

JEREMIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 40 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the fall of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. And let me just share with you what transpired here. We are told in II Kings 25:1-12 of the events and it was not pretty. We are told, **“Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king’s garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon. And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord and the king’s house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the”**

guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.”

As you can see, the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians was massive and it was complete. The cities were burned and the land left barren. Jeremiah, who was put in prison by his own people, is now released and the Babylonians give him a choice, to either go with them to Babylon or remain in Jerusalem, and he chooses to stay.

And keep in mind that this was all the result of the Jewish people refusing to repent of their sin and return to the Lord. God warned them for years and they refused to listen and thus, judgment came, they were going into captivity for seventy years in Babylon!

That is where we will pick up our study this evening in Jeremiah chapter 40 beginning in verse 1, after this Babylonian invasion as Jeremiah continues to speak to the remnant of Jews remaining in the land. And let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

JEREMIAH 40

VERSES 1-3

1. Here we have some more details of Jeremiah's release. After his release from prison it seems that he somehow got mixed up with the other prisoners and he is taken to Ramah, which was the staging area for their departure to Babylon as prisoners. Ramah was located about five miles north of Jerusalem.

Now we don't know how but the captain of guard recognized Jeremiah and here is this pagan man who understood why the Jews were going into captivity, why the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. He told Jeremiah, "**... Because you people have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you.**" Jeremiah 40:3.

2. Think about that one. That had to hurt when the unsaved steps in and exposes the sin of God's own people. He was rebuking them. Why did God allow that? Because if we aren't cleaning our own house; God will use others, the unsaved, to expose our evil. Nebuzaradan is doing just that, exposing the evil of Judah before Jeremiah.

And man does that. What did Pilate say in Luke 23:4, "**... 'I find no fault in this Man.'**" God's own people, the Jews were accusing Jesus of blasphemy, of breaking the Roman law but Pilate saw no fault in Him because there was none!

And what did the Roman centurion say as Jesus gave up His Spirit as He hung on the cross of Calvary, "**... 'Truly this was the Son of God!'**" Matthew 27:54. God's own people, the Jews were cursing Him and denying that He was the Son of God, the Messiah and yet this Roman centurion recognized who He was!

And we see this even today as the secular world, the secular media has exposed corrupt ministers and ministries because the church refused to do so. And that really is a black mark on the church. If the unsaved can see the evil in these people why is the church so blind? We should be embarrassed!

VERSES 4-6

1. Just as God promised Jeremiah He was bringing to pass. Jeremiah could go to Babylon and be cared for or he could remain in Jerusalem. He was free! I believe Jeremiah recognized that God had prophets in Babylon already, Daniel and Ezekiel, and thus, he was going to remain with those that were going to be left in the land so he could minister to them.

So he goes to Mizpah, which was about eight miles north of Jerusalem and meets up with Gedaliah who was appointed governor of the land by the Babylonians. Now this may seem a bit confusing since it seemed like Jeremiah was released by the Babylonians back in Jeremiah chapter 39 and now he is captured again and released again. What is that all about?

Huey explains it like this, “Jeremiah was released from the court of the guard on Nebuchadnezzar’s orders and committed to the care of Gedaliah. In the confusion of captives being led away to Babylon, Jeremiah was not recognized and was arrested again and put in chains. He was recognized by officials in Ramah and released on Nebuzaradan’s orders.” (F. B. Huey, Jr., Jeremiah, Lamentations, New American Commentary, pp. 340-341)

2. We don’t know a lot about Gedaliah but he was a good man, he did obey the voice of God. But one of his downfalls was that he was very naïve about things and if you are a leader you have to be wise or people will take advantage of you or as we will see, they will try to kill you! I think that fits in with what Jesus said in Matthew 10:16, “**Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.**”

Sheep are not able to protect themselves. There are no killer sheep and to put a sheep and a wolf together is not a good thing, at least not good for the sheep. But the Lord is the one who is sending us out into the den of the wolves and thus, He tells us we need to be wise as serpents. Not obnoxious, but wise, be guided by His Spirit.

And not only wise but gentle or harmless as doves. We are not to kill the enemy with physical weapons but with our love because it may be that the wolf may become a sheep! That is impossible! True, but with God all things are possible and you once were a wolf but now, in Christ you are a sheep! Don't forget that! May we be wise as serpents, but gentle as doves!

VERSES 7-12

1. Keep in mind that when the Babylonians were attacking the Southern Kingdom of Judah many of the Jews fled. And that is what we see here. These men were hiding out and now that the coast was clear they began to show their faces again. They hear of Gedaliah being governor and they go to meet him. Now out of all the names we just read, Ishmael and Johanan will impact this story as we shall see.

We even see Jews who fled out of the land of Israel; they fled to Moab, Edom and other countries. And now that this siege is over and things seem to be settling down, they too are returning home to the land of Israel!

2. We also see here that Gedaliah is going to rule from Mizpah, which was a city of Benjamin. Not only that but he was working with the Babylonians, he was not fighting against them. He was telling the people to submit to the Babylonians and just continue on with their lives and things will go well for you. It was the will of God for the people. And you would think at this point the people would have been happy just to live in the land.

Yes, they couldn't harvest at this point because they haven't been able to plant for a few years while the siege was going on. But they could gather what was left in the fields. But when your eyes are not focused on the Lord you will never be satisfied and trouble will follow you.

God never said it would be easy but He did say He would be with us and we need to keep that in mind as we are following His direction, as we walk by faith! We need to not only walk by faith but also trust God for all that we need, to rest in Him! As one writer put it,

God's providence gives us a security in this insecure, often violent world. The Lord sits enthroned over all the military, political, social and economic forces of our generation and his eternal predetermined purposes are ripening through it all. Nothing has got out of hand, nor will it. We can therefore live day by day knowing that the hands which hold our lives are the same hands which hold all things.

- Bruce Milne, Know the Truth, p. 88

VERSES 13-14

1. We are not sure how Johanan found out about this assassination plot against Gedaliah, but he did. The Ammonites hired Ishmael to murder Gedaliah, maybe because he sided with the Babylonians and they of course did not want to submit to the Babylonians. Why did Ishmael agree to this? As we get into chapter 41 in a few minutes we will get some insight that might explain the reason for his actions, for his siding with the Ammonites. But this assassination plot is revealed to Gedaliah and how is he going to respond to it? We are told he did not believe it!

VERSES 15-16

1. So Johanan is convinced of this assassination plot by Ishmael and he goes secretly to Gedaliah and tells him what is going to take place. In fact, he wants Gedaliah to give him permission to go and kill this traitor! To kill Ishmael before Ishmael kills Gedaliah!

But the governor won't allow it; he doesn't believe it is going to happen. Why did Gedaliah refuse any help, why didn't he believe Johanan? We are not sure, he may have been very naïve but we don't know for sure.

Some wonder why God didn't speak to Jeremiah so he could warn Gedaliah. But don't miss the point, God was speaking to Gedaliah through Johanan, he just refused to believe it!

2. Now you may be thinking, "What in the world does this have to do with me?" Good question. What does Ishmael represent in the Scriptures? Ishmael is a type of the flesh. Paul makes that point in Galatians 4:22-23 where we are told, "**For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise.**"

Now how does this relate to us? Simple, when we are doing something wrong, when we are going down a destructive path, God will bring those Johanan's to us to warn us of the danger. And we can listen and be free or we can close our ears and the flesh will put us into bondage!

Paul put it like this in Romans 8:13 what we are to do with the flesh, **“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** The King James Version puts it like this, **“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”** And The Amplified Bible says, **“For if you live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever.”**

It is as the Scottish Theologian David Brown wrote, “If you don't kill sin, it will kill you.” That is absolutely true! Now for us as Christians, we are to put to death or mortify the flesh, the deeds of the body. It is the same word that is used in Romans 8:36 for **“killed.”** But the big question is, how do we mortify the flesh, how do we put to death the flesh? For some, they think it speaks of physical mortification, as some will be nailed to a cross at Easter time. For others, it is a life of isolation from the world. For others, it is just a life of denying this and denying that and as they do they believe they are mortifying the flesh, putting it to death, killing it! I disagree.

Folk's, Paul tells us exactly how this is done and it is not by our efforts, it is not by our strength. He tells us in Romans 8:13, "**... but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**" The Amplified Bible puts it like this, "**... But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever.**"

You see, it is not by our might nor by our power, but by the Spirit of God working in us and through us. It is allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, surrendering our lives to Him. That is how we are to put to death the flesh! You see, the flesh wants to destroy us but God wants to give us life, abundant life that is only found in Him!

3. Again, we must be wise in the things we do and respond to the things that God has shown us. I must admit that God has shown me some things that I did not want to believe, and as they came to pass I found out that I would have been much wiser to listen and respond when He first spoke than to respond after the fact!

I have also seen how God spoke to me regarding a difficult situation and how to respond, and I have seen how it has worked out for His glory. It is far wiser to obey the voice of God than to shut your ears to what He is saying. For Gedaliah, his unbelief would bring him death as we will see as we read on.

JEREMIAH 41**VERSES 1-3**

1. Now we get a little insight into why this Jewish man, Ishmael, sided with Baalis the King of the Ammonites. Ishmael was of the royal family and maybe he felt that he should have been in charge instead of Gedaliah. And so when the Ammonites made this deal with him he saw it as a great opportunity to usurp this position from Gedaliah.

And notice how deceptive the flesh can be. As they were feasting together with Gedaliah, Ishmael and his 10 men not only killed Gedaliah, but also all the Jews who were eating with him, and the Babylonian soldiers that were left behind to keep order in the land so there would be no uprising against Babylon. I guess they were also caught off guard by Ishmael and his men and Ishmael did not want to leave any witnesses behind.

2. Now why in the world did Gedaliah have this feast with Ishmael? Why was Gedaliah eating with the enemy leaving himself vulnerable? He was already warned of the danger so why did he do this? Because he did not believe there was any real danger, he did not see Ishmael as a threat!

What a warning to us who believe we can handle the flesh, nothing wrong with having a good time even though God said that the activity you are doing is wrong. Yes God has warned you not to do that but He is not really talking to me, that is not what He really means, times have changed and we have to flow with the times we are living in. And the foolishness goes on until the flesh destroys our lives!

VERSES 4-8

1. So far everything is okay; no one knows what took place. Then we see these eighty men coming from the Northern Kingdom of Israel or what was the Northern Kingdom of Israel, mourning over the destruction of the Temple.

They came with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, which is a sign of deep sorrow or mourning over what happened to Jerusalem, the city of God and the Temple of God.

They also cut themselves and this was not something that God ordained. This was a pagan practice that God forbid in Leviticus 19:27-28 and Deuteronomy 14:1. Keep in mind that the Northern Kingdom, as well as the Southern Kingdom of Judah had fallen into pagan practices and we see that here.

And they bring offerings to the Lord and it would seem that they were going to Jerusalem, to the burned down Temple, the place where the house of the Lord once stood because they still felt that the land was sacred.

2. So as they are traveling, coming to Mizpah, Ishmael goes out to meet them and he too is mourning or pretending to mourn over what has happened. Once again you can see the deception of this guy Ishmael. And he invites them to come and see Gedaliah, even though he already killed this man. And it is here that he kills seventy of the eighty men, throws them into a pit, and ten men are spared.

What I want you to see here is that the flesh is deceptive; we think we can handle it, but in the end it consumes our lives. Mortify the flesh or it will destroy you!

3. Now why were these ten men spared, why didn't Ishmael kill them as well? We see that they begged for their lives to be spared but don't think that Ishmael spared them out of mercy. No, he did it for money, for food.

VERSES 9-12

1. Why is Ishmael leaving town? Because he knows when word gets back to Babylon that he not only killed the governor that King Nebuchadnezzar put in place but some of his soldiers as well, he would come after him. So he takes some of the people captive with him, including the King's daughters and he goes to take refuge with the Ammonites. And as he begins his journey, he does not get too far before trouble comes his way.

Johanan hears what has taken place and he goes after Ishmael with the men he gathered together. And they found him and all the people he took captive with him at the pool that is located in Gibeon.

2. The people of God are taken captive by the flesh, by Ishmael and what does Johanan do? He goes after them to destroy the flesh that has them in bondage and to set them free. What an example for us to follow. When we see a brother or sister in Christ who is being destroyed by the flesh, fleshly desires, we should come alongside them and love them, share God's Word with them so they can be set free!

What about the lost? They too are in bondage to the flesh and the only way that they are going to be set free is through Jesus Christ. Thus, we go and try to rescue them from the bondage that they are in and set them free in Christ!

VERSES 13-18

1. So Johanan comes and rescues those that have been taken captive by Ishmael which allows Ishmael time to escape with eight of his men to the Ammonites for protection. Everything seems to be going well, things are getting back to the way they were. That is until Johanan takes his eyes off the Lord and places it on the situation that is before him.

You see, things may have been rectified with Ishmael in that the people were free but Johanan also recognizes that once the King of Babylon finds out what has happened he is going to be furious and he is going to retaliate. He is going to come after them and put down this rebellion before it grows and gets out of hand. That is what Johanan is thinking about at this time, he knew the temper, the anger, the brutality of this King in Babylon.

So, because of fear, Johanan is going to take all these people and travel down to Egypt for safety. Now you may wonder why Egypt and the reason is pretty simple. Egypt was the only country in the region that was free from Babylonian control at this time. Johanan and his group went south toward Bethlehem, camping at Chimham.

This is interesting to me because things are tough, uncertainty is before them, and they have allowed fear to drive them back into the world for help, Egypt being a type of the world in the Scriptures. But we need to remember, we need to understand that the world has nothing that will benefit you in your relationship with God, in your Christian walk. The lesson God wants us to learn is simple, seek your help, your strength, your comfort from the Lord instead of the world which can't help you but only cause you more problems. They are going to find this out the hard way because they let the fear of man drive them instead of the fear of the Lord guide them!

Listen to what the Lord has to say about this. First of all in Isaiah 30:1-2 we read, **“‘Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; Who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!’”**

Also, in Isaiah 31:1-3 we read, **“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD! Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, and will not call back His words, but will arise against the house of evildoers, and against the help of those who work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out His hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down; they all will perish together.”**

There is the warning that they were aware of, besides other portions of the Scriptures that warned them not to go to Egypt, but they refused to listen as we see here.

2. Now before they make this journey they are going to ask Jeremiah what they should do, what God would have them to do! It sounds great, the only problem is they are not going to be interested in what God has to say, they have made up their minds already as we will see!

JEREMIAH 42**VERSES 1-3**

1. As you read this it sounds great, they want to know what the Lord would have them do in this situation and they were willing to obey no matter what was said to them. It seems that Johanan is doing the right thing, that he is a good leader.

But as you read this you can see that there is something he says that should tip us off that not all is well. You see, he asks Jeremiah to pray to **“your God”** and not ***“OUR God.”*** They did not have a relationship with God and as we are going to see, they are not going to be willing to submit to His authority in their life, to do those things that the Lord is asking them to do. It is all talk and no action. They looked spiritual but their hearts were far from God. Maybe they just wanted God to bless their trip to Egypt!

2. I have seen people do this very thing. Many years ago when I was an assistant pastor in Chicago a woman from the church called me up and said that she wanted a divorce. I explained to her that she did not have grounds for divorce, biblically speaking.

She did not like what I was saying, she wanted me to bless her and what she was doing, give her the thumbs up and I wouldn't, not even after she told me that her Christian friends at work told her that it was okay for her to divorce her husband. I again explained to her what the Scriptures had to say but she was not interested, she wanted to do what she wanted to do with the churches blessing and I was not going to give it to her and neither was God, which is far more important! I think that is what we see here with Johanan and the people who were with him.

VERSES 4-6

1. Here again we see them come across as desiring to do all that God wants them to do, but as we are going to see, it is all talk and no action!

2. J. Vernon McGee had this to say regarding Jeremiah's promise to give them all that God has spoken to him, "**. . . that whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare it to you, I will keep nothing back from you.**" Jeremiah 42:4. He wrote,

Any person who is attempting to speak for God, no matter whether his medium be the pulpit, radio, or even a soapbox, should lay aside all attempts at being clever and subtle. He should give forth the Word of God with no attempt at being sophisticated and saying smooth words to please the people. When the pulpit majors in positive thinking and ignores the negatives, it becomes weak and is only a sounding board just to say back to the people what they want to hear. . . .

Unfortunately, I think that is much of what the modern pulpit is today. That is the reason it has become extremely weak and has no message for this hour in which we live. When the pulpit can give out God's Word as Jeremiah did, with nothing being held back, letting it say what God means for it to say, then the Word of God will become effective again in our day.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. III, p. 415

3. Amen to that! Now let's read on because Jeremiah is going to tell the remnant what God wants them to do!

VERSE 7

1. Why did it take 10 days for the Lord to answer Jeremiah? We don't know, but God has His timing and it is perfect. All He asks us to do is to wait upon Him and then when He speaks that we would not only listen, but obey His voice.

Many times we are like the Psalmist who said, "**Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble; incline Your ear to me; in the day that I call, answer me speedily.**" Psalm 102:1-2.

That is not always the way that God answers, and as we learn to wait upon the Lord we are building our faith, our trust in Him knowing He will answer in His time and according to His will. He is working in us!

VERSES 8-12

1. Jeremiah calls Johanan and all the people together and shares with them God's will in this situation. He tells them they are not to go down to Egypt, they are told not to run away but to remain in the land and God would provide for them. Do not fear the King of Babylon, do not fear man but fear the Lord or to put it another way – ***TRUST IN THE LORD!*** Here is the blessing for obedience and even though it may be difficult, the Lord is with them to save them, to deliver them and thus, ***TRUST IN THE LORD!***

2. As we read on we will see the consequence if they refuse to obey the Lord and disobedience to God's will is never a good thing, ***NEVER!***

VERSES 13-17

1. Why were they going down to Egypt in the first place? Because they feared what the Babylonians would do to them. They feared the sword, famine, pestilence. But God is warning them that if they do go down to Egypt that is exactly what they will face down there. Everything that happened in Jerusalem would happen to them down in Egypt - they will die by the sword, they would be full of fear, there would be severe famine for them, death, plagues, disaster, wrath, cursing, horror, condemnation and-so-on.

But, if you stay in the land of Israel none of these things will come upon you, that was a promise from God and now it was their choice to remain in the land of God and be protect by God or leave and go to Egypt and face disaster down there!

VERSES 18-22

1. God is stressing His point on what they are not to do, go down to Egypt. You would think they would get it but they don't get it. They let the fear of man drive them to Egypt instead of the fear of God lead them into safety in the Promise Land. And we do the same with God when He tells us not to do something, we have our reasons for disobeying Him but no matter how good they may be, they are still wrong!

2. What I find interesting here is that even before the people responded back to Jeremiah what they were going to do, God revealed to Jeremiah what was in their hearts, what they were going to do, that they never intended to listen to what the Lord had said.

And talk about a tough ministry! Jeremiah's entire ministry consisted of speaking the Word of the Lord to the people, which was great but then he was ignored by the people!

3. Now as we move into Jeremiah chapter 43 we will see the response of the people.

JEREMIAH 43

VERSES 1-4

1. As Jeremiah finished sharing the Word of God with the people, the ones who said they would obey whatever the Lord tells them, they now accuse Jeremiah of lying, they are denying that these words are the Words of God and they see that there is some conspiracy with Baruch so that they would be taken captive by the Babylonians!

Not only are they accusing Jeremiah of not speaking the Words of God, but they are saying that Baruch has influenced him to say these things. Think about that for a minute. His whole life Jeremiah has proclaimed the truths of God in the face of all kinds of persecution and even threats of death.

And now Baruch is going to get him to lie? No way! But that is so typical of people. They cry out, "Lord, whatever your will is for my life, I will do!" And as the Lord speaks to them through His Word or by the pastor, a friend, a counselor, they become angry because what God's Word is saying and what these people are saying goes against what they want to do.

And this is so typical of man! We say that we will do whatever the Lord says, we will obey the Words of God no matter what He says until it goes against what we want to do. That is what has taken place here, they already decided what they wanted to do and because of that they turned themselves off from hearing the voice of God. And the tragedy is that by not obeying the voice of God they were heading for a life of death and destruction. If God has spoken something in His Word you need to listen!

2. Now what is the main reason they came to this conclusion? I will give you a little clue, it is just one word, five letters. It was PRIDE that caused them to come to this conclusion, they were not wrong. Look at what verse 2 says, “... all the proud men spoke ...”

Pride is a terrible thing because it causes people to do things that are contrary to the will and the Word of God. And how many today are in cults, false religious systems and they refuse Jesus because of pride, they know they are right, they just feel it! May we be wise and follow what John said in Revelation 1:3, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

VERSES 5-7

1. Here we see Johanan and his followers taking by force the people who were left in Judah, including Jeremiah and Baruch, and they go down to Egypt settling in the area of Tahpanhes. This was a fortress city located on the boarder of lower northern Egypt.

2. Think about this for a minute. God delivered His people from the bondage of Egypt some 860 years earlier. Now they are **WALKING** back into the world! And we can be hard against these people but don't Christian's do the very same thing today? God has delivered us from this world, the bondage of sin and death, and we see Christian's walk right back into the same place that God has delivered them from. They go there looking for freedom but they find themselves right back in bondage.

Our only freedom is found in Christ, it is not found in this world. Remember what Peter said when Jesus asked him if he was going to leave Him also, “**. . . ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’**” John 6:68-69.

Peter hits the nail on the head here. Yes, it is not always easy to follow Christ. The challenges we face, but where else can you go, who are you going to run to? Are you going to run to the world? Did the world ever have the answers you needed, not what you wanted but what you needed? Of course not, only the Lord does. There is no one else who loves you more, who has what is best for your life than Jesus, His Words are eternal life. Yes, the world may tempt us but it can't give us life, it can't give us joy and satisfaction, for that is only found in Jesus as we partake of Him.

Also, remember what Jesus said in John 8:36, “**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**” We are in bondage in this world to all kinds of things and thus, our freedom comes only in the Son, in Jesus!

Also, as Paul said in Galatians 5:1, “**Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**” Remember where your freedom is found, in Christ!

VERSES 8-13

1. As they arrive in Egypt, in Tahpanhes the Lord tells Jeremiah to take some large stones and hide them at the entrance of Pharaoh's house there in Tahpanhes. These stones were to be used as an object lesson for the people. Kind of a strange object lesson but as we look at verse 10 we see what this was all about!

2. You see, on this very spot where Jeremiah places these stones, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon will come and set up a temporary pavilion as he conquers the Egyptians. Interestingly enough there was a British Egyptologist who was doing some excavating in this area and he found the very stones that Jeremiah spoke of. There is also a fragment of an ancient text that describes what the King of Babylon did as they marched against Egypt! This is a witness to the truth of God's Word that down to the smallest detail God's Word is true!

As Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt he took captive Pharaoh Hophra, setting up his court on that very same spot where Jeremiah placed those stones. Now why did the Jew's flee to Egypt in the first place?

They fled to Egypt to find safety from Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. The very thing they were afraid of and tried to escape in the world from, came upon them. They didn't escape and God had warned them they wouldn't if they ran to Egypt for safety. When you run away from God you don't run away from your fears, you run right into them. The Jew's who fled to Egypt found this out.

And as the Lord describes this invasion in verses 11 and 12 we see that it is going to be like a walk in the park for the Babylonians. It is going to be as easy to take Egypt as it is for a shepherd to put on his garment.

3. As the chapter closes we see that “**the sacred pillars of Beth Shemesh**” are going to be broken. Please keep in mind that this Beth Shemesh is not the same Beth Shemesh that is located in Israel. We are told specifically that this one is in Egypt and its name means “House of the Sun” and it is related to the Egyptian sun god – RE or RA. Osiris was the god of the Nile River. And the Egyptians were polytheistic, they worshiped many gods. And now God is bringing judgment upon them and their gods by the hands of the Babylonians.

4. As I close this evening let me leave you with these words from John Calvin regarding trusting in the Lord, obeying his voice. He wrote, “We have then here set before us the hypocrisy of that people, so that we may learn that whenever we ask what pleases God, we should bring a pure and sincere heart, so that nothing may prevent or hinder us immediately to embrace whatever God may command us.”

God has given to us His Word, He has warned us and now we can listen and obey or reject what He has said and we will suffer the consequences for our actions. Remember what John said in Revelation 1:3, “**Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.**”