**November 23 (Jer 43-47)**

**Jews in Egypt**

After the Israelites came to the Promised Land, there developed communities of Jews in Egypt through political exile, trade and conquest.

Elephantine Island – an island in the Upper Nile near present-day Aswan. Starting in the 7th century BC, there was a community of Judean mercenaries and their families on the island, guarding the frontier between Egypt and Nubia. Subsequently, after destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC, Judean refugees settled on Elephantine. They maintained their own temple, where sacrifices were offered. There is evidence that they also worshipped Egyptian gods there at the same time.

Migdol – near Tahpanhes and Memphis on the eastern edge of the Nile Delta; where Jews settled after the 587 BC Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

Tahpanhes – Jews from Jerusalem after the death of Governor Gedaliah settled there; located on a branch of the Nile in the delta.

Memphis (Noph) – Major city on the Nile at the mouth of he delta, once an ancient capital of Egypt; where Jews settled after the 587 BC Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

The land of Pathros – In the Thebes region of the Nile; where Jews settled after the 587 BC Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

**The Queen of Heaven**

“Queen of Heaven” was a title given to a number of goddesses of the sky worshipped throughout the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East. Goddesses known to have been referred to by the title include Inanna, Anat, Isis, Nut, Astarte, and possibly Asherah.

The goddesses Asherah, Anat, and Astarte first appear as distinct and separate deities in the tablets discovered in the ruins of the library of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, Syria). As was common, deities were taken over from one culture or ethnic group to another, being given local names or syncretistically melding identities together. So most scholars tend to regard these goddesses as one, especially under the title "Queen of heaven."

Mentioned five times in the Book of Jeremiah, The "Queen of Heaven" has been associated with different goddesses by different scholars, including: Anat, Astarte or Ishtar, Ashtoreth, or as a composite figure. In Jeremiah her worship, primarily by women, included baking sacred cakes and pouring out drink offerings to her.

**Discussion Questions (Jer 43-47)**

1) In Jer 43, what’s the significance of Johanan’s people involving both Jeremiah and Baruch directly in their disobedient response to God’s command not to flee the Chaldeans (Babylonians)? How does the symbolism of the stones work and what was its meaning?

2) What in Jer 44 do the Israelites favor in contrast to God’s will and obedience to Him? The concept of “the remnant” figures in this chapter—what can be learned from how God used this here?

3) Jer 45, like some other passages, is out of chronological order with [chapters 42, 43 and 44], and focused on Baruch. Its tone also differs from the last three chapters. What is its significance and why do you think this chapter is here?

4) In Jer 46, what are some of the ways God moved Jeremiah to express the prophesied defeat of Egypt by Babylon in the Hittite territories of Babylon? What are the similes and metaphors he uses? How is this distant event relevant to the Israelites?

5) How can you personally apply these verses?

6) Make up your own question and answer it.