

Jeremiah 6-7

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 4—2nd message continues

The enemy is coming, and eminent invasion (Babylonians)
The people are told to take refuge, the land will be destroyed

The people are told to wash their hearts from wickedness/repent—God giving them a chance
Jeremiah's sorrow/lament for the doomed nation
Vision of the plundering of the land

Chapter 5—The reasons for God's judgment

Dialog between God and Jeremiah—Jeremiah tries to find a way for the people to change

Destruction is coming but God will not make a complete end/remnant will be left
A nation will be coming from afar whose language you do not know (dual prophecy)

The people are without understanding, eyes see not, hears hear not (spiritually)
They have a rebellious heart, they set traps for others for personal gain

God asks: What will you do in the end? (How will you respond when judgment comes?)

Chapter 6

Chapter six finishes the 2nd sermon—Judgment against Judah in Jeremiah's day

- End time prophecy woven in

v. 1-8 Jerusalem under siege

1 “O you children of Benjamin, Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, And set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; For disaster appears out of the north, And great destruction.

2 I have likened the daughter of Zion To a lovely and delicate woman.

3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come to her. They shall pitch their tents against her all around. Each one shall pasture in his own place.”

v. 1 Benjamin was part of the southern two tribe kingdom along with Judah...located to the north of Jerusalem

- Tekoa and Beth Haccerem located to the south of Jerusalem
- All areas around the city are threatened with destruction **from the north**
 - Disaster for ancient Jerusalem and end time Jerusalem

v. 2-3 Jerusalem pictured like a delicate but helpless woman...the enemies are all around

Shepherds—figure for the leaders of the attack (Babylonians)... ‘pitching their tents’= the siege

- Pastoring in its own place= taking the agricultural resources around to feed their army

Statements from the enemy army

4 “Prepare war against her; Arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe to us, for the day goes away, For the shadows of the evening are lengthening.

5 Arise, and let us go by night, And let us destroy her palaces.”

v. 4 “Prepare for war against her—against Jerusalem

- “at noon” “when most are resting” (Companion)
- They are anxious to begin the siege by noon but the day is slipping away

v. 5 As the day has gone by, they attack at night with the goal of destroying the palaces

God's directions to the enemy

6 For thus has the Lord of hosts said: “Cut down trees, And build a mound against Jerusalem. This is the city to be punished. She is full of oppression in her midst.

7 As a fountain wells up with water, So she wells up with her wickedness. Violence and plundering are heard in her. Before Me continually are grief and wounds.

8 Be instructed, O Jerusalem, Lest My soul depart from you; Lest I make you desolate, A land not inhabited.”

v. 6 Cut down trees and make siege mounds/ramps for the attack

- The reason: Jerusalem to be punished because of her oppression

v. 7 Jerusalem's wickedness—it overflows like water overflows a fountain

- Violence and plundering (physical and spiritual)

v. 8 “Be instructed”—Take heed to the warning from God

- They have chance to repent...or be desolate

- “My soul”= I myself (Companion Bible)

The gleaning of Israel (v. 9-15)

9 Thus says the Lord of hosts: “They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel; As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches.”

10 To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. “I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days.

12 And their houses shall be turned over to others, Fields and wives together; For I will stretch out My hand Against the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord.

v. 9 Israel has been described in scripture as a vineyard (Isa. 5:1-2; Ps. 80:9-10)

- The vineyard had gone bad with wickedness (Jer. 2: 21)

- The gleaner (enemy), tool of judgment, will glean the vineyard...knock the ‘grapes’ off the vine

v. 10 Jeremiah’s words: The warning message has been delivered but the people will not listen

- “ear is uncircumcised” –not only ears are closed, but the relationship is gone

v. 11 Everyone will feel God’s anger for their wickedness...v. 12 their property will go to the attackers

v. 13-15 The guilty are called out—false prophets

13“Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely.

14 They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace.

15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the Lord.

v. 13-14 Everyone is guilty...the prophets and priest are especially called out for misleading the people

- Their message of peace when destruction is coming

v. 14 (NIV) “They dress the wound of My people, as though it were not serious. Peace, peace, they say when there is no peace’
(TEV) [Last part] “All is well, all is well”

v. 15 The false prophets and priests are not ashamed of misleading the people...so they will be punished

Refusal to walk in the correct path/God's way

16 Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

17 Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'

v. 16 God's admonition to examine their way of life, to choose the right path and to walk in it
[Last part] The peoples answer: They refuse to walk God's way

"ask for the **old paths**, where the good way is"

- The way of righteousness (Psalm 1: 1-6)
"For God knows the way of the righteous" (Psalm 1: 6)

v. 17 God sends the watchmen (prophets) to warn them...trumpet being the warning signal

- But the people will not listen

v. 18- 23 Judgment is coming

18 Therefore hear, you nations, And know, O congregation, what is among them.

19 Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people— The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words Nor My law, but rejected it.

v. 18 The nations are called on to witness the judgment coming upon them
“What is among them”—is described in the next verse

v. 19 The earth is called on to be a witness...calamity is coming

- Because the nation had totally rejected God’s word and His law

20 For what purpose to Me Comes frankincense from Sheba, And sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me.”

21 Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, And the fathers and the sons together shall fall on them. The neighbor and his friend shall perish.”

v. 20 The people were offering sacrifices but they were not acceptable, not in proper worship to God
➤ An outward display of religion

v. 21 “stumbling blocks” (NIV) ‘obstacles’

God’s laws are stumbling blocks to many who refuse to obey
➤ results in judgment upon them, and everyone will fall

Description of the coming enemy of judgment

22 Thus says the Lord: “Behold, a people comes from the north country, And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth.

23 They will lay hold on bow and spear; They are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roars like the sea; And they ride on horses, As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion.”

v. 22 The enemy attacks from the north...mentioned first in the vision of the boiling pot (1:13-15)

v. 23 Description of their powerful army...set against Jerusalem/Judah

v. 24-25 Report of the people's reaction to the coming destruction

24 We have heard the report of it; Our hands grow feeble. Anguish has taken hold of us, Pain as of a woman in labor.

25 Do not go out into the field, Nor walk by the way. Because of the sword of the enemy, Fear is on every side.

26 O daughter of my people, Dress in sackcloth And roll about in ashes! Make mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; For the plunderer will suddenly come upon us.

v. 24 The reaction is of anguish...pain like a woman in labor

v. 25 Fear and terror because of the enemy and its fierceness

v. 26 Jeremiah's admonition: to begin mourning because the enemy is coming suddenly

The refining process of the people

27 “I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people, That you may know and test their way.

28 They are all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. They are bronze and iron, They are all corrupters;

29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; The smelter refines in vain, For the wicked are not drawn off.

30 People will call them rejected silver, Because the Lord has rejected them.”

v. 27 Jeremiah is set by God as a refiner/tester of His people (as testing silver to see if there is any dross)
➤ To see if there is valuable people left

v. 28 The results come back quickly—the are all dross (bronze and iron)...rebels, slanderers, corrupters

v. 29-30 The refining process reveals rejected silver, the people are rejected by God

Chapter 7

“The temple sermon”

A new message attacking the hypocrites of his day

(Expositors) “According to 26: 1, Jeremiah delivered it early in Jehoiakim’s reign (609-606 BC) and chapter 26 records the consequences of the address”

- 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,
- 2 “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!’
- 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

v. 1-2 God’s words to Jeremiah addressed to those who come into the temple to worship

- Addressed in the temple precinct where many people including priests would hear

v. 2 “all you of Judah” (multitudes)—they were coming to the temple to worship, but not really to worship the Lord (syncretism v. 10)

v. 3 Immediately they are told to change their ways...and if they do, they would live “in this place”—they would not go into exile (In Babylonia) Repent/reform the theme of the sermon

4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'

5 "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor,

6 if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt,

7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

v. 4 "lying words"—of the false prophets

They proclaimed over and over "the temple of the Lord" [i.e. nothing is going to happen to it]

"temple of the Lord" [repeated] (Companion Bible) "for great emphasis, to exhibit the fanaticism common to all idolaters"

v. 5-6 God's admonitions of specifics of what things they need to change:

Executing righteous judgment...not to oppress the most vulnerable...nor shed innocent blood...nor pagan worship

v. 7 if the people would change their ways, they would continue to live in the land, not be exiled
(Deut. 4:40) for obedience they would live in the land forever

8 “Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.

9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know,

10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’?

11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the Lord.

v. 8 They trusted the lying/deceptive words of the false prophets— ‘the commandments are not relevant’

- They also say ‘all is well’

v. 9-10 Several of the ten commandments they broke including worshipping other gods...then they come to the temple claiming they are ‘delivered’ (free) to do these abominations (Delivered from any punishment)

v. 11 People congregate at the temple, but since they were such blatant sinners, God calls it a ‘den of thieves’

- God tells them: He has seen what they do

Christ quoted this verse in (Mat. 21:13; Luke 19:46) Addressing those who were selling in the temple

12 But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel.

13 And now, because you have done all these works,” says the Lord, “and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer,

14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

15 And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.

v. 12 God reminds them of what happened at Shiloh, when the Philistines captured the ark, which God allowed to happen because of the wickedness of Israel at that time (1 Samuel 4)

- The people of Judah in Jeremiah’s day should have learned a lesson from that example

v. 13 “done all these works”-- steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods

- They were given repeated warnings but they would not listen...

v. 14 what happened at Shiloh will happen to the temple (because of their hypocrisy)

v. 15 “I will cast you out of My sight”—as God had done to the people of Ephraim, where the shrine of Shiloh had been located (Ephraim went into captivity along with all the northern tribes)

Worship of the queen of heaven (their hypocrisy)

16 “Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you.

17 Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.

God tells Jeremiah not to pray for the people because of their sin of idolatry, explained in the next verses

v. 17 God is disgusted with what all the people of Judah and Jerusalem are doing

(Expositors) “What was particularly abominable to the Lord was the worship of the queen of heaven by the entire populace. This goddess was probably the Assyro-Babylonian Ishtar [Astarte] (44:17).

Such worship was probably initiated by Manasseh (II Kings 21:1-9) and reintroduced into Judah by Jehoiakim. The cakes have been described as round and flat, resembling the moon.”

(Vines) “The term Easter is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven”

19 Do they provoke Me to anger?” says the Lord. “Do they not provoke themselves, to the shame of their own faces?”

20 Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place—on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched.”

v. 19 “provoke: (Companion Bible) “fig. *Ploke* by which the one word applies a second meaning. ‘Do they provoke Me?”

No: they bring on themselves the judgment of Jehovah”

v. 20 God pronounces certain judgment on the land

Obedience is better than worthless sacrifices

21 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.

22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.

23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'

v. 21 The burnt offering was totally dedicated to God and the whole animal was burnt up

God is saying, because of their sin and rebellion, they might as well eat the meat, because their sacrifices were worthless to Him

v. 22 (NIV) "For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offering and sacrifices,

v. 23 but I gave them this command: obey me, and will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you"

(Expositors) "The purpose is to show how totally erroneous was Judah's concept of sacrifices"

24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.

v. 24 Israel by means of their disobedience went backwards (spiritually) and not forward

v. 25 God sent the prophets to warn them constantly

26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

27 “Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.

v. 26 But they would not listen to the warning message and did even worse...in Jeremiah's day it was getting worse

v. 27 God tells Jeremiah that the people would not listen to him

- Jeremiah consistently warned the people, yet they would not listen...he was giving that message at the temple where so many were gathered

Judgment on false religion

28 “So you shall say to them, ‘This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the Lord their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.

29 Cut off your hair and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.’

v. 28 God instructs Jeremiah to say to those in Jerusalem: that they do not obey God, nor receive correction, truth is lost in them...they are following the lies and worshipping false gods

v. 29 “cut off your hair”—a sign of mourning, and to lament on the desolate heights
(where they worship the pagans)

- A metaphor to say that they are cut off from God, the relationship is done

30 For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,” says the Lord. “They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it.

31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.

v. 30 Such an abomination that they have set their idols in the temple, polluting it

v. 31 “the high places of Tophet”—pagan worship place where they passed their sons and daughters through the fire

32 “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room.

33 The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away.

34 Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.

v. 32 Tophet will be renamed “Valley of Slaughter”—which would happen to Jerusalem by Babylon (586 BC)

- Representative of what will happen in the end time—on Judah and Israel
- Also a type of the final judgment, the incorrigibly wicked (Lake of fire in Revelation)

v. 34 After the judgment on Jerusalem has passed the voices of celebration will be gone

Lessons

“ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it”

- Walk in the way of righteousness in obedience to God

The danger of syncretism—saying one is worshipping God while practicing paganism
(a form of religion)

- Must be careful to worship God practicing truth (John 17:17)

Israel by means of their disobedience went backwards and not forward

- We must be constantly focused to go forward spiritually towards the kingdom following God