

# **Exposition of Jeremiah - Lesson 41**

## ***"Trust In The Lord Not In Human Viewpoint"***

By:

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**Applicational Text: Proverbs 14:12,** *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

**Expositional Text: Jeremiah 41:17** *And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,*

### **Introduction:**

Back in **Jeremiah 17:5** we had this word from the Lord *Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord*

Now here in chapter 41 we have a number of examples of human viewpoint that amplifies the futility of trusting in man instead of applying God's Word to our circumstances in order to know and do the will of God.

It is sometimes difficult to know truth from falsehood, especially if there is not *"a word from the Lord"* concerning a matter. Although Jeremiah the prophet was there at Mizpah, Gedaliah did not inquire of him, but made a judgment based on his own opinion. Even though we do not have a *"Thou Shalt"* or a *"Thou Shalt Not"* for every decision we have to make, we do have biblical principles that have been revealed in the Word of God that can guide us in our decision making. We have explored these before and have identified seven basic steps to knowing God's will that are identified in Acts chapter eleven: Prayer, Spiritual Evaluation, The Word of God, Providential Circumstances, Holy Spirit's Conviction, Spiritual Show and Tell, Act on Information, Spiritual Verification, Scripture Harmonization, and Logical Deduction. Bear those seven basic steps in mind as we continue our study of Jeremiah.

### **I. Ishamel Operates on Human Viewpoint:**

**Jeremiah 41:1-3** *<sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Eli-shama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahi-kam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. <sup>2</sup>Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahi-kam the son of Sha-*

*phan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. <sup>3</sup> Ish-mael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Ged-a-liah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.*

We are immediately drawn back to chapter forty where Jo-ha-nan the son of Ka-re-ah and all the captains of the forces of Israel that were in the fields when the Chaldeans burned Jerusalem went to Mizpah and warned Ged-a-liah that Baalis the king of the Ammonites was sending Ishamel, one of the members of the royal family to kill him. Jo-ha-nan wanted authorization from Ged-a-liah to kill Ish-ma-el, but Governor Ged-a-liah refused saying, ***“Thou shalt not do this thing; for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.”***

The primary character in this passage is a man by the name of Ishmael, he was the son of Neth-a-niah and the grandson of Eli-shama in the family line of David. He sent by Baalis king of the Ammonites but apparently had his own agenda in that that he was in the royal family of David while Ged-a-liah, although a Jew, was not in the royal lineage, yet had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to be governor over the cities of Judah.

Back in the previous chapter Jeremiah tells us that Ged-a-liah had been warned that Ish-mael was on contract to kill him, but Ged-a-liah refused to believe it. Now in this chapter we are told of Is-mael's deed. We don't know much about this Ish-mael but it is an interesting name for a descendant of Daivid. This name could speak volumes concerning the title of this message, ***“Trust In The Lord Not In Human Viewpoint.”*** Why do I say Ishmael is an interesting name? There are several things that stand out. Primarily Ishmael represents man's attempt to accomplish what God has promised.

Abraham and Sarah failed to trust in the Lord and wait upon God to provide “the son” He had promised. Instead of waiting on God, they devised a plan to have a son by means of Sarah's handmaiden, Hagar. Man's attempt to do what God had promised He was going to do – a human viewpoint attempt. They named the child Ishmael according to the instructions of the angel that appeared to Hagar. The name came to mean, “God will hear.” However it incorporates the word **“Ish”** which is the Hebrew word for man. Ismael was the result of an attempt on the part of human viewpoint to accomplish that which God had promised. We are to “Trust in the Lord not in Human Viewpoint.” There is explicit detail and significance to words, as well as names in the Bible and we encounter that here in Jeremiah where this descendant of David also named Ish-mael attempts to establish himself over Judah when God had placed them under discipline to the Babylonians. God's instruction had repeatedly been, Surrender and live, or Resist and die. Ishmael's human viewpoint is to resist.

## **II. Ishmael's Continued Determination to Do It His Way:**

**Jeremiah 41:4-7** *<sup>4</sup> And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it, <sup>5</sup> That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet*

*them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. <sup>7</sup> And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.*

Once again, we see human viewpoint. First, we have eighty men that came from Shechem, Shiloh, and from Samaria these were men from cities formerly in the northern kingdom that had fallen long ago to the Assyrians but now hearing that Nebuchadnezzar had taken the people of Judah to Babylon, they go to Mizpah. But notice their human viewpoint, they come, *“...having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.”* These were pagan attempts at humility, actions that might have seemed right unto man but were forbidden under the Levitical Law. *“...There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)* These eighty men had not repented and surrendered but instead took their pagan practices with them. God is not impressed with our outward expressions of humility, but *“...The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psalms 51:17)*

A second aspect of human viewpoint is seen in verses six and seven, *<sup>6</sup>And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. <sup>7</sup>And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.* Once again, the humanity of Ish-mael is seen as he lures these men into the city to kill them and take the valuables they have brought.

That human viewpoint is further seen when Ish-mael spares those who tell him they can lead him to some badly needed supplies.

**Jeremiah 41:8** *But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.*

A bit of Biblical Trivia... **Jeremiah 41:9** *Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with them that were slain.*

King Asa was the third king of the southern kingdom of Judah, succeeding his father Abijah. He reigned for 41 years, and his reign is characterized by some religious reforms, military victories, and periods of both peace and conflict. Asa is depicted as a king who initially sought God's guidance and removed idolatry, but later in his reign, he faced challenges and sometimes relied on his own strength (Human Viewpoint) rather than divine guidance. Asa, a former king of the southern kingdom had dug this pit as a hideout when

he feared that Baasha, a former king of the Northern kingdom might attack. This pit, meant for escape, now becomes a burial for those Ish-mael and his men killed.

### III. Ish-mael Attempts to Take the Remnant to Ammon:

**Jeremiah 41:10** *Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.*

Ish-mael having been sent by the king of the Ammonites to kill Ged-a-liah, prepares to take the remnant from Mizpah to the Ammonites. Who were the Ammonites? The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot's younger daughter. You may recall that Lot was the nephew of Abraham who was led, by angels, out of Sodom before it was destroyed. He and his two daughters escaped, and he fathered a son by his oldest daughter and the Moabites are the descendants of that incestual relationship. He also fathered a son by his youngest daughter and the Ammonites are the descendants of that incestual relationship. The area that these two groups of people inhabited was the area known today as Jordan.

### IV. Deliverance Without Authorization:

**Jeremiah 41:11-15** <sup>11</sup> *But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,* <sup>12</sup> *Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon.* <sup>13</sup> *Now it came to pass, that when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad.* <sup>14</sup> *So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.* <sup>15</sup> *But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.*

The thing that we note here is that there is no “... word from the Lord...” This Johanan the son of Ka-reah is the man who attempted to get permission from Ged-a-liah to secretly kill Ish-mael because he had been contracted by the king of the Ammonites to assassinate Ged-s-liah. But Ged-a-liah had refused, not believing that Ish-mael would attempt to kill him, and as a result had been killed by Ish-mael. And, Now Johanan acted on his own.

When Johanan “...heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Neth-a-niah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon.”

*the great waters that are in Gibeon* refer to the elaborate pool system that was associated with the city of Gibeon, located in the modern-day West Bank. When the captives saw that

Johanan had come to their rescue they fled to him and his troops and Ish-mael escaped with eight men and went to the Ammonites.

Although deliverance had been provided by Johanan, he does not settle the remnant in the land and wait on God but instead takes the people to dwell in the habitation Chimham while preparing to go to Egypt.

## V. Wait On the Lord:

Jeremiah 41:16-18 <sup>16</sup> *Then took Johanan the son of Ka-reah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Neth-a-niah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon: <sup>17</sup> And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt, <sup>18</sup> Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.*

The thing that we note from this text is that they never enquired of the Lord as to what their action should be. Perhaps it mattered little, because in the past, while they sought a word from the Lord, they blatantly refused to follow it. What are we to do when we do not have a directive from the Lord? Isaiah had spoken concerning this more than a hundred years before - Wait upon the Lord. Isaiah 40:31 says, *“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

The Psalmist had declared in **Psalm 27:14**, *“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.* If there is not a directive from the Lord, *“Thou Shalt”* or *“Thou Shalt Not”* If there is not *“...the word from the Lord came saying...”* Then we are to wait on the Lord.

It is when the verbal directive is not given that we are the most challenged. The non-verbal directives from the Lord take on various forms. These directives are delivered in circumstances, and we must follow the **“Guidelines For Knowing God’s Will”** that are revealed in Acts chapter eleven: (1) Prayer, (2) Spiritual Evaluation, (3) The Word of God, (4) Providential Circumstances, (5) Holy Spirit’s Conviction, (6) Spiritual Show and Tell, (7) Act on Information. These are to be followed by, (1) Spiritual Verification, (2) Scripture Harmonization, (3) a Logical Deduction.

We are to consider all of these together as we “wait on the Lord! – wait I say on the Lord!” (See Studies on “The Will of God” and “Divine Guidance” in Bible 101 on the website. Spheresofgrace.com)

Johanan the son of Ka-reah, acting on just their circumstances, made the same bad choices of other Israelites before him. God had previously told them not to return to Egypt, but

Johanan takes the remnant that had been left in the land and prepares to go to Egypt. God told Abraham not to go to Egypt during a famine but to trust Him in Genesis 26:2. God told the Children of Israel not to go back to Egypt but depend on Him in Deuteronomy 26:68. And once again, in Jeremiah 42:11-22 God will tell the Children of Israel not to go back to Egypt.

From Mizpah, their window of grace, *“...they dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem.”* This was a stopping place for travelers going to Egypt. When King David was fleeing from his son Absalom who had taken the throne from him, he was assisted and supported by Barzillai the Gileadite (See II Samuel 19). When Absalom was dead and David returned to the throne David invited Barzillai to go live with him, Barzillai was 80 years old and declined the offer but suggested that King David take Chimham, Barzillai’s son and honor him in the way he would honor Barzillai. So David gave Chimham a parcel of land near Bethlehem and Chimham set up a lodging place for travelers on their way to Egypt, it was called “The Habitation of Chimham.”

Out of fear that the Chaldeans would hold them responsible for Ish-mael’s murder of Gedaliah, Johanan takes the remnant of the Children of Israel to Chimham’s Habitation as they prepare to go into Egypt.

As we go into chapter forty-two of Jeremiaih, it would seem that they might have gotten it right, because before going into Egypt they go to Jeremiah to see what God has to say about it, *“...Is there a word from the Lord?”* I said it appears that they might have gotten it right... But as we have previously observed, “It is not what we know God wants us to do,” rather, too often “It is a failure to do what God has revealed He wants us to do.”

## Conclusion:

**Trust in the Lord not in Human Viewpoint!**

**Our Expositional Text in Jeremiah 41:17 said *And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,***

**Our Applicational Text in Proverbs 14:12 says, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."***

When we harmonize that with Isaiah 55:8-9, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,”* we recognize the futility of human viewpoint and the necessity of developing divine viewpoint – what does God have to say about it? Most of the time when the Children of Israel enquired of the Prophet, for a word from the Lord, they were not seeking direction, they were looking for confirmation affirmation of what they intended to do. Christians, for the most part, follow that same pattern. It is essential that we develop the mind of Christ in order to know and do the will of God, When it comes to Christian counseling we must reject the Freud Fraud and *“...Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus...”* (Philippians 2:5) We put on the mind of Christ through the



Communication of God's Word (knowing what it says), the Comprehension of God's Word (understanding how it applies), the Confirmation of God's Word (accepting it as a norm or standard for ourselves), and the Conscious Application of God's Word (applying it to the circumstances we encounter).

We are to interpret God's directives in the light of these three questions: What does it say? What is the context in which it is said? How does our interpretation Harmonize with every other passage of Scripture? I have heard a number of Christians say, "God said it! I believe it! That Settles it!" Oh, really?

**But it all begins at Salvation:**

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved..*

*Let Us Learn From The Failure of Others and Avoid  
The Pain, Loss, or Suffering of  
Personal Discipline!*