**Jeremiah 43 (Lesson 23a)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 43 – They Go To Egypt (<2 min. to read)**

*A. Jeremiah’s Warning Is Ignored (43:1-7)*

 1. Contrary to their commitment (42:1-3, 5f), they would not do as the LORD decreed through Jeremiah. Their vow of allegiance was predicated on God’s agreement and support of the decision they had already made.

 2. Their waywardness is further illustrated in their labeling Jeremiah a false prophet (a charge worthy of death (Dt. 13:5; 18:20; Jer. 28:15-17; 1Kgs. 19:1) & allegation of conspiracy w/ Baruch. They were projecting their own emotional insecurities!

 3. The leaders take the remaining people, including Jeremiah and Baruch and head down to Egypt contrary to God’s instruction and warning. They settle in Tahpanes, now situated on the Suez Canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

 *B. Jeremiah Rebukes Them Down In Egypt (43:8-13)*

 1. He takes advantage of what appears to be a construction site where paving was being done at the palace and uses an object lesson for the people. The essential point of this was that Babylon would march against Egypt soon and bring destruction there as well.

 2. *“As easily as the shepherd in the open field wraps himself in the cool night in his mantle, will he be able to grasp Egypt with his hand and fling it round him like an easily managed garment, in order then to leave the land as an absolute conqueror, clothed in this attire of booty, in peace, without an enemy.”* (Ewald on verse 12) This was a replay of God’s defeat of false Egyptian deities hundreds of years prior (cf. Ex. 12:12).

 3. Beth-shemesh, aka Heliopolis, had a temple dedicated to the sun god Ra, with an avenue of obelisks in front of it built during the reign of Thutmose III in the days of the exodus! Not to be confused with Beth- shemesh in Canaan; this was 6 miles NE of modern Cairo.

 4. Nebuchadnezzar did invade Egypt c. 567 B.C. acc. to Babylonian record.

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 43**

A. How would you describe Johanan given his activities in these few chapters?

B. What do people seek to gain through false accusations? What can people lose because of a false accusation? (Ex. 20:16; 23:1, 7; Lev. 19:16; Dt. 19:18f; Prov. 3:30; 11:9; 25:8; Ezek. 33:17-20).

C. Explain the illustration of the hidden stones (vv. 8-13).

**III. Applications For Chapter 43**

A. Effective and moral leadership is pivotal. Yet, even when leadership isn’t what it is supposed to be, God can use these imperfect vessels as shepherds (e.g. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus).

B. False gods are always false. They do not cease to be false given time, location, or changes in situation. The one true God is timeless, universal, and immutable.

C. Those who labor for the Lord in sharing His instructions need to use effective, soul-reaching methods in order to keep hearts soft and strive to convict even the most calloused and scarred hearts.

**Jeremiah 44 (Lesson 23b)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 44 – Queen of Heaven (4.5 min. to read)**

*A. A Recap Of Recent Events (44:1-6)*

 1. The increase in cities inhabited by the Jews may be explained in two ways: 1) Some Jews had fled to Egypt prior to and during the initial invasion of Judah by Babylon so this may lump these exiles in with the group Jeremiah is with; and/or 2) Time has passed and the group Jeremiah was with has spread out into Egypt. The tabernacle at Elephantine, as well as the absorption of the queen of heaven into Judaism suggests the amalgamation of cultures.

 *B. Denunciation & Judgment (44:7-14)*

 1. So few would escape death that they wouldn’t even need to be counted. Truly they were the bad figs!

*C. Rebellious Persistence (44:15-19)*

 1. The assembling of the people for a great feast contextually suggests a festival in honor of the queen of heaven (cf. 7:18f).

 2. The people blame their perils on the cessation of their worship of the queen of heaven at the time of Josiah’s reforms (cf. 2Kgs. 21:23). They totally ignore the real cause of these judgments!

 3. Jeremiah gives a strong renunciation of the activities of all, but especially the women. The women tell Jeremiah they had the approval of their husbands. Under the LOM, a husband had the right to annul a vow of his wife (Num. 30), so this was in part true. Even so, this has the flavor of the Eden scene where responsibility and accountability is refused.

*D. Condemnation Of Twisting The Facts (44:20-30) – last chronological message of J!*

 1. v. 28 – time will tell who is correctly interpreting history!

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 44**

A. What cities of Egypt did the people settle in?

B. What do we learn from this chapter regarding God’s consistency in punishing rebellion and wickedness?

C. Who or what was the “queen of heaven”? How might we demonstrate the same mentality of these rebels in our lives today?

D. What sort of arguments did the people offer to justify their worship of the “queen of heaven”? Do people argue the same today to justify their false worship?

E. In fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy, how did Pharaoh Hophra die? Hophra has a stela in open-air museum in Memphis, Egypt. Obelisks from street now in NY, Rome, London. After failed campaign in Libya, revolt arose placing blame on Hophra for loss. Hophra sent his general Amasis to stop that but Amasis took advantage of the revolt. Hophra marched against Amasis and lost, fleeing to Babylon. He gained a coalition and three years later marched against Amasis again and lost again. He was captured, Amasis handed Hophra over to the Egyptians and they strangled him in 567 B.C. (Herodotus, Josephus, Diodorus write of these events; call him Apries).

**III. Applications For Chapter 44**

A. Leadership, headship, and submission in the home are so critical! (vv. 19)

B. God will render to all according to their deeds and priorities. Likewise, He will extend immeasurable grace to those who seek to do His will.

C. *“If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it.”*