

Jeremiah 43

Read Jeremiah 43:1-7: It happened again! The proud leaders of the survivors in Judah rejected God's direction. God desires that all men were saved, but it seems like these people are making that impossible. They are flying right into the buzz saw. The Old Testament seems to focus more on physical salvation (being saved from being killed). The New Testament focuses more on spiritual salvation. How does God save someone who keeps doing the opposite, while seeing evidence of the futility of going his own way?

They had just prostrated themselves before Jeremiah; and begged him to make an inquiry to God on their behalf. They volunteered that they would do whatever God told them to do; and may the consequences of their disobedience be upon them. After 10 days of praying, Jeremiah came back with an answer. Jeremiah reported that they could safely stay in Judah...but going to Egypt was out of the question. That is a straightforward answer to a prayer.

We now have a makeshift military leadership structure, who are telling the people what to do. These leaders reject this updated direction from God. They could not accept that the Babylonians, whom they feared would cohabit with them.

They are asking God for direction without having a willingness to accept the answer. We should ask ourselves when we do that. When I say "Dear LORD, Thy will be done"; or "Make me a servant", we do not follow through.

I recall asking the LORD to make me more of a servant about 20 years ago. I was working with an odd woman who owned a citrus grove. She had some beliefs and health issues and essentially lived in her citrus grove. She was either eccentric or seriously challenged. I offered to help this woman with some non-business issues; and she took me up on my offer. She was also a hoarder; and my packing house girls cleaned up her house. She had newspapers staked 5' high like a corn maze that were soaked with rat pee. It was so gross they could almost not clean the place. It took about 45 minutes to get to her place from the house. She would call me to help her with things around the place at the most inopportune time. It made me angry and really frustrated me. I realized that being a servant does not consider my schedule preferences.

Were the Jews only open to answers they were inclined to accept to begin with? Are we like that? Is that even a prayer for God's will or ours? They refuse to stay in Judah. They protested, saying; we are going to Egypt! It really reminds me of the faithless spies sent to Canaan. They accuse Jeremiah of setting up the people to get slaughtered by the Chaldeans. They set off for Tahpanhes, Egypt. Why rattle God's chain if you have no open mindedness to do the hard things?



Are these people mentally ill? Why would you ask for advice, while volunteering your allegiance on your own life...to only reject the sensible solution? Why ask God, if you are not intent on taking the advice? Psychologists do not use the words *sin nature*, but they offer some explanations. We no better; but these classifications of thinking are insightful:

Research using **reactance theory** informs us that whenever a person tells us what to do and how to do it, we respond with defensive *defiance* because we want to maximize our personal freedom and decision-making.

Psychologists tell us why some people will request advice, and then reject it. A lot of this has to with a lack of trust, combined with an elevated view of self. Here are some ways:

1. Illusion of Control
 - a. People like to think that they are in control, whether they are bungee jumping or budgeting or brainstorming. It is a contradiction to ask for advice, while already being committed to another path.
2. Illusion of Validity
 - a. Self-appointed experts have a high view of their convictions. They have a fixed mindset before the question is asked. Outside opinions become irrelevant.
3. Belief Bias
 - a. This is the idea to project a strong self-image while asking for advice. They will frequently modify the advice with a preference to hold on to some level of control.
4. Endowment Effect
 - a. People overvalue their suppositions and ideas because they own them. It is a combination of hopes with a modified view of reality. Some people feel their homes are worth more than they are.
5. Overcoming Bias
 - a. Confidence is an admired trait, but overconfidence is actually a weakness. The more powerful we feel about something, the less likely we will take advice.
6. Availability Bias

- a. The urge to make decisions quickly to avoid contrary arguments. This is based on intuition.

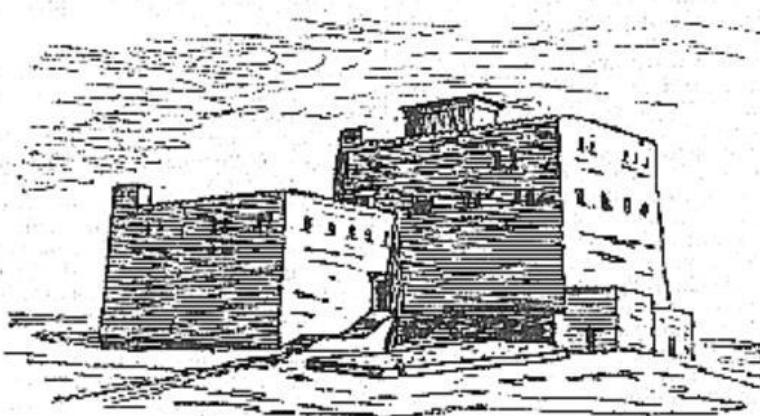
7. Reactance

- a. We all have a confirmation bias; which makes us more willing to consult with like-minded people.

8. Regret Aversion

- a. The fear and aversion to advice. Many leaders have a fear of the fallout and failure of changing plans. They have a very high-risk tolerance tied to their opinions, while little confidence in others.

Read Jeremiah 43:8-13: God reaches out to Jeremiah when they all arrive in Egypt. He essentially tells him to make an illustration of what is coming to Egypt. It is like a GI Joe fort and invasion scenario he wants him to set up with stones. Jeremiah 43 was written around 586 BC. Babylon soundly defeated Egypt at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC. Egypt had a civil war against competing Pharaohs in 567 BC. It was a very bad time to move to Egypt.



Restoration of the Fort among the ruins of *Daphne* (now *Daphnae*), in Egypt, showing the large platform before the entry of Pharaoh's palace at *Tahpanhes*.

Pharaoh Apries, who had the misfortune of becoming King shortly after the **Babylonian Exile**, attempted to help the kingdom of Judah, and in 588 B.C. Apries, referred to as Hophra in Jeremiah 44:30, "dispatched a military unit to Jerusalem to protect it from Babylonian forces sent by Nebuchadnezzar II. However, the Egyptian army soon realized they were no match for the Babylonians, and they had to withdraw to avoid a deadly confrontation." ¹

Among those who managed to flee Jerusalem were King Zedekiah's daughters, **Prophet Jeremiah**, and Baruch, his amanuensis. They sought refuge in Tahpanhes, located about twelve miles west from the modern El Kantara, on the Suez Canal. The ancient Greeks called this Biblical city Daphne. This Hebrew party reached Tahpanhes during the reign of Pharaoh Apries, who had a palace at Tahpanhes, even though the capital of the XXVIth Egyptian dynasty was at **Sais**.

Knowing his Egyptian army had been defeated, Pharaoh Hophra "was able to give the Hebrews no further assistance save the refuge which the palace at Tahpanhes afforded the remnant who escaped from Jerusalem.

After the flight to Egypt the divine command came to the prophet Jeremiah saying:

Take great stones in thy hand, lay them in mortar in the brick work which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house at Tahpanes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and he shall spread his royal (glittering) pavilion over them (Jer. 48: 8-10).

That this prediction became history, and that the Babylonian King did twice invade Egypt and conquered it, is no longer doubted." ²

We owe much of our knowledge about the ancient history of Tahpanes to Egyptologists Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853 – 1942) who discovered the site in 1886. At the time of Flinders' first contact with this historical place, the city was called known by natives as Qasr Bint al-Yahudi, the "Castle of the Jew's Daughter.



An artist's depiction of the deportation and exile of the Jews of the ancient Kingdom of Judah to Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple. Jewish Museum, New York, NY. Public Domain

The meaning of the name Tahpanes is still unknown, but scholars suggest it may be of Egyptian origin. When Petrie excavated at the site, he unearthed the house of Pharaoh Apries. Petrie recalled it laid bare an "area of continuous brick work, resting on sand, about a hundred by sixty feet, facing the eastern entrance to what seem royal buildings."

"It is curious how exactly this answers to the Biblical description of the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanes," Petrie said when examining the ancient ruins.

The late archaeologist "dug into this square platform and found there some rough, "unhewn stones, " but without inscriptions. He was surprised, on inquiry, to learn that the mound from which these stones are exhumed is called by the Arabs to this day Kasr el khint el Yahudi, " The Castle of the Jew's Daughters." Thus the Biblical story of the royal princesses still clings to the ruins as a historical echo from the remote past." ²

Petrie also discovered a mound tower. The structure "was about a hundred and fifty feet high. It was square and contained many stories. The basement had certainly been used for a kitchen. In one room were stones for grinding corn, dishes, jars, and iron rods-the spits used for roasting meat." ²

This is not really found in history books. It was confirmed by archaeologists. Again, the bible stands head and shoulders above all books of history.