

# STAY WHERE YOU ARE – Part 2

## ***Jeremiah 42:1–3***

***1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, 2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) 3 That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.***

Just to recap. Israel has just been conquered by the Babylonians. While most of the citizens have been carried away to Babylon, a small remnant has been allowed to remain in the land. The king of Babylon appointed a governor help to keep peace and maintain order.

Things were going well until a man, named Ishmael, decides to assassinate the governor to seize control for himself. Understanding the trouble this act of treachery could put them at risk with the king of Babylon, a group of Israelites tries to bring the perpetrator to justice. Unfortunately, he slips out of their hands and escapes to a neighboring country. We never hear from him again.

The people still have a problem—they are still at risk to the wrath of the king. Thus, they must decide, “Do we STAY WHERE WE ARE and face the wrath of the king, or do flee to a neighboring country for safety? The people decide to turn seek God’s advice. And for this they petition the help of the prophet Jeremiah. They ask Jeremiah to pray that God will show them what to do.

I know what some of us are thinking. “This is an interesting story, but what does any of this have to do with me?” We’re prone to think that unless the Bible is giving us specific direction on how to pray or what to believe, it has very little value for the common man. We often look at the stories in the Bible as just that—stories. We don’t realize that these stories are written to teach us something.

## ***Romans 15:4***

***4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.***

So, the things written in the Old Testament were written to teach us something (patience, hope). And this is not only true of *some* passages. This is true of EVERY passage.

### **2 Timothy 3:16**

***16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:***

Now, lets go back to our passage and see if we can't discover what it has to teach us.

### **Jeremiah 42:7–10**

***7 And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. 8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9 And said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; 10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.***

Again, the people came to Jeremiah wanting to know God's advice on the matter. Should they stay and face the wrath of the king of Babylon? Or, should they flee to Egypt? The word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah and God says, "STAY WHERE YOU ARE." And we said to you that God is saying the same to us today.

But, what does that mean? Does this mean that we're not to move from the city we're presently living in? Does it mean that if you're working for a particular company, God doesn't want you to change careers?

We don't approach the Old Testament expecting to apply what we see *literally*. Instead, we approach the Old Testament with an understanding that we must *translate* and find the spiritual meaning behind what we read. With that said, what's the spiritual meaning behind God's command to the people to abide in the land? Well, we first have to determine what land God was referring to when He gave them this command. He was referring to Canaan (*Land of Promise*). Therefore, when God said, "Abide in the land" He was in a sense saying, "Abide in My promises." How do we abide in the promises of God?

### **Psalm 91:1**

***1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.***

What is this *secret place* and how do we *abide under shadow of the Almighty*? First, the secret place is not a *physical* place, neither is the shadow of the Almighty. Instead, they represent God's PROMISE of protection. We know this because in order to enter into them we must TRUST IN GOD.

***Psalm 91:2–3***

***<sup>2</sup> I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: My God; in him will I trust. <sup>3</sup> Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, And from the noisome pestilence.***

Notice, we enter into the secret place by “saying” or confessing the God is our refuge. This brings us under His shadow and protection from every kind of evil and plague (even minor ones like “dashing your foot against a stone” **verse 12**). Therefore, as in the case of the Israelites in our story, God promises to protect us in times of trouble. However, we must “*abide* in this place” (in His promises) to enjoy it! In spite of this, many are still choosing to *flee*.

***Jeremiah 42:13***

***<sup>13</sup> But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God,***

Notice, rather than saying “The Lord is my refuge,” the people said, “We will not dwell in this land!” Why would they say the opposite of what God said? FEAR.

***Jeremiah 42:11***

***<sup>11</sup> Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.***

Notice how many times the phrase “be not afraid” appears in this one verse! Fear will have you changing your confession from Lord you are my refuge, to “No I can't make it,” or “No I won't do it.”

***Jeremiah 42:14***

***<sup>14</sup> Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:***

Notice how they were trying to escape war (trouble). Our natural instincts are to avoid trouble at all costs. However, we don't avoid trouble by disobeying God. If we want to avoid trouble, then it starts with submitting to God.

**James 4:7**

***7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

Trying to avoid trouble or difficulty by disobeying God is really the recipe for more trouble. Besides, we don't really escape from.

**Jeremiah 42:15–16**

***15 And now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; 16 Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.***

Notice that their faces were “set” flee. However, God told them that if they ran from their trouble, they would find it in whatever place they went.

This is a reminder that you don't really escape trouble. Instead, you have to overcome it! Moreover, the first step to overcoming trouble is learning to *dig in*. You will never win the battle over trouble (or the devil) if you don't learn to stop giving up ground.

When the devil (trouble) threatens your position, don't give in. Don't run away from your position, OR give up your position. STAY WHERE YOU ARE and abide in the promises of God. (Remember we accomplish this by what we “say” or confess!)