

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Ishmael executes his conspiracy against Gedaliah the governor and his companions, and attempts to carry away the Jews who were with him captives to the Ammonites, Jeremiah 41:1-10; but Johanan recovers them, and purposes to flee into Egypt, Jeremiah 41:11-18.

Verse 1

Now - in the seventh month - Answering to the first new moon in our month of October.

There they did eat bread together - This was the same as making a solemn covenant; for he who ate bread with another was ever reputed a friend.

Verse 2

Smote Gedaliah - See the preceding chapter, Jeremiah 41:14.

Verse 5

Having their beards shaven - All these were signs of deep mourning, probably on account of the destruction of the city.

Verse 6

Weeping all along as he went - This felonious hypocrite pretended that he also was deeply afflicted, and wished to bear them company in their sorrow.

Come to Gedaliah - He will appoint you vineyards and fields.

Verse 7

Slew them - He kept the murder of Gedaliah secret, and no doubt had a band of his assassins lodged in Mizpah; and he decoyed these fourscore men thither that he might have strength to slay them. He kept ten alive because they told him they had treasures hidden in a field, which they would show him. Whether he kept his word with them is not recorded. He could do nothing good or great; and it is likely that, when he had possessed himself of those treasures, he served them as he had served their companions. Grain is preserved to the present day in subterranean pits, called mattamores, in different parts of the east.

Verse 9

Now the pit - was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha - See 1 Kings 15:22. Asa made this cistern as a reservoir for water for the supply of the place; for he built and fortified Mizpah at the time that he was at war with Baasha, king of Israel.

Verse 10

Carried away captive - He took all these that he might sell them for slaves among the Ammonites.

Verse 14

Went unto Johanan - They were weary of the tyranny of Ishmael, and were glad of an opportunity to abandon him.

Verse 16

The women - children, and the eunuchs - These were all most probably, persons who belonged to the palace and harem of Zedekiah: some of them his own concubines and their children.

Verse 17

Dwelt in the habitation of Chimham - The estate that David gave Chimham, the son of Barzillai. See 2 Samuel 19:37, etc. He took this merely as a resting-place; as he designed to carry all into Egypt, fearing the Chaldeans, who would endeavor to revenge the death of Gedaliah.