

# NOTES ON THE PROPHECY AND LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

“The Weeping Prophet”

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### ISHMAEL'S TREACHERY AND THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

(Chaps. 40-44)

Kaleidoscopic were the changes through which the remnant passed, while left in the land by the clemency of Nebuchadrezzar, in the year following the destruction of Jerusalem.

Gedaliah, the governor, was a truly pious man, of upright principles, but not at all the kind of a person to take the lead in the troublous times that had fallen upon his native land. Brave, honorable and unsuspecting, he yet lacked that genius for true leadership, and that necessary sternness in dealing with evil, which the times demanded. It was not long, therefore, ere he became the victim of a diabolical conspiracy which resulted in his assassination by one whom his too generous heart had implicitly trusted, and who owed his own preservation from death to the man he so basely murdered.

Nebuzaradan having given him his liberty Jeremiah, as we have seen, attached himself to the governor. The Chaldean captain had given him free choice as to his abode; even offering him a safe and comfortable asylum in Babylon, had he desired it.

How much this man really understood the ways of the Lord in the chastening of His people, we know not; but he shows himself to be at least familiar with the words spoken by both Ezekiel and Jeremiah, alleging this in his interview with the latter: **“The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place”** (vers. 1. 2).

He gives, too, the correct reason for this strange dealing.

Because Judah had sinned, and not obeyed His voice, their God had brought these afflictions upon them. Sad it is to note that this heathen conqueror had a clearer sense of the truth than the majority of the leaders among the Jews. Loosing Jeremiah from his chains, he gave him the king's message:

**“If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go”** (ver. 4).

Then, apparently divining the prophet's mind, and courteously seeking to relieve him of the embarrassment of refusing his well-meant offer to go to the imperial city, which, after all, represented the power of the oppressor of his people, Nebuzaradan added, "**Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go.**"

This offer Jeremiah accepted, and departed to seek the governor, receiving both victuals and a reward from the captain of the guard. He found Gedaliah at Mizpah, a historic trysting-place never to be forgotten by lovers of Israel. Many and varied had been the scenes enacted there, both in the unsettled days of the judges and the early days of the kings. Here Gedaliah kept his simple and unostentatious court, and here Jeremiah dwelt with him, "**among the people left in the land**" (vers. 5, 6).

It was the choice of a man who walked with God, and could view things in the light of His presence. To many it might have been considered a fine thing to be invited to the conqueror's capital, there to be honored as a sage and a seer, and to receive various tokens of the king's appreciation because of his steady opposition to the policy of resistance to Babylon and dependence upon Egypt. But in all this, Jeremiah had been in no sense the servant or tool of the Chaldean emperor. He had remained to the last the simple prophet of the Lord.

- If he counseled submission to Babylon, it was because the Word of the Lord so directed.
- If he warned the princes and the people of the folly of counting upon the Egyptian alliance, he did so because he had the mind of the Lord regarding it.

This did not alter his personal abhorrence of all that Babylon stood for. None knew better than he its abominable paganism and its cruel tyranny. None knew more clearly, too, the doom soon to fall upon it. In God's government He had used it to chastise His erring people. Soon it also must pass under the rod of His vengeance. Consequently the city by the Euphrates had no charms for the man of God. Far better a small place among "**the poor of the flock**" in Immanuel's land, than a large place in the Gentile oppressor's palace.

He desired not the world's patronage, as he feared not its wrath. In this he is the consistent type of the man of God still - "**in the world, but not of the world**" - perchance even serving the world; as Abraham long before had, in delivering Lot, really served Sodom; but looking for no recognition from the world: leaving all that to the judgment-seat of Christ.

Self-interest would surely have taken Jeremiah to Babylon. Providence, too, might have seemed to favor such a move; for, how useful to his people might he not have been in the councils of the empire - as in the cases of Mordecai and Nehemiah at the court of Medo-Persia some years later. Faith, however, kept him in the desolated land of Canaan, among the poor and distressed remnant who called upon the name of the Lord. Like Moses, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the temporary prosperity that an abode in the royal city might have brought him. Faith ever runs counter to the mere pleadings of nature.

We shall see something very different to this disinterested and unselfish devotion to the Lord and His people as we now turn to consider the captains of the roving bands of the Jews, concerning which the next part of the chapter treats. Jerusalem being destroyed, several companies of unsubdued warriors remained, or fled to mountain fastnesses and wilderness hiding-places, thus safely eluding the Chaldean armies. These bands, formed in what we call “guerrilla corps,” officered by daring, impetuous leaders, were determined not to own the sway of the king of Babylon. Hearing that Gedaliah, one of their number, had been appointed governor, and that he had established himself at Mizpah, these outlawed bands now gathered about him, hoping doubtless to find independence and rebellion.

Ishmael, two sons of Koreah (Johanan and Jonathan by name), Seraiah, Jezaniah, together with the sons of Ephai, with their companies, were the ones who repaired thither (vers. 7, 8). If they expected Gedaliah to break his plighted word, and assist in him one who would further their schemes of them in throwing off the yoke of Chaldea, they soon learned their mistake. He faithfully counseled submission, bidding them: **“Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you”** (ver. 9).

As for himself, he declared his full determination to dwell at Mizpah, and to render service to the nation into whose power God had given them. He also counseled them to cease from warfare, and to seek to reap the fruits of peace and quietness, bidding them gather wine, and summer fruits and oil, and dwell in the cities they had taken (ver. 10). We read of no dissenting voice on the part of the guerrilla captains or their men; but it is plain from what follows that they were thoroughly opposed to what must have seemed to them a peace-at-any-price policy. Resentment burned fiercely in the heart of one at least, Ishmael, though he was politic enough to hide his feelings for the time.

Hearing the cruel war was over - even if disastrously ended - numbers of Jews who had fled to Moab, Ammon, and Edom, also returned to their land and gathered to Mizpah, owing the gentle sway of the pious Gedaliah. These quietly followed the advice given, and proceeded to harvest the summer fruits and wines, thus making provision for the approaching winter (vers. 11, 12). A people not strong were they, but they prepared their meat in the summer (Proverbs 30:25).

Meantime Ishmael, returning from the country of the Ammonites, was secretly plotting the assassination of Gedaliah. We gather from the context he had pledged himself to Baalis, the king of Ammon, before he left, to do this, if Gedaliah was not prepared to be a tool in his hands. The too-confiding governor was warned of the foul errand upon which the captain of the sinister name had come, for there was jealousy and treachery among the various outlawed chiefs, leading Johanan and the rest of the captains at last to inform upon the traitor. They told Gedaliah the errand upon which he had come, sent by Baalis the Ammonite.

Simple and honest himself, the governor discredits the tale of Ishmael’s depravity, and takes no measures to protect his life, so valuable to his compatriots at this dark period. Johanan accordingly sought another, and this time a private, interview with him, assuring him of the truth of the former report, and pleaded for commission to forestall the murder, by himself taking the life of Ishmael in secret, so that no man should know it, pleading that in no other way could the death of, not only the governor, but all the Jews that were gathered with him, be averted.

The noble-hearted Gedaliah replied, “**Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael**” (vers. 13-16). The sequel shows how ill-placed his confidence was.

Very shortly after this, and only three months after the sack of Jerusalem, Ishmael (who we now learn was of the seed royal, which accounts in large measure for his hatred of Gedaliah), and ten princes came again to the house of the governor at Mizpah, and all ate bread together - a complete expression of fellowship according to Eastern custom. But, alas, it was like the feasting of Judas at the last passover. Those who ate bread with Gedaliah lifted up the heel against him. At Ishmael’s signal, he and the ten princes rose up against their gracious host, slew him in cold blood, and then massacred the Jews and the Chaldeans that were in Mizpah (41:2).

None of those connected with Gedaliah had escaped to carry to other parts the awful tale of carnage and bloodshed. On the morrow, fourscore men from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, came to bring an offering to the house of the Lord. How they had corrupted the way of approach to God, and taken up with heathen manners, is evident by their shaven beards, and rent clothes, and gashes upon their flesh, as were commonly made by the worshipers of Baal. Yet offerings and incense were in their hand, and however ignorant, they felt the need of seeking the face of the Lord.

Ishmael’s abominable hypocrisy and horrid treachery stalk out again.

Assuming the air of one sorely grieved over the desolations of the land, he goes out weeping and lamenting, and offers to be their guide to Gedaliah the governor. Having led the doomed men into the midst of the city, he suddenly threw off the mask, and, with his associates, slew these unsuspecting men, as he had the others before, and cast their bodies into a pit - sparing ten of them for the hidden stores of wheat, barley, oil and honey which they were to reveal (vers. 5-8).

The pit into which the slain had been cast was a subterranean chamber, built by order of Asa, king of Judah, as a hiding-place in case Baasha king of Israel should besiege him during the rebuilding of Mizpah, nearly four centuries earlier (I Kings 15:22). It now became the tomb for the guileless Gedaliah and his attached followers, as also for the seventy visitors (ver. 9).

Having thus disposed of the dead, Ishmael beat a hasty retreat to the land of the Ammonites, carrying with him the king’s daughters and all the people (probably the poor) who dwelt in Mizpah that had not been included in the massacre.

As was to be expected, the awful news of his bloody acts soon got abroad.

Johanan and the other captains being apprised thereof, at once pursue the fleeing traitor, and overtake him by “**the great waters that are in Gibeon**” - the old battlefield where Joab and Abner contended - pitching on either side of the pool (II Samuel 2:12-17), and near the historic spot where Joshua achieved his great victory over the allied armies of the Canaanites, when he went to the defence of the men of Gibeon. The freebooters who followed Ishmael made no attempt to stand against the men of Johanan, but fled with their leader, while all the people they were carrying away “**cast about and returned**” (vers. 13-15).

Johanan was unquestionably a brave and a patriotic man, but lacked the piety of Gedaliah; a man of action, but not one who waited upon God for his path. Without hesitation, or inquiring of the Lord, he leads his confederates and the delivered company to Chimham, near Bethlehem, the route to Egypt, determined to leave the land of Palestine, fearing the wrath of the Chaldeans because of Ishmael's assassination of the governor deputed by Nebuzaradan, and the Babylonian guard (vers. 16-18).

Having thus determined upon their path, like multitudes before and since, they make a pretence of seeking the mind of the Lord.

Jeremiah being among the number carried away from Mizpah, the representatives of the people now turned to him. Their words were very fair and well-spoken: **“Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee,”** they said, **“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); that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do”** (chap. 42:1-3).

One is reminded of Jehoshaphat professedly seeking the mind of God after the alliance with the king of Israel had already been made and his word pledged. Alas, this is but trifling with God; yet, dear reader, are we altogether clear of this? How many a saint has set his heart upon a certain course without asking counsel of the Lord; and then, actuated by a feeling of unrest and anxiety, has sought to get the divine approbation for his self-concocted plans!

Notice here that the people do not say, **“The Lord our God,”** but **“The Lord thy God.”** There is a sense of distance. They do not feel they can approach Him with confidence, hence they turn to Jeremiah, and would fain have him act the part of a go-between, or a mediator. It is always a bad sign when there is diffidence in approaching God; when the petitioner has more confidence in the prayers of a ministering servant than in his own. Unmistakably, it reveals the lack of communion with God which inspires confidence in the hour of need. If the eye is single, the whole body is full of light, having no part dark. If the desire to glorify God be supreme in the soul, one can turn to Him for guidance without fear. But when some cherished aim or selfish object is controlling the heart, there is and must be a lack of confidence towards Him.

Such was the present state of the spared remnant. Jeremiah makes no comment upon it, but quietly replies, **“I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you”** (ver. 4). Note how he throws them back on their own responsibility. He says, **“The Lord your God,”** and speaks of what **“the Lord shall answer you.”** He will be the spokesman for them, but not the go-between.

In the most solemn way they declare that they will abide by the Word of the Lord, whatever it may be; and no doubt, like many another in a similar place, they really thought they would. But they had settled it in their hearts to go into Egypt, and they counted upon the Lord's endorsement of their fleshly determination.

They replied, **“The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us”** (ver. 5). Then growing bolder, they use the term, **“The Lord our God,”** declaring, **“Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God”** (ver. 6). This certainly sounded well. Alas, that **“good words and fair speeches”** can be so cheap and so meaningless!

A significant ten days was allowed to elapse ere the Lord communicated His mind to His servant - a number suggesting man's responsibility Godward and man-ward, as set forth in the Ten Commandments given at Sinai. On that ground the remnant could claim nothing. The delay in answering indicates the distance at which they were from God. They had failed grievously, and yet there was no repentance (ver. 7).

Before all the people, Jeremiah declared the word of the Lord: **“Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before Him: 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”** (vers. 8-10).

What riches of grace are here unfolded! On their part, no adequate sense of guilt; yet on His, such amazing compassion and loving-kindness. If they will but trust Him now in their weak, broken state - if they will rely upon His mighty arm and thus dwell in the land He had given them - if they will accept the chastisement, and bow to His Word, then He will build them up and care for them as a husbandman cares for his vintage.

Obedying His voice, they need have no fear of the wrath of Babylon's king.

**“For I,”** says God, **“am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand. And I will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land”** (vers. 11, 12). Restoration and blessing, under the divine protection, would be the happy result of subjection to Himself. On the other hand, it were worse than folly for them to seek relief in Egypt. Nought but dire distress and judgment could result. To go back to Egypt was like a Christian going back to the world for help. The Lord Jesus **“gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father”** (Galatians 1:4). This is the antitype of the deliverance from Egypt of old.

Pharaoh's land, for the redeemed of the Lord, was a land of bondage - it could never be their home. To settle there in peace and happiness was absolutely impossible. To attempt to do so was to ignore the blood of the passover and the parting of the Red Sea.

For the Christian this would be to forget that he is purged from his old sins through the shedding of the precious blood of Christ, and separated from this world by the death of that blessed One.

The Cross of Christ has come in between the believer and the world, enabling him to say, **“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”** (Galatians 6:14).

As the Red Sea rolled between Egypt and the place of Israel's blessing, so the death of Christ has cut me off from this world if I am a child of God. I cannot get back to it now, save by, for the time being, ignoring that solemn fact and acting as though the Cross to me were nothing! Alas, alas, how often, dear fellow-believer, have we so acted! Oh, the shame that it ever should be so! Yet what need there is that we own before God with confusion of face our wretched failures in this connection! But of one thing there can be no question: no truly converted soul was ever able to find rest in this world after being delivered from it once. The history of the remnant here is, like all Scripture, "**written for our admonition,**" and should speak loudly to our consciences.

To go back to Egypt, for them, must mean increased sorrow and disaster. They might try to persuade themselves that they would there find a land of plenty and quietness, where, undistracted by war and the sound of the trumpet, they could eat bread to the full and dwell in peace; but this was a delusion (vers. 13, 14). The sword from which they sought to flee should pursue them there, and the famine of which they were afraid should follow close after them, and Egypt should be to them but a graveyard, because of the anger of the Lord which should be poured out upon them (vers. 15-18).

The Egyptians might indeed dwell securely in their own land, but not so with the remnant of Israel. The worldling may occupy himself in this scene in comparative quietness and peace, but the child of God is spoiled for the world and can never be happy in it.

*That the captains and the people had in no sense deceived the Lord with their fair words is evident in what follows.*

He admonished them faithfully not to go into Egypt, and then makes bare their hearts:

**"For ye have used deceit against your souls,"** the prophet declares, **"when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it"** (vers. 19, 20 margin).

It was in vain to seek to deceive Him whose eyes as a flame of fire penetrate the inmost secrets of the being. They were not upright before Him. He knew it well, and yet condescended in grace to point out the path of blessing, and warn of the road to ruin. The word had been set before them. Already their downcast faces gave the answer. Jeremiah waits for no reply, but announces:

**"Now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor anything for the which He hath sent me unto you. Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn"** (vers. 21, 22).

Indignation filled the hearts of "**the proud men**" of Judah at these words. Angrily, Azariah and the captain, Johanan, exclaimed, **"Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there. But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives to Babylon"** (chap. 43:1-3).

It was a case of the wish being father to the thought. They were determined to go down to Egypt. They would not believe that God had forbidden them to do so. Nor did they have the effrontery, after all their humble speeches before, to charge Jeremiah with deliberately seeking to deceive them by palming off his own thoughts as a divine revelation; but Baruch was made the scapegoat, and upon him the blame was laid.

This man had faithfully stood in the breach with his master, and on several occasions had put his life in jeopardy by his boldness in carrying out commissions entrusted to him. But it was sheer folly to suppose the prophet to be a mere puppet moved by his servant. Only gross unbelief and determinate self-will could so conclude.

Forthwith Johanan and the captains gathered all the remnant together, forcing both Jeremiah and Baruch to be of the number, and set out for Egypt in direct opposition to the Word of the Lord. We read of no further delay until they arrived at Tahpanhes, where they concluded to settle (vers. 4-7). This city was located in northeastern Egypt, some twenty miles from the historic treasure city of Pithon, the scene and reminder of Israel's former degradation, as built by their fathers in the days of their slavery. It was in the land of Goshen, and was dedicated to a heathen goddess.

Here the emigrants sought a home, hoping that they had left far behind them the awful trinity of destruction that had harassed them for so long - war, pestilence, and famine.

This could not be, however, for they were bent on a course of rebellion against the Lord. They could never be at home in the land from which He had once delivered them, when He separated them to Himself.

Jeremiah is again commissioned to warn them of the impending storm of divine wrath. He may be in a sense a prisoner, but **"the Word of the Lord is not bound,"** and he is bidden to instruct the people both by an object-lesson and by word of mouth. At the Lord's bidding, he took great stones in his hand, which he hid in the brick-kiln at the entry of Pharaoh's house in the city, in the sight of the men of Judah. From this it would appear that the king of Egypt sometimes resided in Tahpanhes (vers. 8, 9), if at this time it was not, indeed, his capital.

Having thus attracted the attention of the people, he declared in the name of the Lord of hosts that He was about to send Nebuchadrezzar, who is again designated **"My servant,"** and all the land of Egypt should be given into his hands. His throne was to be set upon the stones thus hidden, and his royal pavilion spread over them. Like a shepherd (as the shepherd kings had done before, in the days of the patriarchs), he should **"array himself with the land of Egypt"** as with a garment. Egypt's gods and their people would be destroyed in that day, and it would be vain for the men of Judah to seek relief from his vengeance (vers. 10-13).

With more fulness of detail the same theme is taken up in the next chapter.

Again the Word of the Lord came to His servant **"concerning all the Jews which dwelt in the land of Egypt, at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros"** (ver. 1). Migdol was a royal fortress, not far from the place where the Red Sea was parted for the deliverance of the redeemed host under Moses. Noph is supposed to be the same as Memphis, the ancient capital of Upper Egypt.



The general term Pathros covered a considerable district in Upper Egypt, inhabited originally by the Pathrusim. It will be seen from the mention of these various localities that the Jews had in a very short time, a few months at most, spread themselves over a large part of the country; though there may have been several earlier colonies planted there prior to the movement we have been considering.

The Lord's expostulation is recorded in verses 2 to 14. He bids them consider the evil which He brought upon Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah because of the frightful wickedness there perpetrated. "**Rising early,**" He had sought their good, sending prophets saying, "**Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!**" It was idolatry that provoked His special abhorrence. But they would neither give heed to the warnings and entreaties of the prophets nor turn from their iniquitous ways. Therefore His fury had been poured forth and the land now lay waste and desolate. Their present course was but an aggravation of the evil, and would, if persisted in, result in national suicide. In Egypt they were fast relapsing into idolatry. Unless they repented, He could but cut them off from the face of the earth. Yea, by their folly, they were cutting themselves off.

How short their memory! Had they already forgotten the wickedness of their fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and their own wickedness, and the wickedness of their wives in the land of Judah, which had drawn down so awful a punishment? They were not humbled, even after all the past; nor was there any evidence of godly fear; neither had they walked in His law, nor in His statutes, which He had set before them and their fathers. Because of this persistency in wrongdoing, He would set His face against them for evil, to cut them all off. From the least to the greatest, all the men of Judah who dwelt in Egypt should be consumed - those, of course, who had gone there of their own volition. Jeremiah and Baruch, together with many of Gedaliah's former followers, were there by force, and hence could not be included with the self-willed captains and their retainers. Even should the latter desire to return, they would not be permitted so to do. "**None shall return but such as shall escape**" (vers. 11-14).

Open and unblushing defiance greeted this serious warning and earnest expostulation. The true state of the people was at once made manifest, and the hypocritical nature of their former protestations became clearly apparent. Idolatry of the most degrading character had already been secretly practiced by them; the women leading, and the men abetting, as formerly in the land (ver. 15). The latter boldly declared, "**As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee**" (ver. 16). It was willful, deliberate, high-handed opposition to the truth!

The reasons given illustrate the grave danger of trusting in experience rather than going to the Word of God, in spite of all outward appearances. Walking by sight, not faith, they reasoned that when, in the cities of Judah, they ignored the Lord's word and burned incense unto the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, they had a measure of prosperity; at least they had "**plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.**"

On the other hand, since they had left off so to do, they "**have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine**" (vers. 17-19).

Therefore they argue, it is clear that the blessings of the gods of the heathen were theirs while they thus served the queen of heaven. This blessing had been withdrawn when they gave up the outward symbols of idolatry and professed to worship the Lord. How plausible and specious was their sophistry! Yet are there not many who reason in similar ways now? It was the appeal to a momentary experience, instead of to the Word of God - the only safe guide.

Jeremiah's answer is ready and convincing, whether they will own it or not. It was their idolatrous practices which brought down the wrath of the Lord upon them. He stood it until He could no longer bear it; then His judgment fell. For this very cause all the evil they complained of had come upon them (vers. 20-23).

For the women He had a special word. Because they were the leaders in thus dishonoring His Name, that Holy Name should **“no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth”** (ver. 26). He would give them up to destruction, watching over them for evil, and not for good, until they should all be consumed, save a small number, who, escaping the sword, should return unto the land of Judah. Thus **“all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, Mine, or theirs”** (vers. 27, 28).

A sign of the coming destruction was also given, that, when it came to pass, they might know the hour of their judgment was no more to be delayed. Pharaoh-hophra, the king of Egypt, was to be given into the hand of his enemies. Thus the bruised reed upon which they leaned should be broken (vers. 29, 30).

How vain the effort of man to withstand his Maker! What folly to strive with Him! Truly:

**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding.”**

~ end of chapter 22 ~

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