

Jeremiah Chapter 7

Verses 1-2

Chapters 7 through 10 are often called “The Message in the Temple Gate.”

Throughout these four chapters runs the theme of the causes for Judah’s judgment.

These chapters focus on the people’s false standards of life.

Scholars disagree as to whether they relate to Josiah’s later reign, or to King Jehoiakim’s early reign.

The thrice-repeated “temple of the LORD” reads like a meaningless echo.

Even the right words are cheap when not backed up by a person’s righteous willingness to “amend” his or her “ways.”

Jeremiah 7:1 "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,"

“The word that came”:

This was Jeremiah’s first temple sermon (verse 2); another is found in chapter 26.

God was aroused against the sins He names in verses 6, 19, especially at His temple becoming a “den of robbers” (verse 11).

The point of this message, however, was that if Israel would repent, even at this late hour, God would still keep the conqueror from coming (verses 3, 7).

They must reject lies such as the false hope that peace is certain, based on the reasoning that the LORD would never bring calamity on His own temple (verse 4).

They must turn from their sins(verses 3, 5, 9), and end their hypocrisy (verse 10).

Jeremiah 7:2 "Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all [ye of] Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD."

That is, of the temple, and the court of it.

This gate, as Kimchi says, was the eastern gate, which was the principal gate of all (see Jer. 26:2).

"And proclaim there this word, and say":

With a loud voice, as follows:

"Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah":

The inhabitants of the several parts of Judea, which came to the temple to worship.

Very probably it was a feast day, as Calvin conjectures; either the Passover, or Pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, when all the males in Israel appeared in court.

"That enter in at these gates to worship the LORD":

There were seven gates belonging to the court, three on the north, three on the south, and one in the east, the chief of all, as Kimchi, Abarbanel, and Ben Melech observe; and this agrees with the account in the Mishna.

And therefore, Jeremiah was ordered to stand here, and deliver his message.

The first thing that is apparent here is this message is to God's people, not to the world.

Jeremiah was to go to the house of God and tell God's people.

The last chapter was devoted more to Benjamin's family.

This is spoken to the house of Judah.

Notice, "all ye of Judah".

It appears the time that Jeremiah was to bring this, was a time when large numbers of those of Judah would come to the temple.

This is inside the gate.

As I said, this is a message for God's people alone.

It is a time now that pastors should stand on the porch of the church and give God's message to the people of God.

Notice carefully, Jeremiah was bringing this message from God.

Jeremiah 7:3 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place."

The Lord of armies above and below in general, and the God of Israel in particular. Wherefore they ought to hearken to what He was about to say, and to be obedient to Him.

"Amend your ways and your doings": Or, "make them good"; which shows that they were bad, and were not agreeable to the law and will of God, to which they ought to have been conformed. And the way to amend them was to act according to the rule of the divine word they were favored with.

"And I will cause you to dwell in this place": To continue to dwell in Jerusalem, and in Judea, the land of their nativity, and in the temple, the house of God, and place of religious worship. Otherwise, it is suggested that they should not continue here, but be carried captive into a strange land.

Jeremiah was crying out to them in the name of the LORD to repent of their evil ways and return to God. God wants to bless them, but He cannot bless them when they are worshipping other gods. He is saying, it is not too late if you will repent.

Jeremiah 7:4 "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, [are] these."

Jeremiah's God-given message was straightforward: the physical presence of the "temple" was no guarantee that judgment would not come upon Jerusalem. God's wrath against Judah's sins could be averted only through a genuine repentance that would be reflected in their total lives (verses 5-6).

They are saying over and over, "the temple". They thought if they came to the temple 3 times a year that was all that was required. They did not live by their faith in God after they left the temple. There is more to belonging to God than just attending church once in a while. To be in right relationship, we must always worship God.

Verses 5-7: God has listed four practical and specific changes to behavior that He expected to see among His people:

- (1) "Execute judgment thoroughly;"
- (2) Care for "strangers," "the fatherless", and "the widows";
- (3) "Shed not innocent blood;" and
- (4) Do not pursue "other gods."

God has never lowered His standards; He expects nothing less from His people today.

Jeremiah 7:5 "For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor;"

The care of the downtrodden and oppressed of society (the “widow,” the “orphan,” the “poor” and the “stranger”), was of particular concern to the God of all mercies. This theme appears often in the Book of Deuteronomy, and recurs elsewhere too (compare Job 31:16; Psalms 94:6; 146:9; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 22:3; Ezek. 22:7). This dominant theme is a vivid reminder for believers not only to practice righteous standards in their lives but to cultivate a social concern for all men similar to that of God Himself.

Jeremiah 7:6 "[If] ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:"

Who have none to help them, and who ought to have mercy and compassion shown them, as well as justice done them. And should not be injured by paranoid sinful men in their persons and properties, and much less oppressed in courts of judicature by those who should be their patrons and defenders.

"And shed not innocent blood in this place": In the temple, where the Sanhedrin, or great court of judicature, sat. For this does not so much respect the commission of murder by private persons, as the condemnation of innocent men to death by the judges, which is all one as shedding their blood. And by which actions they defiled that temple. To shed innocent blood in any place, Kimchi observes, is an evil; but to shed it in this place, in the temple, was a greater evil, because this was the place of the Shekinah, or where the divine Majesty dwelt.

"Neither walk after other gods to your hurt": The gods of the people, as the Targum explains; "for this", as the Arabic version renders it, "is pernicious to you". Idolatry was hurtful to themselves as well as to God; and therefore, it is dissuaded from by an argument taken from their own interest.

We see in Jer. 7:5-6, that they were not representing God in their day to day dealings with other people. They were believers in name only. They lived like the rest of the world. As a formality, they came to the temple at the required times. We see a list of the things wrong in their lives in the verses above. God would not accept them as His family until they had a change of heart, and lived every day as His representatives on the earth. They must turn from the worship of false gods and worship only the true God, and treat their fellowman as they would want to be treated.

Jeremiah 7:7 "Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."

“The land that I gave ... for ever”: God refers to the unconditional element of the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12, 15, 17, 22).

Their being able to live in the Promised Land peacefully and prosperously was conditional on their living as God would have them live. Blessings were for those who obeyed God.

Verses 8-11: In calling the Temple “a den of Robbers,” Jeremiah was confronting the hypocrisy of God’s people in thinking they could be thoroughly pagan in every aspect of their lives and then pretend to come worthily into God’s house (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

Jeremiah 7:8 "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit."

What they are dissuaded from (Jer. 7:4), is here affirmed they did, and which is introduced with a note of assertion and attention. This being a certain thing that they did so; and was worthy of their consideration and serious reflection upon. And it was astonishing that they should, since to do so was of no advantage to them, but the contrary.

"That cannot profit": Temple worship and service, legal sacrifices and ceremonies, could not take away sin, and expiate the guilt of it; or justify men, and render them acceptable to God. These, without faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ (which was yet coming), were of no avail; and especially could never be thought to be of any use and profit, when such gross abominations were indulged by them as are next mentioned.

They had believed lies. They had turned from God to these false gods. What could they possibly profit from an idol which is a nothing?

Jeremiah 7:9 "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;"

At the same time, they offered sacrifices, and trusted in them. They did those things, which would not be pleasing to the Lord, nor profitable to them. Or, "ye do steal", etc.; so explains the Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions; and likewise the Targum; as charging the people with them; these are sins against the second table of the law, as what follow are against the first. Note: The “first table” is about the way God’s people should relate to God. The second “table” is about the way they should relate to their neighbors.

"And burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not": For they not only burnt incense to Baal, which was an act of idolatrous worship; but served other strange gods they had not known before. Whose names they had never heard of, and of whose help and assistance they had no experience; nor received any benefit from, as they had from the one and only true God. And therefore, it was great folly and ingratitude for them to forsake the Lord, and walk after these.

Jeremiah 7:10 "And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?"

In the temple; either as if they had done no such thing, like the whore, that wipes her mouth, and saith she hath done no wickedness (Prov. 30:20), noting their deep hypocrisy. Or else that this would barely atone for all their abominations, as if they could make amends to God for their sins by their duties; and their posture of standing denotes their service (1 Kings 10:8; Prov. 22:29).

“We are delivered to do all these abominations”: That is, because they had appeared before God with their sacrifices, either they thought themselves safe from all danger, and freed from God’s judgments (Mal. 3:15); or rather privileged to return to all that wickedness again, hereby noting their impudence (see Isa. 1:12).

They were not free to do these sins, just because they belonged to God. This is so much like many Christians today who believe they can live any way they want to and not be guilty of sin, because they have been baptized. Christianity is a day to day walk in the footsteps Jesus left for us to walk in. We must continue in our salvation. When we receive the Lord, we are brand new creatures in Christ. The old sinful life should have been buried in the watery grave of baptism. We should be walking in newness of life in Christ. We no longer live, but Christ lives in us. This is the very same thing for these children of God (Judah and Benjamin). Their lives should reflect God within them. They should not live like the lost world.

Jeremiah 7:11 "Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen [it], saith the LORD."

Merely formal religious attendance at God’s “house” is condemned also by Jesus (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). The house of God is to be a holy place. God never intended it to be a gathering place for thieves and robbers. Jesus spoke of it this way: Matthew 21:13 "And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

In Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46, we read the same thing. God wants His people to be holy, as He is holy. He is our Tabernacle. He wants His people, and His house to be holy and separated from the world. Christians should live holy lives because we bear the name of Christ.

Jeremiah 7:12 "But go ye now unto my place which [was] in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."

“Go ... unto ... Shiloh”: God calls them to return to Shiloh where the tabernacle dwelt along with the Ark of the Covenant. He permitted the Philistines to devastate that place (1 Sam. Chapter 4), and He is ready to do similarly with Jerusalem, the place of His temple (verses 13-14).

(See the note on 26:1).

“Shiloh” is an interesting word. It appears to be the name of a place where the earliest sanctuary was located. It is the same area as Shechem. This had undoubtedly been somewhat of a permanent structure to house the Ark of the Covenant. It had been destroyed. It appears that many of the people in and around Jerusalem did not believe God would allow the Babylonians to destroy the temple in Jerusalem. This is a reminder that the first resting place had been destroyed, and Jerusalem would be no different. I want to mention something in passing here. The word “Shiloh” was not just a place but was also a name for the Messiah. Shiloh, the place was destroyed, and so will Jerusalem be destroyed by the Babylonians because of sin in their lives.

Jeremiah 7:13 "And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;"

“Rising up early”: This refers to the daily ministry of the prophets (compare verse 25).

The phrase “rising up early” becomes a frequent expression in Jeremiah. The practice is in harmony with the consistent biblical teaching. Jesus Himself rose up before daybreak to pray (Mark 1:32-35). Many of God’s choice servants had this practice (compare Gen. 28:16-22; Exodus 24:4-8; 34:4; 1 Sam. 1:19; 2 Chron. 29:20; Job 1:5). The Psalms remind believers that the morning hour spent with God is crucial for spiritual growth (Psalm 88:13). Each morning God’s child has a fresh opportunity to recall His mercy and protection (Psalms 59:16; 92:2), and to find direction and guidance for the tasks of the day (Psalm 143:8). Jeremiah reports that the heavenly Father waited until it was early, awaiting a meeting with the citizens of Judah (7:25; 11:7-8; 25:3-4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4-5). This phrase captures God’s tender seeking of His people, but alas, they neither responded nor met with Him at all (compare 2 Chron. 36:15-16). Rather, as Zephaniah sadly reports, “They rose early, and corrupted all their doings” (Zeph. 3:7). How great must be the heartbreak of God who earnestly longs to meet in communion and fellowship with His people, only to find that they do not keep their appointments with Him!

Verses 14-15: The ancient tabernacle from the wilderness period that had stood in “Shiloh” for so long had been abandoned. Now even the magnificent temple in Jerusalem (“This house which is called by My name”), such a solid and apparent sign of God’s ongoing commitment to His people, would be as forsaken as Shiloh. God is never compromised by those who take Him for granted.

Jeremiah 7:14 "Therefore will I do unto [this] house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh."

The temple (as in Jer. 7:11), for though it was called by His name, and His name was called upon in it, yet this could not secure it from desolation. For so the name of the Lord was set in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and yet He forsook it because of the wickedness of the people.

"Wherein ye trust": They trusted in the sacrifices offered up there, and the services performed there; in the holiness of the place, and because it was the residence of the divine Majesty; wherefore they thought this would be a protection and defense of them; and this was trusting in lying words (as in Jer. 7:4).

"And unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers": Meaning either Jerusalem; the Syriac version renders it, "and to the city; or the whole land of Judea as in Jer. 7:7".

"As I have done to Shiloh": see Jer. 7:12.

God had warned them of the consequences of worshipping false gods. He had Jeremiah telling them of their error and its consequences/ outcome, if they did not repent. It appears the warning was not heeded. They had trusted in the temple being in Jerusalem forever. God had given them the Promised Land, and had even dwelt with them in His temple in the Most Holy Place.

Jeremiah 7:15 "And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, [even] the whole seed of Ephraim."

No observances, professions, or supposed revelations, will profit, if men do not amend their ways and their doings.

None should hope in free salvation, who allow themselves in the practice of known sin, or live in the neglect of known duty.

They thought that the temple they profaned would be their protection. But all who continue in sin because grace has abounded, or that grace may abound, make Christ the minister of sin; and the cross of Christ, rightly understood, forms the most effectual remedy to such poisonous sentiments.

The Son of God gave Himself for our transgressions, to show the excellence of the Divine law, and the evil of sin. Never let us think we may do wickedness without suffering for it.

Jeremiah 7:16 "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee."

"Pray not": God told His spokesman not to pray for the people (compare 11:14). He did not find Judah inclined to repent. Instead, He found the glib use of self-deluding slogans (such as in 7:4), and flagrant idol worship (in verse 18), from a people insistent on not hearing (verse 27, 19:15; compare 1 John 5:16).

Jeremiah was instructed by God not to "pray" for the people or "cry" over them (11:14; 14:11; 15:1). They were, from youngest to oldest, intent on self-destruction, and God would let them have their way.

We see in this, that God's judgement is already set. Jeremiah is not to pray for their deliverance, because he would be praying against the judgement of God. We know that Abraham asked God

to spare Sodom, if He could find as many as 10 righteous people. There were not 10 righteous, and God did not spare them. God told Abraham ahead of time that He was going to destroy them, but all the prayers of Abraham could not have stopped the judgement. This is the case here as well. There are certain things God has planned. To intercede in prayer in opposition to God's plans will not work.

Jeremiah 7:17 "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?"

We enter in one of the darker regions of Jewish idolatry, such as Ezekiel (Jer. Chapter 8), saw in a vision. A foreign worship of the basest kind was practiced, not only in secret, but in open places as well.

God brings Jeremiah's attention to the rampant sin in the cities. They must be punished for their sins. The punishment is to cause them to repent and turn to God.

Jeremiah 7:18 "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead [their] dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

"The queen of heaven": (compare 44:17-19, 25). The Jews were worshipping Ishtar, an Assyrian and Babylonian goddess also call Ashtoreth and Astarte, the wife of Baal or Molech. Because these deities symbolized generative power, their worship involved prostitution (see the note on Judges 2:11-15).

We see from this, that even the wives and children enter into the false worship with the fathers. This is an abomination before God. God is a jealous God; He will not tolerate the worship of other gods.

Deuteronomy 6:15 "(For the LORD thy God [is] a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

They are not only worshipping false gods, but are doing it openly for all to see their unfaithfulness. God's fury has come up in His face against them.

Jeremiah 7:19 "Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: [do they] not [provoke] themselves to the confusion of their own faces?"

No: He cannot be provoked to anger as men are. Anger does not fall upon Him as it does on men. There is no such anxiety in God as there is in men; His Spirit cannot be irritated and provoked in the manner that the spirits of men may be. And though sin, and particularly idolatry, is disagreeable to Him, contrary to His nature, and repugnant to His will; yet the damage arising from it is more to men themselves than to Him. And though He sometimes does things which are like to what are done by men when they are angry, yet in reality there is no such anxiety in God as there is in men.

"Do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?": The greatest hurt that is done is to themselves. They are the sufferers in the end. They bring ruin and destruction upon themselves; and therefore, have great reason to be angry with themselves, since what they do brings their own shame and confusion. The Targum says, "do they think that they provoke me? saith the LORD; is it not for evil to themselves, that they may be confounded in their works?"

The answer is yes, they do greatly provoke God. The worst thing is now they do not even know what they believe in. The "confusion of their own faces", just means they are totally confused in their worship. We had spoken earlier about their formality of sacrificing to God still going on, but at the same time they were worshipping false gods. They did not know themselves what they believed.

Jeremiah 7:20 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."

Since these are their thoughts, and this the fruit of their doings.

"Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place": Like fire, to consume and destroy it. Meaning Jerusalem, which was burned with fire; as an emblem of God's wrath, and an instance of His vengeance upon it, for their sins; which came down in great abundance, like a storm or tempest.

"Upon man and upon beast": Upon beasts for the sake of man, they being his property, and for his use. Otherwise they are innocent, and do not deserve the wrath of God, nor are they aware of it.

"And upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground": Which should be blighted by nipping winds, or cut down and trampled upon by the Chaldean army.

"And it shall burn, and shall not be quenched": That is, the wrath of God shall burn like fire, and shall not cease until it has executed the whole will of God in the punishment of His people.

These people were symbolically God's wife. There is nothing that makes a husband more furious than an unfaithful wife. They have been unfaithful to the Lord GOD. His anger will cause them to fall in this great battle with Babylon.

Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the LORD thy God [is] a consuming fire, [even] a jealous God."

Zechariah 8:2 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury."

This destruction will be so great that the trees, the fruit, and in fact, everything will be destroyed.

Verses 21-26: As He does frequently, God invited His people to remember their past. The people had maintained the mechanical traditions of “burnt offerings” and “sacrifices” while forsaking God’s true commandment, “Obey My voice” (1 Sam. 15:22).

Verses 21-23: These verses do not minimize the importance of the Old Testament sacrifices, but call attention to the necessity of the believer living a life of total obedience and devotion to God. The Scriptures consistently teach that religious observances devoid of spiritual devotion are worthless (compare 1 Sam. 15:22-23; Psalm 40:6-8; Isa. 1:10-20; Micah 6:8).

Jeremiah 7:21 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh."

The LORD of armies above and below, and the covenant God of the people of Israel; who were bound to serve Him. Not only by the laws of creation, and the bounties of Providence, but were under obligation so to do by the distinguishing blessings of His goodness bestowed upon them. Wherefore their idolatry, and other sins committed against Him, were the more heinous and aggravated.

"Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh": That is, add one offering to another. Offer every kind of sacrifice, and, when you have done, eat the flesh of them yourselves. For that is all the advantage that comes by them; they are not acceptable to me, as Jarchi observes, therefore why should you lose them? Burnt offerings were wholly consumed, and nothing was left of them to eat. But of other sacrifices there were, particularly the peace offerings; which the Jewish commentators think are here meant by sacrifices; and therefore, the people are bid to join them together, that they might have flesh to eat. Which was all the profit arising to them by legal sacrifices. The words seem to be sarcastically spoken; showing the unacceptableness of legal sacrifices to God, when sin was indulged, and the lack of profitableness of them to men.

God is telling them to go ahead and cook and eat their sacrifices that they would have made to Him, because they are unacceptable to Him. The LORD leaves no doubt who He is here, emphasizing that He is the “God of Israel”.

Verses 22-23: Offerings ... sacrifices ... Obey”: Here is a crucial emphasis on faithful obedience (Compare Joshua 1:8; 1 Sam. 15:22; Prov. 15:18; 21:3; Isa. 1:11-17; Hosea 6:6; Matt. 9:13).

Jeremiah 7:22 "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:"

“Nor commanded”: Bible writers sometimes use apparent negation to make a comparative emphasis. What God commanded His people at the Exodus was not so much the offerings, as it was the faithful obedience which prompted the offerings. (See this comparative sense used elsewhere in Deut. 5:3; Hosea 6:6; 1 John 3:18).

Jeremiah 7:23 "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."

This was the sum and substance of what was then commanded, even obedience to the moral law. This was the main and principal thing enjoined, and to which the promise was annexed.

"Obey my voice": The word of the Lord, His commands, the precepts of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments). Obedience which was preferable to the sacrifices of the ceremonial law (see 1 Sam. 15:22), wherefore it follows:

"And I will be your God, and ye shall be my people": The meaning is, that while they were obedient to Him, He would protect them from their enemies, and continue them in their privileges and blessings, which He had bestowed upon them as His peculiar people.

"And walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you": Not only in some of them, but in all of them. Not merely in the observance of legal sacrifices, but chiefly in the performance of moral actions. Even in all the duties of religion, in whatsoever is required in the law, respecting God or man.

"That it may be well unto you": That they might continue in the land which was given them for an inheritance, and enjoy all the blessings promised as a reward for their obedience.

We know that God promised blessings to His people if they obeyed Him, and curses if they did not. This all began with the promises to Abraham. The ordinances and laws God gave were for the benefit of man. The sacrifices were also for man to express thankfulness to God for the provisions God had made for him. Some of the sacrifices were to bring forgiveness for sins. All were for man's benefit. We will understand this better, if we remember the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It was not for Jesus' benefit the sacrifice was made, but for man's. If man had never fallen, there would have been no need for sacrifice. Look with me at one Scripture that expresses the same thought:

1 Samuel 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams."

To understand this more fully, study the book of Leviticus. God will not be our God if we have other gods, He must be the only One or He will not be our God at all.

Jeremiah 7:24 "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels [and] in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."

They were stubborn as in Jer. 3:17.

"Went backward and not forward": The whole sacrificial system, even at its best, to say nothing of its idolatrous corruptions, was accordingly, from Jeremiah's point of view, a retrograde

movement. The apostasy of the people in the worship of the golden calf involved a like deflection, necessary and inevitable though it might be as a process of education. From the first ideal government, based upon the covenant made with Abraham. i.e., upon a pure and spiritual theism, the emblems and ordinances of which, though "shadows of good things to come," were in themselves "weak and beggarly elements" (Heb. 10:1; Gal. 4:9).

Man, by nature is sinful. The best example of this that stands out to me is the children of Israel headed for the Promised Land. God miraculously brought them out of Egypt with the 10 plagues He brought on Egypt. This alone should have convinced them that He was truly God, and there were no others. He parted the Red Sea and took them over on dry land. He had Moses strike the Rock and water enough for the millions of people sprang forth. They still did not believe. They made the golden calf to worship. What does God have to do for man, before man realizes who God is? It appears man is so set on sinning, that he ignores all the evidence and follows the desires of his flesh.

Jeremiah 7:25 "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending [them]:"

That is, in all generations; ever since their first coming out of Egypt, they had been disobedient to the commands of God. And had walked after their own heart's lusts, and had gone backward, and not forward. For this is not to be connected with what follows:

"I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them": Which should be rendered, "although God has sent"; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should continue in their disobedience. Though the Lord sent to them to exhort and warn them, not one, or two, of His servants the prophets, but all of them, who daily rose early in the morning, which denotes their care and diligence to deliver God's message; and which, because they were sent of the Lord, and did His work as He directed them, it is attributed to Himself. And of these, there was a constant succession; from the time of their coming out of Egypt unto that day, which shows the goodness of God to that people, and their slothfulness, hardness, and obstinacy.

(Compare verse 13).

God heard their cry in Egypt and sent Moses to their rescue. God sent judges, prophets and holy men, but they would not believe. They were so caught up in the desires of the flesh, they would not listen to the warnings of God.

Jeremiah 7:26 "Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers."

Speaking by the prophets.

"Nor inclined their ear": To what was said to them; would not listen to it, and much less obey what was commanded them.

"But hardened their neck": And so became stiffnecked, and would not submit to bear the yoke of the law.

"They did worse than their fathers": Every generation grew more and more wicked, and went on to be so until the measure of their iniquity was filled up (hence it follows in verse 27).

It seems the sins got worse with every generation. It was almost as if they were trying to outdo their fathers. The "hardening of their neck" just meant they were too stubborn to learn.

Jeremiah 7:27 "Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee."

Before mentioned in the chapter: exhortations to duty, admonishing sins, promises and threats.

"But they will not hearken to thee": So as to reform from their evil ways, and do the will of God. They will neither be allured by promises, nor awed by menaces.

"Thou shalt also call unto them": With a loud voice, showing great vehemence and earnestness. Being concerned for their good, and knowing the danger they were in.

"But they will not answer thee": This the Lord knew, being God omniscient. And therefore, when it came to pass, it would be a confirmation to the prophet of his mission. And being told of it beforehand, was prepared to meet with and expect such a reception from them. So that he would not be discouraged at it. And at the same time, it would confirm the character given of this people before.

I feel so sorry for Jeremiah here. He brings the message from God to these people and they will not listen or believe. How discouraging can this be? Noah had the same problem while he was building the Ark. He preached of the coming disaster but never had anyone believe him or change his ways. It is not the obligation of the messenger to make them believe, it is enough that he brings God's message to the people. It is their obligation to believe.

Jeremiah 7:28 "But thou shalt say unto them, This [is] a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth."

Having found by experience, after long speaking and calling to them, that they are a disobedient and incorrigible people.

"This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God": Who, though the LORD is their God, and has chosen and avouched them to be His special people, whom He has distinguished by special favors. Yet what He says by His prophets they pay no regard unto, and are no better than the Gentiles, which know not God.

"Nor receiveth correction": Or "instruction"; so as to be reclaimed, and made the better. Neither by the word, nor by the rod; neither had any effect upon them.

"Truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth": Neither faith nor faithfulness is in them. Nothing but lying, hypocrisy, and insincerity.

Jeremiah says exactly what God tells him to. He says: you do not want the Truth. They have believed a lie. They do not want help.

Jeremiah 7:29 "Cut off thine hair, [O Jerusalem], and cast [it] away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath."

"Cut off thine hair": This is a sign depicting God's cutting the nation off and casting them into exile. Ezekiel used a similar illustration by cutting his hair (Ezek. 5:1-4). God never casts away the genuinely saved from spiritual salvation (John 6:37; 10:28-29).

"Cast it away": it is not to be reserved, as sometimes men and women both do for some use; but to be cast away, and as a thing good for nothing. And thus, it may agree with the church's lamentation, (Lamentations 5:16); for it is not here exhorted to as a token of repentance, but as a threatening of judgments.

They were to cut off their hair in mourning. It was a custom of the people when they took a Nazarite vow, to grow their hair long and then cut it and cast it away. God has rejected and forsaken them. He wants no sacrifice to Him from them anymore.

Jeremiah 7:30 "For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it."

Meaning not a single action only, but a series, a course of evil actions. And those openly, in a daring manner, not only before men, but in the sight of God, and in contempt of Him, like the men of Sodom (Gen. 13:13).

"They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it": That is, they have set their idols in the temple. Even king Manasseh set up a graven image of the grove (2 Kings 21:7), which looked, as if it was done on purpose to defile it.

It appears Manasseh had built altars for all the host of heaven. This is an abomination, a revolting sin in God's sight because the very first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me".

Verses 31-32: The full scriptural picture concerning this Canaanite abomination makes it clear that "Tophet" was a sacred enclosure in the "valley of the son of Hinnom," where the heinous child sacrifice (burnt alive in fire to a false god, Molech) was carried out (compare 19:5-6; 32:35; 2 Kings 23:10; and see the notes at 2 Kings 16:3-4 and 2 Chron. 28:3). Archaeological confirmation concerning the nature of the sacrifices carried out in a Tophet comes from the excavations at the Phoenician colony of Carthage.

Jeremiah 7:31 "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 commanded [them] not, neither came it into my heart."

“Burn their sons and their daughters in the fire”: Though God forbade this atrocity (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31), Israelites still offered babies as sacrifices at the high places of idol worship (Tophet), in the valley of the son of Hinnom (south end of Jerusalem). They offered them to the fire god Molech, under the delusion that this god would reward them (see note on 19:6).

This is the worship of Molech which was strictly forbidden. They practiced human sacrificing of their children to this false god.

Jeremiah 7:32 "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place."

“Valley of slaughter”: God renamed the place because great carnage would be forthcoming in the Babylonian invasion.

We realize from this, that this was a common thing and many children were killed. It would be correct to name it the valley of slaughter.

Jeremiah 7:33 "And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray [them] away."

That is, those which remain unburied, for which there will be found no place to bury them in. All places, particularly Tophet, being so full of dead bodies; not to have a burial, which is here threatened, was accounted a great judgment.

"And none shall fray them away": or frighten them away. That is, drive away the fowls and the beasts from the carcasses. The sense is either that there should be such a vast depletion of men that there would be no one left to do this, and so the fowls and beasts might prey upon the carcasses without any disturbance. Or else, those that were left would be so devoid of humanity, as not to do this for the dead.

In Deuteronomy 28:25, we read of this very thing.

Jeremiah 7:34 "Then will I 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."

Signifying that the devastation should not only be in and about Jerusalem, but should reach all over the land of Judea. Since in all cities, towns, and villages, would cease:

"The voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness": Upon any account whatever; and instead of that, mourning, weeping, and lamentation.

"The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride": No marrying, and giving in marriage, and so no expressions of joy on such occasions. And consequently, no likelihood at present, of re-peopling the city of Jerusalem, and the other cities of Judah.

"For the land shall be desolate": Without people to dwell in it, and till it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "The whole land".

The only thing we need to be reminded of here, is that this punishment comes from God. Babylon may be the instrument that God uses to carry this out, but the judgement is from God. This is the curse God brings on His children who do not obey Him and who go after strange gods. This is speaking of total destruction. There would be no happiness at all, only desolation.

Jeremiah Chapter 7 Questions

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the_____.
2. What did God tell Jeremiah to do in verse 2?
3. Who was the message for?
4. Why had God chosen this particular place to speak to the people?
5. What would they have to do for God to cause them to dwell in this place?
6. What are they really saying, when they say, "the temple of the LORD"?
7. What were some of the things mentioned they must change?
8. They were believers in _____only.
9. Blessings were for those who_____God.
10. Name some of the sins verse 9 mentions.
11. What was the wrong idea they had about their sins?
12. What does water baptism symbolize?
13. I no longer live, but_____liveth in me.
14. What did God say, they thought His house had become?
15. Where are two other places (in the Bible), you can read the same thing?
16. Why should Christians live holy lives?

17. What happened to the place the Ark had been housed (at Shiloh)?
18. Where was Shiloh located?
19. The word "Shiloh" was not just a place, but was also, a name for_____.
20. What does verse 14 say, God will do to His house He had given them?
21. Who had God cast out of His sight, previously?
22. Who is Ephraim, in verse 15, speaking of?
23. Why was Jeremiah not to intercede for them?
24. What did God bring Jeremiah's attention to (in verse 17)?
25. Who were involved in this false worship of the queen of heaven?
26. Who will God pour His fury out on?
27. What makes a husband more furious than anything else?
28. What is God telling them to do with their sacrifices?
29. What was more important to God than their sacrifices?
30. How did they respond to God's warnings?
31. What does God have to do, before man will recognize Him as God?
32. Who had God sent to them to warn them?
33. What did He mean by "hardened their neck"?
34. Why does the author feel sorry for Jeremiah?
35. What is the obligation of the messenger?
36. In verse 29, what are they to do with their hair they cut off?
37. What had Manasseh done that was spoken of in verse 30?
38. What was the valley of Tophet changed to?
39. The sacrificing of their children was the worship of the false god_____.
40. What is the only thing we need to be reminded of in verse 34?