidence shows a significant Jewish refugee community developed in Egypt, including the Elephantine colony. Jeremiah himself was forcibly taken to Egypt (43:6-7), where tradition says he was stoned to death by his own people.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does fear-based decision-making lead us to contradict God's revealed will while appearing 'reasonable'?
2. In what ways do we seek 'Egypt'—worldly security—rather than trusting God's provision in difficult circumstances?
3. How does the remnant's vow to obey (42:5-6) followed by immediate disobedience reveal the danger of presumptuous promises?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר	רְבָבָה	וְאֶל	לְאָמֵר	אָמֵן	כִּי	לְאָמֵן	רְבָבָה	וְאֶל	לְאָמֵר
Saying	H3808	H3588	into the land	of Egypt	No but we will go				H834
H559			H776	H4714	H935				
לֹא	נְרָאָה	נְרָאָה	מִלְחָמָה	וְאֶל	שׁוֹפֵךְ	רְבָבָה	וְאֶל	שׁוֹפֵךְ	נְשָׁמָע
H3808	where we shall see	H7200	no war	H4421	H6963	the sound	of the trumpet	H7782	H3808
									nor hear
לֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא
of bread	H3808	nor have hunger	H7456	H8033	H3427	and there will we dwell			
H3899									

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:19 (Parallel theme): My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

Jeremiah 41:17 (References Egypt): And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Beth-lehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

Isaiah 31:1 (References Egypt): Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

Jeremiah 4:21 (Parallel theme): How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

Exodus 16:3 (References Egypt): And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.