

# Jeremiah 42:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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,

## Analysis

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Jeremiah's assembly of the leadership—"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"—mirrors their earlier approach to him (v.1), demonstrating prophetic reciprocity: they came to him collectively, now he addresses them collectively. The specific naming of Johanan signals his leadership role and particular responsibility for the community's response. The phrase 'all the captains of the forces' emphasizes military leadership's presence, significant because they had power to enforce or resist prophetic direction. The inclusion of 'all the people from the least even to the greatest' makes everyone witness to God's word, establishing corporate accountability—none could later claim ignorance. This comprehensive assembly ensures that God's revealed will is communicated publicly and completely, not filtered through intermediaries who might soften its message. The formal gathering anticipates the gravity of what follows: God's clear command to remain in Judah rather than flee to Egypt (verses 9-17), and His promise of protection versus warning of destruction based on obedience or disobedience. Jeremiah's gathering of everyone before delivering God's word demonstrates pastoral wisdom: ensuring all hear directly prevents misunderstanding and establishes that their response is fully informed choice, not ignorance.

## Historical Context

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This assembly occurred at Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem after the ten-day waiting period. That Jeremiah could gather 'all the people from the least even to the greatest' indicates the remnant was small enough to assemble in one location—probably a few thousand people at most rather than tens of thousands. The emphasis on 'all the captains of the forces' shows the military commanders' crucial role: they had practical power to lead the community either in obedience (remaining in Judah) or rebellion (fleeing to Egypt). Ancient Near Eastern practice for delivering prophetic or royal decrees involved such public assemblies where entire communities heard official proclamations. This ensured transparency and prevented claims of misrepresentation. The assembly format also created social pressure toward compliance—publicly heard divine commands are harder to reject than private counsel. However, as subsequent events showed, even public declaration of God's clear word proved insufficient to prevent rebellion when the message contradicted the people's fear-driven plans. The assembly thus served both to establish divine will clearly and to demonstrate the people's culpability when they chose disobedience despite full knowledge.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. Why is public, comprehensive communication of God's word important for establishing accountability and preventing misunderstanding?
2. What does Johanan's specific naming suggest about leadership's particular responsibility for community response to divine direction?
3. How does including 'all the people from the least even to the greatest' in hearing God's word establish corporate rather than merely individual responsibility for obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל	וְאֵל	קָרַח	בֶּן	יֹחָנָן	אֵל	וַיִּקְרָא
H3605	H413	of Kareah	H1121	he Johanan	H413	Then called
		H7143		H3110		H7121
וְלִכָּל	אֶת	וְאִשָּׁר	הַחֲיִל	יָמָיו	שָׂרֵי	
H3605	H854	H834	of the forces	H2428	and all the captains	
					H8269	
גָּדוֹל:	וְעַד	לְמִקְטָן	וְהָעָם	וְהָעָם	וְהָעָם	
H1419	H5704	from the least	which were with him and all the people	which were with him and all the people	which were with him and all the people	
		H6996		H5971		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 42:1** (Parallel theme): Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,