

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 (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי 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 (גּוּר, 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

הַעֲתָהּ לְכִן וְעַתָּה הַ
H6258 H3651 **And now therefore hear** הַדְּבָר הַ
H8085 H1697 **the word** הַיְהוָה הַ
H3068 **of the LORD** יְשָׂרְיָהוּ הַ
H7611 **ye remnant**

אֵם יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאלֹהֵי יְצָבָא וְתַיְהוּהוּ הַ
H3063 H3541 **of Judah** H559 **Thus saith** הַיְהוָה הַ
H3068 **of the LORD** הַיְצָבָא וְתַיְהוּהוּ הַ
H6635 H430 **of hosts** הַיְשָׂרְיָהוּ הַ
H3478 **the God** H518 **of Israel**

וּבָאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם וּבָאתָ מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְתִשְׂמְחוּ וְתִשְׂמְחוּ וְתִשְׂמְחוּ
H859 **If ye wholly** H7760 **If ye wholly** H7760 **your faces** H6440 **and go** H935 **into Egypt** H4714 **and go** H935

שָׂמְחוּ לְגֵר וּרְחֹקִים
H8033 **to sojourn** H1481

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.