

Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 19

In 40:1-6, Jeremiah is released by Nebuchadnezzar's general. Speaking Yahweh's "word," the general repeats a summary of Jeremiah's oracles over the past 35 years concerning the sins and judgment of the people of Judah. He also offers Jeremiah three choices:

1. He can come with him back to Babylon where the general will look after him.
2. He does not have to accept the general's offer and is free to go wherever he likes.
3. He can join Gedaliah and the people staying in Judah at Mizpah.

The narrative from 40:7-41:18 continues in seven sections that are linked by the repetition of certain phrases that come at the beginning of each section in the Hebrew text:

1. ... *all the military leaders* (40:7)
2. ... *and all the military leaders* (40:13)
3. *And it happened* (41:1)
4. *And it happened* (41:4)
5. *And it happened* (41:7)
6. ...*and all the military leaders* (41:11)
7. ...*and all the military leaders* (41:16)

Gedaliah welcomed the Judean soldiers who had avoided capture and, as the Babylonian governor of Judah, he made them a generous offer in 40:9-10 when he swore:

1. They had nothing to fear from the Babylonians because Gedaliah would protect them.
2. They are invited to make use of the food supplies.
3. They are invited to settle in any towns they take under their control.

When was Gedaliah assassinated? Was it three months or three to four years after the fall of Jerusalem?

1. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in July of 587 BC.
2. Summer fruits are harvested in August-September (40:12).
3. The seventh month in 41:1 was the month of Tishri in the Jewish calendar (September/October).
4. The pilgrim feast of Tabernacles/Shelters is in the month of Tishri (September/October) and explains the arrival of the pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem in 41:4-5 (see Ex 23:16; Dt 16:13-16).
5. The events in 41:1-18 could be three months after the fall of Jerusalem or three or four years later.
6. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah in 582 BC, perhaps as a response to the murder of his governor and the Babylonian garrison at Mizpah.

Yahweh's gives Jeremiah two oracles for the remnant of Judah in Chapter 42:

- Oracle #1: Stay in Judah and do not go to Egypt (verses 9-14).
- Oracle #2: If you go to Egypt, you will die there (verses 15-18)

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Here is a list of the people mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah whose existence is confirmed by archaeologists who have discovered authentic inscriptions bearing their names:

1. David
2. Manasseh
3. Shaphan
4. Gemariah
5. Jehoiachin
6. Shelemiah
7. Jehucal (Jucal)
8. Pashhur
9. Gedaliah
10. Baruch
11. Jezaniah/Jaazaniah
12. Nebuchadnezzar
13. Nebuzaradan
14. Nebosarsekim
15. Ishmael son of Nethaniah
16. Elishama father of Nethaniah and grandfather of Ishmael
17. Baalis king of Ammon
18. Hophra (Apries) Pharaoh of Egypt

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