



LESSON 25 AFTERMATH

Israel		Judah	
Jeroboam	931–910	Rehoboam	931–913
Nadab	910–909	Abijah	913–911
Baasha	909–886	Asa	911–870
Elah	886–885		
Zimri	885		
Omri	885–874		
Ahab	874–853	Jehoshaphat	873–848
Ahaziah	853–852		
Joram	852–841	Jehoram	848–841
Jehu	841–814	Ahaziah	841
		Athaliah	841–835
Jehoahaz	814–798	Joash	835–796
Jehoash	798–782	Amaziah	796–767
Jeroboam II	793–753	Uzziah	792–740
Zechariah	753		
Shallum	752		
Menahem	752–742	Jotham	750–731
Pekahiah	742–740		
Pekah	752–732	Ahaz	735–715
Hoshea	732–722	Hezekiah	729–686
		Manasseh	696–642
		Amon	642–640
		Josiah	640–609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoiakim	608–598
		Jehoiachin	598–597
		Zedekiah	597–586

Jerusalem, along with the other fortified cities of Judah, lay in ruins. The Lord's Temple had been stripped of anything of value, then burned to the ground. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, had been blinded and taken bound to Babylon. The people, except for the poorest of the poor, had been taken captive and resettled in Babylon. One would hope that in the aftermath of such a disaster those who remained would have turned to the Lord, submitting to His will so that they could once again be blessed. However, the text reveals the opposite to be true; the people would continue in rebellion and would suffer the consequences.

Gedaliah Slain (2Kings 25.22-25; Jeremiah 40-41)

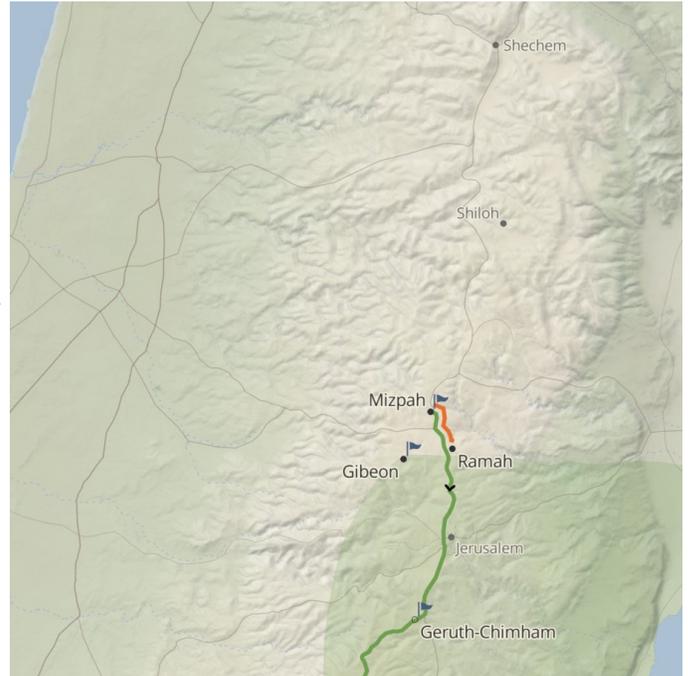
The policy of the Babylonians toward conquered peoples was different than that of the Assyrians. Not only did the Babylonians resettle populations together, rather than dispersing them, they would also appoint a local official to govern the remaining population, so long as they remained loyal to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar chose Gedaliah to govern the people, and his headquarters was located at Mizpah (~ 8 miles north of Jerusalem). Significantly, Gedaliah was of the royal family and was the son of a man, Ahikam, who'd previously come

to the defense of Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 26.24). Speaking of Jeremiah, once he was freed from prison by the Babylonians he was given the choice to go to Babylon or remain in the land. He chose to remain with Gedaliah and the rest of the people at Mizpah (Jeremiah 40.1-6).

Gedaliah's governorship had a promising beginning as the people gath-

ered to him at Mizpah, including their brethren who'd previously fled to Moab, Ammon, Edom and other countries (Jeremiah 40.11). Gedaliah promised the people that he would "stay at Mizpah to stand for you before the Chaldeans who come to us; but as for you, gather in wine and summer fruit and oil and put them in your storage vessels, and live in your cities that you have taken over." (Jeremiah 40.10) And it would seem that they were blessed by the Lord as they "gathered in wine and summer fruit in great abundance" (Jeremiah 40.12).

Tragically, other forces were at work. Baalis, the king of Ammon, conspired with a Jew named Ishmael to murder Gedaliah. We don't know what motivated the conspirators, perhaps the king of Ammon was not content with a Jewish remnant still living in the land; perhaps he had designs on the land for himself. Another Israelite named Johanan became aware of the plot and warned the governor, even offered to slay Ishmael before the conspiracy could act (Jeremiah 40.15), but Gedaliah would not believe the report. Only 2 months after Jerusalem was destroyed, Ishmael acted by slaying not only Gedaliah, but all of those who were with him... including Babylonians (Jeremiah 41.2-3)! Ishmael's rampage continued the next day as he slew 80 men who had journeyed from Shechem, sparing only those who promised to reveal where they'd hidden supplies (Jeremiah 41.4-8). Finally, Ishmael rounded up all of the inhabitants of Mizpah and set out for Ammon, but Johanan was able to overtake Ishmael and rescue the people. However, more trials were in store, for the people "went and stayed in Geruth Chimham, which is beside Bethlehem, in order to proceed into Egypt because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, since Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had struck down Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land." (Jeremiah 41:17-18, NASB95)

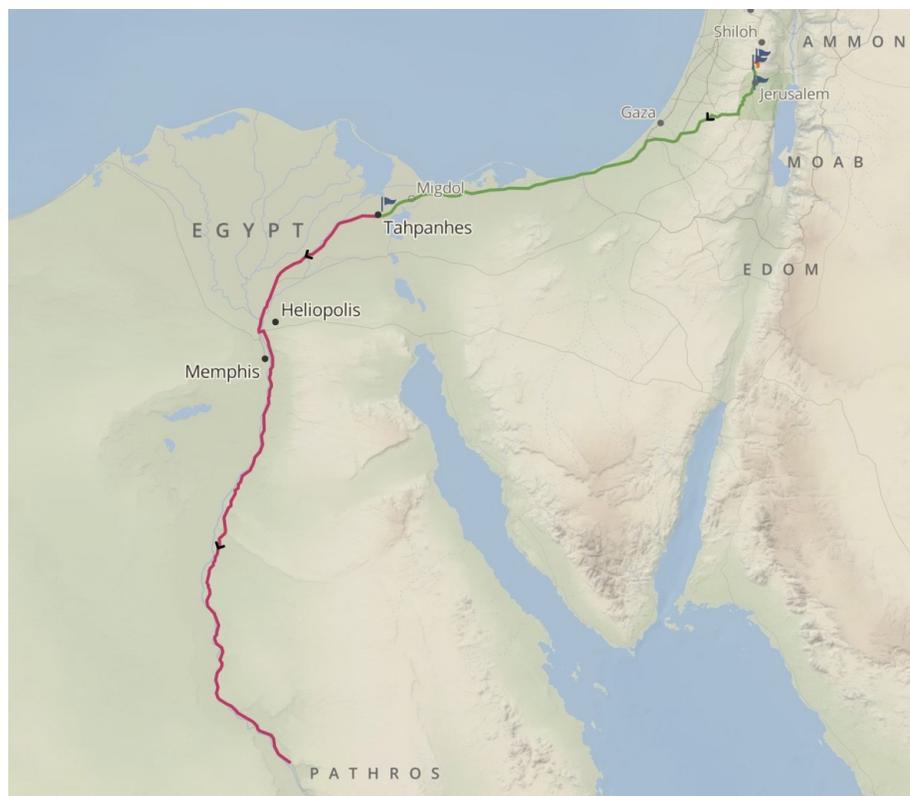


Flight to Egypt (2Kings 25.26; Jeremiah 42-44)

Jeremiah 42 begins with a hopeful note as Johanan and the rest of the people approach Jeremiah, asking the prophet to inquire of the Lord as to what they should do. They even swore to heed the Lord's counsel, saying "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with the whole message with which the LORD your God will send you to us. Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will listen to the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you, so that it may go well with us when we

listen to the voice of the LORD our God.” (Jeremiah 42:5–6, NASB95) However, the people proved to be false. The message of the Lord was that they should stay in the land, submitting to Babylon, and they would be blessed. Furthermore, the Lord warned that if they fled to Egypt “then the sword, which you are afraid of, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are anxious, will follow closely after you there in Egypt, and you will die there” (Jeremiah 42:16, NASB95). The people accused Jeremiah of lying and not only fled to Egypt, but compelled Jeremiah to go with them (Jeremiah 43:1-6)!

Their first stop in Egypt was Taphanes, in the eastern Nile River delta. There the Lord instructed Jeremiah to hide stones in Pharaoh's palace for “I am going to send and get Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and I am going to set his throne right over these stones that I have hidden; and he will spread his canopy over them. He will also come and strike the land of Egypt; those who are meant for death will be given over to death, and those for captivity to captivity, and those for the sword to the sword.” (Jeremiah 43:10–11, NASB95) Nebuchadnezzar would have future campaigns in Egypt and “a fragmentary text now owned by the British Museum in London states that Nebuchadnezzar carried out a punitive expedition against Egypt in his thirty-seventh year (568-567 B.C.), during the reign of Pharaoh Amasis” (Archaeological Study Bible, Page 1265).



Jeremiah 44 begins with an appeal to the people, reminding them of all the calamity they had experienced and declaring that their continued obsti-

nacy would only result in further disaster. But the people, afflicted as they were, would not listen! “As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you! But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune. But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have met our end by the sword and by famine.” (Jeremiah 44:16–18, NASB95) And so the Lord’s message to the people concludes with a pronouncement of judgment: “Behold, I am watching over them for harm and not for good, and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone.” (Jeremiah 44:27, NASB95)

Perhaps no verse better encapsulates the attitude of the people toward the Lord during the entire period of the divided kingdom than Jeremiah 44.7: “Why are you doing great harm to yourselves, so as to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, from among Judah, leaving yourselves without remnant...?” The history of Israel was one of self-inflicted harm, all resulting from their rejection of the Lord. The lesson for us should be obvious...

“Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:11–12, NASB95)