

Jeremiah 42:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

Analysis

Hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah—Jeremiah addresses them by their identity: the she'erit (שְׁאֵרִית, remnant), emphasizing both their precious status as survivors and their covenant responsibility. The prophetic formula **Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel** invokes Yahweh's full covenant title: YHWH Tseva'ot Elohei Yisra'el (יהָה צְבָאֹת אֱלֹהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל), the sovereign commander of heavenly armies who entered covenant with Israel.

The conditional warning begins: **If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt**. The phrase **set your faces** (sum panim, שׁוּם פָּנִים) means to determine resolutely, to fix one's purpose—the same expression used when Jesus 'set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9:51). The adverb **wholly** (som tasimun, an emphatic Hebrew construction) intensifies their stubborn determination. They had already decided; Jeremiah's inquiry (42:1-3) was mere pretense.

Go to sojourn there uses gur (גָּר, to dwell as foreigners/sojourners), ironically the same word describing Israel's original sojourn in Egypt that ended in slavery (Genesis 15:13). By returning to Egypt, they completed the circle of apostasy—rejecting the Exodus deliverance and choosing bondage over covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

The 'remnant of Judah' consisted of the poorest citizens left after Nebuchadnezzar's deportations (52:16), plus refugees who returned after Jerusalem's fall. Gedaliah had governed this remnant under Babylonian oversight (40:7-12), but his assassination by Ishmael (41:1-3) shattered this fragile stability. The survivors feared Babylon would punish the entire community for Ishmael's regicide, though Gedaliah's murder was politically motivated (Ishmael was of royal seed, likely resentful of Gedaliah's Babylonian appointment). Egypt, under the 26th Dynasty, actively recruited refugees and mercenaries, making it an attractive destination. Yet God had explicitly forbidden returning to Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:16), making this choice not merely unwise but covenantally forbidden.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'set your face' toward something contrary to God's will, and how does stubborn determination compound disobedience?
2. How does the language of 'sojourning' in Egypt reveal the irony of seeking security in the place of former bondage?
3. Why might we seek God's guidance while having already determined our course, and what does this reveal about our hearts?

Interlinear Text

לְכָךְ	וְעַמְתָּה	שְׁמַע	וְ	דְּבָרִ	יְהִי	הַ	שָׁאַר	יִתְ	שָׁאַר	יִתְ
H6258	H3651	H8085		the word	of the LORD		ye remnant			
And now therefore hear				H1697	H3068					
of	of	of	of	of	of	of	of	of	of	of
of Judah	Thus saith	of the LORD	hosts	hosts	the God	the God	of Israel			
H3063	H3541	H559	H3068	H6635	H430	H3478				H518
אִם	יְשַׁבָּא	לְ	אֱלֹהִים	וְ	אֱלֹהִים	וְ	אֱלֹהִים	וְ	אֱלֹהִים	וְ
If ye wholly	If ye wholly	your faces	and go	and go	into Egypt	and go				
H859	H7760	H7760	H6440	H935	H4714	H935				
וְבָאתֶם	מִצְבֵּחַ	וְבָאתֶם	מִצְבֵּחַ	וְבָאתֶם	מִצְבֵּחַ	וְבָאתֶם	מִצְבֵּחַ	וְבָאתֶם	מִצְבֵּחַ	וְבָאתֶם
to sojourn										
H1481	H8033									
לְגַזְעַן										
לְגַזְעַן										
לְגַזְעַן										

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 17:16 (References Lord): But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Jeremiah 42:17 (Word): So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.