

Jeremiah 43 is one of those heartbreaking moments in Scripture where people ask for God's will, hear God's will, and then openly reject God's will. They had said in Jeremiah 42, "Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God." But as soon as the Lord said, "Do not go to Egypt," they said to Jeremiah, "You are speaking falsely." That is the tragedy of this chapter.

This passage warns us about religious talk without surrendered hearts, about running back to the very bondage God delivered us from, and about the foolishness of trusting in human refuge instead of in the Lord. It also shows us that God's Word always comes to pass, whether we believe it or not.

## Jeremiah 43 – Running to Egypt

### 1. Open Rebellion After Clear Revelation (Jeremiah 43:1–3)

*"Now it happened, when Jeremiah had stopped speaking to all the people all the words of the Lord their God... that Azariah... Johanan... and all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, 'You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, "Do not go to Egypt to dwell there."'"* (Jeremiah 43:1–2)

This is stunning. In the previous chapter they begged Jeremiah, *"Pray for us... whatever the Lord says we will do."* (Jeremiah 42:2–6). But when the answer was not the answer they wanted, they accused God's prophet of lying.

Notice how the Holy Spirit describes them: "all the proud men." Pride is what makes us argue with God's Word. Pride is what makes us say, "That verse is not for me." Pride is what makes us say, "I know the Bible says that, but my situation is different."

They even blamed Baruch:

*"But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans..."* (Jeremiah 43:3)

When people are determined to disobey God, they will often **blame the messenger**, accuse pastors of "pushing an agenda," or claim that others "talked them into it." But the issue was not Baruch. The issue was their hearts.

### Practical application:

- Be careful not to call "false" what God has clearly said.
- When God's Word confronts us, the right response is repentance, not accusation.
- A proud heart will always find a reason to reject the Word.
- When we start blaming others for God's hard word, it is usually a sign that we have already chosen disobedience.

## 2. Dragging God's Servants into Disobedience (Jeremiah 43:4–7)

*“So Johanan... and all the people... did not obey the voice of the Lord, to remain in the land of Judah. But Johanan... took all the remnant of Judah... men, women, children, the king's daughters... and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch... so they went to the land of Egypt... and they came to Tahpanhes.”* (Jeremiah 43:4–7)

This is the painful part: their disobedience did not stay private. They took *everyone* with them. Men, women, children, even the king's daughters. And, according to Jewish tradition and Josephus, they forced Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them.

This is always tragic—when people who refuse to trust God pull others into their unbelief. Disobedience is contagious. Fear is contagious. Rebellion is contagious. A whole remnant that could have been planted and blessed in Judah is now being marched back to Egypt—the very place God delivered them from nine hundred years earlier.

Egypt in Scripture often pictures the old life, bondage, self-reliance, the world's system. It is always a sad day when God's people go back to the place of former slavery. They did not go because God led them; they went because they were afraid to trust God where they were.

### Practical application:

- Your obedience or disobedience affects people around you.
- Do not let someone else's fear drag you out of the will of God.
- It is always tragic to return to the sins, habits, or old life that Jesus delivered you from.
- Going back is never the answer. God calls us forward, not backward.

## 3. A Prophetic Sign in Egypt (Jeremiah 43:8–11)

Even in Egypt, God still speaks. You can run from the land, but you cannot run from the Lord.

*“Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, ‘Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the sight of the men of Judah, in the clay in the brick courtyard which is at the entrance to Pharaoh's house... and say to them, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones...”’”* (Jeremiah 43:8–10)

God has Jeremiah bury stones in the clay near Pharaoh's palace—right where everyone could see him do it. Then he was to say, in essence, “You came to Egypt to escape Babylon, but Babylon will come here. Nebuchadnezzar will set his throne right on top of these stones.”

In other words: you cannot outrun God's word.

The people thought, “If we get to Egypt, we will be safe.” God said, “No. The judgment you fear will meet you here.”

**Practical application:**

- Running from problems rarely removes them; it often multiplies them.
- The safest place is not the strongest nation, but the center of God's will.
- God's Word is not limited by geography. If He said it in Judah, He will fulfill it in Egypt.

**4. God Will Judge Egypt's Idolatry Too (Jeremiah 43:11–13)**

*"He shall also break the sacred pillars of Beth Shemesh that are in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians he shall burn with fire."* (Jeremiah 43:13)

The people went to Egypt thinking, "Egypt is powerful. Egypt will protect us." God said, "I am going to strike Egypt, too."

He even says of Nebuchadnezzar:

*"He shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment..."* (Jeremiah 43:12)

That is a picture of ease—Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Egypt as easily as a shepherd throws on his cloak. So much for human security.

**Practical application:**

- Anything we trust instead of God will one day be shown to be weak.
- God will overthrow idols—ours and the world's.
- If we seek refuge in what God will one day judge, we will share in its judgment (compare Revelation 18:4).

**A Challenge for Believers**

Jeremiah 43 presses on us some serious questions:

1. Do I only obey God when I agree with Him?  
These people said, "Whatever God says, we will do." But when God's word contradicted their plan, they rejected it. Real discipleship says, *"Not my will, but Yours be done."* (Luke 22:42)
2. Am I tempted to go back to "Egypt"?  
Maybe God delivered you from addiction, from immorality, from false religion, from bitterness, from legalism, from worldly ambition. Do not go back. Returning to what God redeemed you from is always a tragic step backward.
3. Am I leading others toward faith or toward fear?  
Johanan and the leaders dragged everyone to Egypt. Believer, lead your family, your church, your friends toward trust in the Lord, not toward self-protective disobedience.

*"Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."* (Isaiah 26:4)

## An Invitation to Non-Believers

Jeremiah 43 is your story too. Humanity has a long history of running from God instead of to God. We think, “If I can just change locations, careers, relationships, churches—then I will be safe.” But the problem is not location; the problem is sin.

The Bible says:

- *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)
- *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*  
(Romans 6:23)

The people in Jeremiah’s day tried to save themselves by going to Egypt. It did not work. You cannot save yourself by going to religion, to good works, to philosophy, to wealth, or to your own efforts. There is only one Savior—Jesus Christ.

Jesus shed His blood on the cross to take the judgment you deserve. He rose from the dead to prove that He is God, Savior, and Lord. And He calls you, not to run farther from God, but to come home.

You can call on Him right now:

*“Lord Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose again. I turn from my own way, and I come to You. Forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new. I confess that You are my Savior and my Lord. I put my trust in You alone. Amen.”*

If you prayed that sincerely, the Lord heard you. He delights to forgive and to restore.

## Closing

Jeremiah 43 teaches us that God’s Word will always stand, even when people deny it. It teaches us that disobedience motivated by fear is still disobedience. And it calls us to trust God in the place He has assigned us, rather than running back to “Egypt.”

So, believer:

- stay where God put you,
- trust the Word even when it is hard,
- refuse to be ruled by fear,
- and fix your eyes on Jesus—the crucified and risen Lord—who will never lead you backward into bondage, but always forward into freedom.