



Jeremiah 42-43

Tape #7302
Jeremiah 42-43
By Chuck Smith

Let's look now at Jeremiah, chapter forty two. The warnings of the prophets of God, have not been heeded. The nation of Judah did not turn from idolatry, from the sexual promiscuity, from the worship of the false gods. The people of Judah did not return to the Lord with their whole hearts. They did not return to the law of God. As the result, the words of the prophets have come to pass, the Babylonian army has overrun the city of Jerusalem. The walls of the city have been broken down. The temple, the palaces have been broken down, the city has been set on fire. The inhabitants have fled, or have been taken captive to Babylon. It is a sad, sad picture of the desolation. The king of Judah has been taken as a captive to Babylon, his children have been slain before his eyes, and now his eyes have been put out. He is a captive in Babylon.

The Babylonian king has put a governor over Judah, his name is Gedaliah, and they set up the operations in the city of Mizpeh, because Jerusalem is wasted and desolate. The people gather there to Gedaliah, in Mizpeh, and he encourages them to just enjoy the fruit of the land, and just obey the Babylonians, submit to them, and all will be well. But there were evil men who came and conspired against Gedaliah, and assassinated him, and they began to take the people as captives, those that were left, to Moab in a conspiracy with the king of Moab. However one of the captains of the host of Judah, came with his men and they delivered the captives out of the hand of this fellow by the name of Ishmael, who had assassinated Gedaliah.

Now they have gathered to a place near Bethlehem. They are planning to flee to Egypt. They are fearful that when word gets back to Nebuchadnezzar of the assassination, that he will send his troops once more, and this time it will be utter destruction, so, they plan to flee to Egypt for their lives.

[So we read in chapter forty two] *Then all of the captains of the forces, and Johanan, and Jezaniah, and all of the people from the least even to the greatest, came near, And they said unto Jeremiah the prophet, We beg you, that our supplication may be accepted by you, and that you will pray for us unto Jehovah, thy God, even for all of this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as your eyes do behold us:) Pray that the Lord your God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do (42:1-3).*

So recognizing that Jeremiah had predicted the very things that had happened. While he was prophesying that Babylon was going to come and destroy the city, the false prophets were saying, "The Babylonians will never shoot an arrow into the city. The city is safe and secure." But Jeremiah was saying, "No, they're gonna come." And now they recognize that Jeremiah was a true prophet, and they ask him to seek the Lord. It is interesting that they said, "Jehovah, thy God." They didn't say Our God. Because they were still not fully committed to the worship of Jehovah, but they recognized that He could give them guidance. And they were searching right now, just as to what they should do. Even though they had already sort of made up their minds that they were going to flee to Egypt.

So Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto Yahweh, your God [Notice he says your God] according to your words; and it shall come to pass that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; and I will keep nothing back from you (42:4).

So Jeremiah agrees to that request. "I will seek the Lord, and I will pray, and I will see if the Lord has a word for you in this situation, and I promise I'll tell you everything, and I'll not hold back anything."

So they said to Jeremiah, May the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all of the things for which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us (42:5).

And so they made a vow. "The Lord be with us with this vow, a faithful true witness. We'll do everything God tells us to do. We will be obedient to the voice of the Lord. Whatever God says, we will do it."

Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, no matter what God says, we'll do it. Though it's hard though it's difficult, we'll do it. we will obey the voice of the Yahweh our God, [And here they acknowledge now, "Our God"] to whom we send thee that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of Yahweh our God

(42:6).

So there is this promise. "Whatever God says, we will do." This sort of raises a person's hope for the future. Things have been very bleak, very difficult, but now here's a people who are committed, "Whatever God says, we will do. Doesn't matter, whether it's hard or whatever. We'll do it." And as you read this you'll realize, "Alright! Finally they've learned their lesson! They've learned the importance of obedience to God." The Bible says that, "The way of the transgressor is hard." They had transgressed the laws of God, and now they were experiencing the devastation the total devastation of their city, the land, because of their disobedience. They brought it on themselves. Then you say, "Alright, they've learned their lesson."

Now we can always start over again!" That's the glorious thing about God. He gives you opportunity after opportunity to start over again. Mess it up, God will just let you start over again. Start afresh, start anew. The way to start is that commitment. "Lord I won't go my own way, I won't do my own thing. Lord I will obey whatever you say." As I read this I see great hope and all for the future.

We're told that it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah (42:7).

So Jeremiah prayed, he sought the Lord for ten days. Then after the ten days, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, the message for the people.

So Jeremiah called Johanan, and all of the captains of the forces which were with him, and all of the people from the least to the greatest, And he said unto them, Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, unto whom you sent me present your supplication before him; [This is God's word unto you.] If you will just abide in this land, then I will build you, and not pull you down, I will plant you, and not pluck you up, for I have turned from the evil that I have done unto you (42:8-10).

The word repent is a, it is a, an attempt to explain the actions of God in our human language. We are told in the scriptures that, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the Son of Man that He should repent. Has He not spoken, and shall He not make it good?" But in the scriptures we read on several occasions, where God repented him of the evil that He had brought, or whatever. It's just using, you see, talking about God, we're bound to human language. All we have is human language by which to express our self. And where repentance means to us, one thing, a sorrow and a grieving over something that we have done and the acknowledgment that it was wrong. With God, it is only an indication of a turning from a previous activity. The previous activity was His judgement upon Judah. That fierce judgement that He brought. Now God is saying, "I'm turning." In other words, the judgement is complete, as far as God is concerned. "They have suffered for the evil that they did, and so I am turning from the evil that I have done unto them."

So, don't be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; but don't be afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand (42:11).

What a glorious promise that God gave to these people! And how simple are the instructions! "We'll do whatever God tells us to do." Well, what God told them was very very simple! He just said, "Stay here in the land. Don't go down to Egypt, just stay here." And God then promised what He would do for them if they would stay in the land. He would build them up. He would plant them again. And God said, "Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon, for I am with you."

The answer to fear is always the presence of God, and the presence of God, the consciousness that God is always with us. God is always with us, but we're not always conscious of it. But that consciousness of the presence of God is what always dispels fear. David said, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." The presence of God dispelling the fear. When you get to that place where you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, when you are conscious of God's presence there will be no fear there. You won't be afraid to walk into that valley of the shadow of death, because of the presence of God. "Thou art with me."

So God gives His cure for fear and that is the consciousness of the fact that He is with them. "Don't be afraid for I am with you to save you and I will deliver you out of his hand."

And I will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land (42:12).

So, God has promised that He will just be merciful to them if they will just return to their own land.

Now, that's the word of the Lord, that God gave to Jeremiah for the people, and they had said, "Whatever God says, we'll do it. Boy we'll do it! God bear witness, we'll do it." But God went on to warn them.

But if you say, We will not dwell in this land, and neither obey the voice of the Lord your God (42:13),

Now they've already said they would obey, but He said, "If you say",

We're not gonna stay in this land, we're not gonna obey the voice of Yahweh. And you say no we will get into the land of Egypt, where we will see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have any hunger of bread; and there we will dwell: Now therefore hear the word of the Lord, you remnant of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; If you wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and to go to sojourn there; Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which you feared, will overtake you in the land of Egypt, the famine, whereof you were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there you will die (42:13-16).

Now, it is as though God knew that when they promised to obey the voice of God, that they weren't going to obey. And probably the people were talking about, "You know if we can just get down to Egypt, we'll be safe. We'll be beyond the reach of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army and there we can have plenty of bread, and there we can live safely. We won't hear the sound of the trumpets calling people to war and all, and we can just dwell safely." But God is saying that's a false precept. If you go down there you won't dwell safely. "It will come to pass that the sword which you fear, will follow you there and overtake you in the land of Egypt. The famine whereof you were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt, and there you will die."

And 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, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them (42:17).

You will all perish in Egypt. You won't escape. The very things you are trying to escape from, will befall you there. Warning, adequate warning from God.

Now, nine hundred years earlier, God had brought their fathers out of Egypt. For the Egyptians had oppressed them. The Egyptians had made slaves of them, and they were chaffing under the cruel taskmasters of Egypt, that were forcing them in slave labor to actually produce more than they could humanly, possibly produce. It represented bondage. They cried unto God by reason of their bondage in Egypt, and God delivered them and brought them out of the land of Egypt, and gave them the land that He promised unto Abraham. It was a glorious day of God's deliverance!

But now they're going back. What a tragedy. Back to that old life of bondage. Back to the life of the flesh, and as we mentioned this morning, Egypt in biblical typology is always a type of the flesh life. Thus going back to the bondage of the life of the flesh. After having been delivered and being set free. It's a tragedy when a nation when a people who have been made strong by the Lord, leave the Lord and go back to the base things, as they are doing.

For thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel; As my anger and my fury has been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: [Now you see, God knows they're gonna go. They've made all these promises, but God knew they were empty promises. So God talks about the things that are gonna happen when they enter Egypt.] you will be an execration, an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and you won't see this place again (42:18).

"You're gonna be looked down upon when you get there. You're gonna be as dirt, you're gonna be a reproach, and a curse."

And the Lord has said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go not into Egypt: and know certainly that I have admonished you [or warned you] this day. (42:19).

For Jeremiah said unto them, for you dissembled me in your hearts, when you sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according to all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it (42:20).

He said, "You dissemble in your heart, in your heart you weren't sincere. In your heart you had already made up your mind what you were going to do. You were already determined to go to Egypt, and thus when you said, 'you'll do whatever God said for us to do', he said, In your heart you were not sincere, you were

disassembling in your heart when you made that promise and that vow before the Lord.”

So many times we have made up our minds what we are going to do, before we ever seek the Lord. Our seeking of the Lord isn't always a genuine desire to know and to do exactly what God would have us to do. What we're hoping, is that God will approve of what we have already planned to do. You know, it always helps if God is on your side. So, it's sort of the idea of, “Hopefully God will go along with our plans. That'll be a plus, if He doesn't, we're gonna do it anyhow, but wouldn't it be nice if the Lord would approve of what we're going to do.” Evidently, that's what they were hoping that the word of the Lord would say, “Go to Egypt, and I'll be with you, and I'll preserve you, and you'll escape you know, and you don't have to fear.” But what the message came back different. The message just came back, “Stay here. Trust in me. You don't have to be afraid, just trust in me. I'll take care of you, I'll provide for you. I'll do you good. I'll build you up. I will plant you again in the land, and it will be good. It will be well with you. But if you go to Egypt, there's nothing but disaster that awaits you.” What would you do in that case? Well, hopefully you would say, “Well alright! Let's hang around. Let's just see God work.” The idea is just abide, and, “If you'll abide then I will take care of you. I will provide for you”.

Basically that's what the Lord says to us, “Just abide in Christ.” There is the place of safety, there's where the Lord will bless you, and there's where the Lord will prosper you, just abide in Christ. Though the enemy may come against you, you don't have to fear because Christ will be your defense. Just abiding in Christ is such a glorious place! There's where we experience the mercies of God. There's where we experience the grace and the blessings, and the goodness of God, as we abide in Jesus Christ. For Jesus is our protection, and it's a great place. People say, “Well...”, and the life of the flesh looks very enticing, and alluring to them. They are drawn after the flesh so many times. Their heart is there in the world and they're drawn back to the things of the world, rather than abiding in Christ.

And Jeremiah says, And now I have this day declared it to you; but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor any thing for the which he has sent me unto you. [I've told you, but you haven't obeyed.] Now therefore just know for sure that you are going to die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place where you desire to go and to dwell (42:21-22).

“Just know for sure, if you're gonna go down there, you're gonna die down there. You're not going to find the protection that you're looking for. You're not gonna find the satisfaction and the life that you want.”

In reality the life of the flesh can never provide what you're looking for! You see, the problem is that we have fantasies, but reality can never live up to the fantasy. Therefore it's always disappointing. The life of the flesh always leaves you disappointed and empty; and, searching for more. Prophet said, “You're gonna die there, you're not gonna find what you want. Just know that.”

Chapter 43

So, it came to pass, that when Jeremiah had finished speaking to all the people the words of the Lord had spoken, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, even all of these words. Then [this fellow] Azariah the son of Hoshai, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all of the proud men, and they said to Jeremiah, You're speaking falsely; Jehovah our God has not sent you to say, Don't go to Egypt to dwell there (43:1-2).

“That's not true. You're not speaking the truth. God didn't say that to you.” There are so many people who want to serve God on their terms. They want to follow God on their terms. “As long as God tells me the things I want to do are alright, I'll serve God. But He better not cross me, or I'm not gonna serve Him anymore.” And they have such a peculiar concept of what it is to submit your life to God. To really surrender yourself to God. They're all mixed up! “I'll serve the Lord as long as He'll allow me to do this, as long as I can do that. Here I am Lord, I am your servant.” Well yeah, “As long as you go along with me.” But that's not what it's all about.

Here they are, they've asked to hear from God, God has spoken, and now they're saying, “That's not true. God didn't say that.” They were hoping that God would say go down to Egypt, but they say, “God didn't send you to say, ‘Don't go to Egypt.’”

But Baruch put you up to this for he wants to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might

put us to death, and carry us away as captives to Babylon (43:3).

So, they are accusing the prophet of lying with a false motivation. “Your real desire is to see us destroyed.” Not so. But yet, they’re disobeying so they have to have some excuse.

So Johanan and all of the captains of the forces, and all of the people, obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah. [Though they had made the vow, “God be our witness, we will obey”, yet they obeyed not.] But Johanan and all of the forces, took all of the remnant of Judah, that returned from all of the nations, where they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah; Even the men, and the women, and the children, and the king’s daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, the Babylonians had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: thus they came even to Tahpanhes (43:4-7).

So, here we are. The tragedy, back to Egypt. Returning back to the old life after nine hundred years. Back to the place of bondage.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, [Now this, to me, is glorious. The people now, it is hopeless, it’s total utter failure, I mean this is it. They had their warning, they saw the word of God come to pass, they saw Jerusalem destroyed, they realized that Jeremiah was a true prophet of God, and they’d had their opportunity now, once more. God gave them one final opportunity to do what’s right. “Dwell in the land, and it’ll be well with you.” And now they refuse even now, to obey. They’ve been stubborn and rebellious and disobedient to God. That brought on their calamity but now even seeing the calamity, they won’t turn, they just remain in this stance of rebellion against the word of the Lord, and they’ve come to Egypt. At that point, if I were God, I’d say, forget it, and I wouldn’t talk to them again. I would just not. I would say, that’s it, and I would refuse to speak to them again. But to me, the amazing thing is that when they got there in Egypt, back again in total disobedience to God, the voice or,

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, there in Egypt, in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in your hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, with is at the entry of Pharaoh’s house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; And say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them (43:8-10).

So, God’s word to the people. “You’ve come down here, you think that you’re gonna be safe here”, but this pavement in front of the, uh, the pavement stones in front of the king’s palace, there at Tahpanhes, (one of his many palaces through Egypt), and the king’s palace there’s these pavement stones. Jeremiah was told by the Lord to take these great stones, hide them under this pavement. It was to be a sign to the people, he was to say, “When Nebuchadnezzar comes, he’s going to place his throne right here on these stones, here on this pavement. Nebuchadnezzar’s throne will be placed here.” “Over these stones that I have hid; he will spread his throne over them.”

And when he comes, he will smite the land over Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as for the sword to the sword. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace (43:11-12).

Like a shepherd takes his cloak and throws it over his shoulder, and walks off, so Nebuchadnezzar’s going to take the land of Egypt. Just throw it over his shoulder and walk off. God’s just gonna deliver it into Nebuchadnezzar’s hands, and he’s just gonna carry them away, like a shepherd takes his cloak and throws it over his shoulder, walking off. So will he walk off.

He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; [Now there’s a Bethshemesh in Israel, so to distinguish them, they said the Bethshemesh, which means the house of the sun, which is.... The sun god Rab was the chief God of the Egyptians. He’ll break the images of Bethshemesh, or Rab the sun god,] and the houses of the Egyptians shall be burned with fire (43:13).

So, Egypt is not going to be a place of refuge, you’ve come here but Nebuchadnezzar is going to come and destroy this place.

Now, an interesting side light, an archeological note. A few years back, an archeologist by the name of Flinders Petrick, in doing excavation at Tahpanhes, they discovered the palace there of the king, of the Pharaoh of Egypt. So the pavement stones that were in front of the palace, they began to dig under them, and under the pavement stones there at Tahpanhes they found the huge rocks that Jeremiah had placed there as a sign for the people. They discovered those.

God's word was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar came down and conquered Egypt. The people who disobeyed God, were destroyed through their disobedience. God's word is sure. God's word is steadfast. Yet people question the word of God. People challenge the word of God. Some are so foolish as to even disobey the word of God, taking their chances. But the old Greek proverb says, "The dice of the gods are loaded." By which they say, or are saying, that you cannot go against God and win! It's impossible for you to go against God and come out ahead! You're going to experience the tragic consequences anytime you set your heart and your mind to disobey the commands of the Lord.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. As we've said before, "God has not prohibited one good thing." In fact God has required that you do that which is good, and that which is right. God has only prohibited those things that are destructive to you, and to your relationships. Those things that destroy, God said that, "You shall not do those." Those things that are good and beneficial, wholesome, and right, God says, "These are the things you should do." "He has shown you O man what is good." What the Lord requires of you is that you do justly. That you love mercy and that you walk humbly with your God. Now that's not too big a deal!

It's sort of like what God said to the people. "It's not hard! Just abide here in the land. If you just abide here, I'll be with you, I'll bless you, I'll take care of you. You don't have to fear. I'll watch over you, and I'll plant you, and I'll do all these things for you, if you just will abide. If you disobey, these are the calamities." And you say, "Oh those stupid people! When are they gonna learn?" I'm sure the angels are saying that about a lot of you! "When are you gonna learn to obey the Lord, and walk after His commands, which are for your good." Shall we pray.

Father, help us. Lord we see the tragedy of a people who would not listen. Who were determined to go their own way, to do their own thing, in spite of your warnings. Somehow thinking that they could escape the consequences of disobedience. But Lord we see the tragic consequences that did befall them. The very things that they were trying to escape from, overtook them there. Lord we see people today doing the same thing. Their hearts are determined to go to Egypt to live in Egypt, to live after the flesh. But Lord, You'd given them adequate warnings and the dangers of the life of the flesh. It's death! Yet Lord, they pursue that life of the flesh, to death.

We see, O God, the sad and tragic results. Broken lives, broken homes, destroyed families. Because people won't obey and hearken to your voice. God may we be those who do listen, who do obey, who seek your face, who follow your commandments, who live after righteousness. May we not turn our hearts towards Egypt, but may we turn our hearts towards You, to follow You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Shall we stand. God is not finished talking to the people, though they have made these tragic mistakes. In chapter forty four, our next lesson, we'll find what God is saying to the people, who have failed so completely. But God still talks.

As long as God is still talking, there's still hope. If God is no longer talking to your heart, then you're in real bad shape. I mean, you've gone over the line. If God is still speaking to your heart, if there's that nudging within your spirit, if there's still that voice that's saying, "You know, you need to really follow the Lord. You need to really surrender your life to God." As long as that voice is still there, there's hope. There's hope. But it's awesome to realize that there can come a day when that voice will no longer be there. When God quits talking, it's all over. So God is still talking to the people. There's still hope, if they'll but listen. They can still salvage what's left.

May God give us, not only ears to hear, but a heart that will respond to the things of God, to the ways of God, that we might be the people of God. Thus may you go forth as a light shining in darkness, a witness for Jesus Christ, through the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit. May the light of His love shine forth in your life, bringing hope to this dying world. In Jesus' name.

