

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 65  
Jeremiah 41-52

**Key Concepts:** The key concept in this final section of Jeremiah is that even as God judges Judah, God will also judge those nations who helped to destroy her.

**Stories:** This section opens with a long narrative of the political machinations following the Babylonian conquest including the assassination of Gedaliah and many of his supporters by Ishmael, Ishmael's flight with captives, the freeing of the captives by Johanan, Ishmael's flight to Ammon, Jeremiah's plea for the people to remain in Judah their flight to Egypt with Jeremiah unwillingly in tow, a prophecy against Egypt, a series of oracles against the fall of Judah's enemies including Babylon and finally an historical appendix about the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the death and exile of Judah's leadership.

**Brief Summary:** Our story picks up following the destruction of Jerusalem and the other major cities of Judah by the Babylonians. While much of the land was decimated in the war, there were pockets of territory, such as the land of Benjamin, that were mostly untouched. It was in this area, in the city of Mizpah, that the Babylonians established a regional government run by Gedaliah, a local noble. Gedaliah was warned that Ishmael, a member of the royal family, was out to get him but he refused to believe it. Unfortunately the claims were true and Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah along with his supports and the Babylonian garrison at Mizpah. He then slaughtered another group of Jews who arrived for a festival. Ishmael then fled with all of the people in Mizpah, but was tracked down by Johanan and his troops. Even though the captives are rescued, Ishmael escapes. His escape places all of those left behind, including Johanan and Jeremiah in jeopardy. They are in jeopardy because they could not prove that they were not the assassins.

Johanan then asks Jeremiah for his advice. Jeremiah replies with a prophecy which says that the people are to remain in the land and trust in the protection of God. The people have none of it however. Having seen the death and destruction caused by the Babylonians, they flee to Egypt, with Jeremiah unwillingly in tow. Once in Egypt Jeremiah receives another word from God to the effect that Egypt would not be a safe haven because the Babylonians would conquer much of it as well; which they do. In addition, the exiles return to the worship of other gods once they reach Egypt. This is where we leave Jeremiah; in exile still trying to bring about the faithfulness of God's people.

The following section of oracles is similar to such oracles in both Isaiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah's however are probably linked to specific historical instances in which the Babylonians rained destruction on Judah's enemies, including Philistia, Moab, Amon, Edom and Elam along with cities such as Damascus, Kedar and Hazor. Jeremiah saw their conquest and/or destruction as God's judgment upon them for their mistreatment of God's people. Jeremiah concludes with a prophecy that Babylon will suffer the same fate, which it did in 539 BCE.

The concluding historical section is largely a retelling to 2 Kings 24-25 which we will look at in the next lesson.

1. Why do you suppose that Ishmael assassinates Gedaliah?
2. What do you think of the choice Johanan and the people made?
3. What are some reasons Jeremiah's words were preserved across the centuries?