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## FAST OF GEDALIA

THE **FAST OF GEDALIA** ([/gɛDθ'LAɪ.θ, gθ'DɑːLIθ/](#); [HEBREW](#): צום גדליה *TZOM GEDALYA*), ALSO [TRANSLITERATED](#) FROM THE HEBREW LANGUAGE AS **GEDALIAH** OR **GEDALY A(H)**, IS A MINOR [JEWISH FAST](#) DAY FROM [DAWN](#) UNTIL [DUSK](#) TO LAMENT THE ASSASSINATION OF [GEDALIAH](#), THE RIGHTEOUS GOVERNOR OF JUDAH. HIS DEATH ENDED JEWISH AUTONOMY FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE [FIRST TEMPLE](#).<sup>1</sup>

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## BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

When [Nebuchadnezzar](#), the king of the [Neo-Babylonian Empire](#), [conquered Jerusalem](#), he killed or [exiled](#) most of its inhabitants and appointed [Gedaliah](#)<sup>[2]</sup> as governor of the now-Babylonian of [province of Yehud](#).

However, [Baalis](#), king of [Ammon](#), was hostile and envious of the Judean remnant and sent a Judean, [Yishmael Ben Netaniah](#), who was descended from the royal family of Judea, to assassinate Gedaliah. In the seventh month ([Tishrei](#)) of 582/1

BCE (some four to five years following the destruction of the Temple, although the exact year is unclear and subject to dispute; others claim the assassination took place in the same year as the destruction), a group of Jews led by Yishmael came to Gedaliah in the town of [Mitzpa](#) and were received cordially. Gedaliah had been warned of his guest's murderous intent, but refused to believe his informants, believing their report was mere slander. Yishmael murdered Gedaliah, together with most of the Jews who had joined him and many Babylonians whom the Babylonian king had left with Gedaliah. The remaining Jews feared the vengeance of the Babylonian king (in view of

the fact that the king's chosen ruler, Gedaliah, had been killed by a Jew) and fled to Egypt.<sup>[3]</sup>

The events are recounted briefly in the [Hebrew Bible](#) in [2 Kings](#) 25:25–26:

But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldeans that were with him at Mitzpah. And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces, arose, and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

A fuller account is in [Jeremiah](#), chapter 41,<sup>[4]</sup> where the murder of a group of envoys and the kidnapping of the gubernatorial staff and family are also related:

In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, of the royal family, one of the chief officers of the king,

came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. As they ate bread together there at Mizpah, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and ten men with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam son Shaphan with the sword and killed him, because the king of Babylon had appointed him governor in the

land. Ishmael also killed all the Judeans who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldean soldiers who happened to be there