

## Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Temple Sermon (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 7:1–8:3

### The Temple Sermon

7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

2 “Stand in the gate of the house of Yahweh and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, all of Judah, *those who* enter through these gates to bow in worship to Yahweh.

3 Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Make your ways and your deeds good and let me dwell with you in this place.

4 Do not trust in the deceitful words, saying, ‘The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, they *are* the temple of Yahweh.’

5 For if you truly make your ways and your deeds good, if you truly do justice between a man and his neighbor,

6 you do not oppress *the* alien, *the* orphan, and *the* widow, you do not shed innocent blood in this place, and you do not go after other gods to your harm,

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

8 Look, you *are* relying for yourselves on deceitful words without benefiting.

9 Will you steal? Will you murder? And will you commit adultery? And will you swear falsely? And will you make a smoke offering to the Baal? And will you go after other gods whom you have not known?

10 And then you come and you stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and you say, ‘we are safe to go on doing all of these detestable things.’

11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a cave of robbers in your eyes? Look, I, even I, have seen *it*,” declares Yahweh. [[Matt 21:13](#); [Mark 11:17](#); [Luke 19:46](#)]

12 “For go now to my place that *was* in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell in the beginning, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.

13 And now, because of your doing all these things,” declares Yahweh, “and I have spoken to you over and over again, and you have not listened, and I called you, and you have not answered,

14 therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you *are* trusting, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors what I did to Shiloh.

15 And I will cast you out of my sight just as I cast out all of your blood relatives, all of the offspring of Ephraim.”

### Worship of the Queen of Heaven

16 “And you, you must not pray for this people, and you must not lift up for them a cry of entreaty or a prayer, and you must not plead with me, for I *will* not hear you.

17 *Do* you not see what they *are* doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 The children *are* gathering wood, and the fathers *are* kindling the fire, and the women *are* kneading dough to make sacrificial cakes for the queen of heaven, and they pour out libations to other gods for the sake of provoking me to anger.

19 *Are* they provoking me to anger? “ declares Yahweh, “*Is it* not themselves *they hurt*, for the sake of the shame of their faces?”

20 Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh, “Look, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, on the humankind, and on the animal, and on the tree of the field, and on the fruit of the ground, and it will not be extinguished.”

### A Disobedient Nation

21 Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat *the* flesh.

22 For I did not speak with your ancestors, nor did I command them in the day of bringing them out from the land of Egypt, concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifice.

23 But I only commanded them this word, saying, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be to you God, and you will be to me people, and you must walk in all of the way that I command you, so that it goes well with you.’

24 Yet they did not obey, and they did not incline their ear, but they walked in *their own* plans, in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and they became worse instead of better.

25 From the day that your ancestors came out from the land of Egypt until this day I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, day after day, sending again and again.

26 Yet they have not listened to me and they have not inclined their ear, but they have hardened their neck, they did more evil than their ancestors.

27 So you shall speak to them all these words, but they will not listen to you, and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you.

28 “And you shall say to them, ‘This *is* the nation that has not obeyed the voice of Yahweh their God, and they have not accepted discipline. The truth has perished, and it is cut off from their mouths.

29 Shear your hair and throw *it* away, and lift up a lament on the barren heights, for Yahweh has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.’

### Coming Judgment of Human Sacrifice

30 For the people of Judah have done evil in my eyes,” declares Yahweh, “They have set their abominations in the house that is

called by my name, to defile it.

31 And they built the high place of Topheth, which *is* in *the* Valley of Ben Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I have not commanded, and it did not come into my mind.

32 Therefore look, days *are* about to come,” declares Yahweh, “and it will no longer be called Topheth or *the* Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of the Slaughter, and they will bury in Topheth until there is no more place.

33 And the dead bodies of this people *will be* as food for the birds of the heavens, and for the animals of the earth, without anyone to scare *them* away.

34 And I will cause to disappear from the towns of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem *the* sound of jubilation, and *the* sound of joy, *the* voice of *the* bridegroom, and *the* voice of *the* bride, for the land will become a site of ruins.

### Desecration of Graves by the Enemy

8:1 “At that time,” declares Yahweh, “they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its officials, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Judah from their graves.

2 And they shall spread them out before the sun, and before the moon, and before all the host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, and which they have gone after, and which they have inquired about, and to which they have bowed in worship. They shall not be gathered, and they shall not be buried; they will be like dung on the surface of the ground.

3 And death will be preferred to life by all the remaining of this evil clan in all the remaining places where I have driven them away,” declares Yahweh.

## Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—A Depraved and Incurable People (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 8:4–9:6

### Stubborn Refusal to Return to God

8:4 “And you shall say to them, ‘Thus asks Yahweh:

“Do men fall and not stand up?

If one turns away does he not return?

5 Why has this people, Jerusalem, turned away *in* enduring apostasy?

They have kept hold of deceit, they have refused to return.

6 I have listened attentively,

and I have listened.

They do not speak honestly,

there is no man *who* regrets his wickedness, saying, ‘What have I done?’

All of them *are* turning to their ways of running,

like a horse plunging into battle.

7 Even *the* stork in heaven knows its appointed time,  
and *the* turtledove, and *the* swallow, and *the* song bird,  
they observe the time of their coming.

But my people do not know the ordinance of Yahweh.

8 How can you say, ‘*We are* wise and the law of Yahweh *is* with us’?

Look, surely the lying stylus of the scribes has made it a lie.

9 *The* wise will be put to shame,

they will be dismayed,

and they will get taken.

Look, they have rejected the word of Yahweh,

and what *is* wisdom to them?

10 Therefore I will give their wives to others,

their fields to conquerors,

because from *the* smallest to *the* greatest,

all of them make profit *for* unlawful gain,

from prophet to priest,

all of them practice deceit.

11 And they have treated the wound of the daughter of my people lightly,  
saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.

12 Were they ashamed, for they had committed a detestable thing?

What’s worse, they were not ashamed at all,

and they did not know to feel humiliated.

Therefore they will fall among *those who* fall;

at the time of their punishment they will stumble,” says Yahweh.

13 “I will take away their harvest,” declares Yahweh.

“There are no grapes on the vine,  
and there are no figs on the fig tree,  
and the leaves wither,  
and *what* I gave to them passed over them.” ”

#### **The People’s Resignation to the Coming Invasion**

14 Why *are* we sitting?

Gather, and let us go into the fortified cities,  
and let us perish there,  
for Yahweh our God has caused us to perish,  
and has provided drink for us, water of poison,  
because we have sinned against Yahweh.

15 We hope for peace,  
but there is no good,  
for a time of healing,  
but there is terror.

16 “From Dan is heard the snorting of their horses,  
from the sound of the neighing of their stallions all the land quakes,  
for they come and devour the land,  
and that which fills *the* city,  
and *those who* live in it.

17 For look, I *am* letting loose among you snakes,  
adders for which there is no incantation,  
and they will bite you,” declares Yahweh.

#### **Lament for a Stricken People**

18 “My comfort *is gone* from me,  
sorrow *is* on me,  
my heart *is* sick.

19 Look, the sound of the cry for help of the daughter of my people  
from a distant land,  
‘Is Yahweh not in Zion?  
Is her king not in her?’  
Why have they provoked me to anger with their images,  
with idols of a foreign land?”

20 *The* harvest has passed,  
*the* summer has come to an end,  
and we have not received help.

21 “Because of the wound of the daughter of my people I am broken down,  
I mourn, horror has seized me.

22 Is there no balm in Gilead?  
Is there no healer there?  
Why, then, has the healing of the daughter of my people not been restored?

9:1 Oh that my head were waters,  
and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
so that I might weep day and night,  
*for* the slain of the daughter of my people.

2 Oh that I had in the desert a place of overnight lodging for travelers,  
that I may leave my people and go from them,  
for all of them *are* adulterers,  
a band of traitors.

3 And they bend their tongue *like* their bow,  
*for* falsehood and not truth is superior in the land,  
for they go forth from evil to evil,  
and they do not know me,” declares Yahweh.

4 “Let everyone be on your guard against his neighbor,

- and you must not trust in any brother,  
for everyone surely betrays,  
and every neighbor goes about *with* slander.
- 5 And everyone deceives his neighbor,  
and they do not speak *the* truth,  
they have taught their tongues to speak lies,  
they are tired *from* going astray.
- 6 Your dwelling *is* in the midst of deceit,  
upon deceit they refuse to know me,” declares Yahweh.

## Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—Jerusalem's Coming Ruin (c. 629t BC)

Jeremiah 9:7–26

### God's Justification for the Coming Punishment

7 Therefore, thus says Yahweh of hosts:

- “Look, I *am* about to refine them,  
and I will test them,  
for what else can I do,  
because of the presence of the daughter of my people?
- 8 Their tongue *is* a murderous arrow,  
it speaks deceit.  
With his mouth he speaks peace with his neighbor,  
but in his inner parts he sets up his ambush.
- 9 Because of these *things* shall I not punish them?” declares Yahweh,  
“On a nation that *is* like this shall I not take revenge?
- 10 For the mountains I lift up weeping and wailing,  
and for *the* pastures of *the* desert a lament,  
because they are laid waste so that no man passes through.  
And *the* sounds of cattle are not heard,  
from *the* birds of heaven to *the* animals  
they have fled, they are gone.
- 11 And I will make Jerusalem as heaps *of ruins*, a lair of jackals,  
and the towns of Judah I will make a desolation, without inhabitants.
- 12 Who *is* the wise man that can understand this?  
And to whom has the mouth of Yahweh spoken, so that he may declare it?  
Why is the land destroyed?  
It is laid waste like the desert so that no one passes through.”
- 13 And Yahweh said, “Because of their forsaking my law that I set before them, and they have not obeyed my voice, and have not walked in it,  
14 but they went after the stubbornness of their heart, and after the Baals, which their ancestors taught them.”  
15 Therefore thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Look, I *am* feeding this people wormwood, and providing drink for them,  
water of poison,  
16 and I will scatter them among the nations that they have not known, they and their ancestors, and I will send the sword after them until I bring them to an end.”

### A Lament over Jerusalem's Destruction

17 Thus says Yahweh of hosts:

- “Consider closely, and call for the wailing women, so that they come,  
and for the skillful women, so that they come.
- 18 And let them hasten,  
and let them lift up wailing over us,  
so that our eyes may melt *with* tears,  
and our eyelids may flow *with* water.
- 19 For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion,  
‘How we are devastated!

We are very ashamed because we have left the land,  
because they have overthrown our dwelling places.’

20 For hear, *O* women, the word of Yahweh,  
and let your ear receive the word of his mouth,  
and teach your daughters a lamentation,  
and each woman her neighbor a lament.

21 For death has come into our windows,  
it has entered into our fortresses,  
to cut off *the* children from *the* streets,  
*the* young men from *the* public squares.

22 Speak, ‘thus declares Yahweh:

“The dead body of the human will fall  
like dung upon the surface of the field,  
and like cut grain behind the reaper,  
and there is no *one who* gathers.” ”

### The Only Basis for Boasting

23 Thus says Yahweh,

“*The* wise man must not boast in his wisdom,  
and the warrior must not boast in his might,  
*the* wealthy man must not boast in his wealth.

24 But only in this must the one who boasts boast,  
*that* he has insight,  
and *that* he knows me,  
that I *am* Yahweh, [[1 Cor 1:31](#); [2 Cor 10:17](#)]  
showing loyal love, justice, and righteousness on the earth,  
for in these *things* I delight,” declares Yahweh.

### Circumcision Will Not Save You—Circumcise Your Hearts!

25 “Look, days *are* coming,” declares Yahweh, “and I will call into account all those who are circumcised in *the* foreskin:

26 Egypt, Judah, and Edom, and the Ammonites, and Moab, and all those who are trimmed to *the* side, those who live in the desert,  
for all the nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised of heart.”

## Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Judah—Idolatry and the Coming Exile (c. 629t BC)

### Jeremiah 10

#### The Foolishness of Idolatry

1 Hear the word that Yahweh speaks to you, *O* house of Israel.

2 Thus says Yahweh:

“You must not learn the way of the nations,  
and you must not be dismayed by the signs of the heavens,  
for the nations are dismayed by them.

3 For the statutes of the peoples *are* vanity,  
for it *is* a tree cut down from *the* forest,  
*the* work of *the* hands of a craftsman with the tool.

4 He decorates it with silver and gold,  
they strengthen it with nails and hammers,  
so that it does not stagger.

5 They *are* like scarecrows in a cucumber field,  
they cannot speak.

Indeed, they must be carried,  
for they cannot march.  
You must not be afraid of them,  
for they cannot do evil;

furthermore, to do good *is* not in them.”

- 6 There is none like you, O Yahweh,  
you *are* great and your name *is* great in might.
- 7 Who would not revere you, O king of the nations?  
For you it is fitting.  
For among all the wise men of the nations,  
and in all their kingdoms,  
there is none like you.
- 8 At the same time they are stupid and foolish,  
*in the* instruction of idols, it *is* wood.
- 9 Silver beaten from Tarshish is brought,  
and gold from Uphaz,  
the work of *the* craftsman and *the* hands of the goldsmith.  
Blue and purple *are* their clothing,  
all of them *are* the work of skillful people.
- 10 But Yahweh *is* the true God,  
he *is* the living God,  
and an everlasting king.  
Because of his wrath the earth quakes,  
and *the* nations cannot endure his anger.

11 “Thus you shall say to them,

‘Gods who did not make the heavens and the earth  
will perish from the earth and from under these heavens.

- 12 *He is* the maker of *the* earth by his power,  
*who* created the world by his wisdom,  
and by his understanding he stretched out heaven.
- 13 When he utters his voice *there is* a noise of water in the heavens,  
and he causes *the* mist to rise from *the* ends of the earth.  
He makes lightning for the rain,  
and he causes *the* wind to go out from his storehouses.
- 14 Everyone is stupid, without knowledge,  
every goldsmith is ashamed by *his* divine image,  
for his cast image *is* an illusion,  
and *there is* no breath in them.
- 15 They *are* vanity, a work of mockery,  
at the time of their punishment, they will perish.
- 16 The portion of Jacob *is* not like these,  
for he *is* the creator of everything,  
and Israel *is* the tribe of his inheritance,  
Yahweh of hosts *is* his name.

#### **Announcement of Exile**

- 17 Gather your bundle from *the* ground,  
you who live under the siege.”

18 For thus says Yahweh,

“Look, I *am* about to sling out the inhabitants of the land at this time,  
and I will bring distress to them, so that they may feel it.”

- 19 Woe to me, because of my wound.  
My wound *is* incurable.  
But I said, “Surely this *is* my sickness,  
and I must bear it.”
- 20 My tent is devastated,  
and all my tent cords are torn.  
My children have gone out *from* me,

and they are not.

There is no *one who* pitches my tent again,  
or *one who* puts up my tent curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become stupid,  
they do not seek Yahweh.

Therefore they do not have insight,  
and all of their flock are scattered.

22 Listen, news:

Look, *it is* coming,  
a great roar from *the* land of *the* north,  
to make the cities of Judah a desolation,  
a lair of jackals.

### Jeremiah's Prayer

23 I know, *O* Yahweh, that to the human *is* not his *own* way,  
nor to a person *is the* walking and the directing of his *own* step.

24 Chastise me, *O* Yahweh, but in moderation,  
not in your anger, lest you eradicate me.

25 Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you,  
and on *the* peoples that do not call on your name,  
for they have devoured Jacob,  
they have devoured and consumed him,  
and they have caused his settlement to be desolate.

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### Chronological Notes

- 1) The current majority view is that the "Temple Speech" recorded in Jeremiah 7 belongs to the time of Jehoiakim and should be harmonized with Jeremiah 26 (e.g., Lalleman, Harrison, Thompson, Craigie-Kelley-Drinkard, Feinberg, and Brown). However, Laetsch is not convinced: "The reasons advanced for this identification do not seem convincing. 1) The same demand for a change of conduct. Yet that was the subject and purpose of all the preaching of Jeremiah. 2) The same occasion, a festival. Yet these festivals gave an opportunity to preach to all the people and were quite generally used by the prophets. 3) The same place. Yet Jeremiah and others spoke in the gates and courts of the Temple, cp. ch. 19:14; 35:2, 4; 36:5–10; also 28:1, 5. 4) In ch. 26 only the main thoughts of ch. 7 are repeated. That does not prove identity! 5) The reference to Shiloh. Why should not Shiloh have been repeatedly mentioned as a warning example of the folly of relying on external possession of God's house? A warning like this was not only possible, but quite to be expected in the days of Josiah, when the Lord announced His readiness to fulfill all the threats contained in the rediscovered Book of the Law (2 Kgs 22:16–20). One of these threats referred to the overturning of Jerusalem 'as Sodom and Gomorrah' (Deut 29:23), involving the destruction of the Temple. Linking up with Huldah's message, Jeremiah may have reminded the Jews of the destruction of the Tabernacle at Shiloh as a warning against misplaced trust in the Temple. In ch. 7 there is not the slightest indication of opposition. That also would fit well into the time of Josiah's reform."<sup>1</sup>
- 2) Given the speculation involved in identifying Jeremiah 7 with Jeremiah 26, I have decided to go against the majority view and place Jeremiah 7–10 just prior to the discovery of the Book of the Law (solidly within Josiah's reign).

<sup>1</sup> Theo. Laetsch, *Jeremiah*, pp. 93–94. See also F. B. Huey, Jr., "Jeremiah, Lamentations," *NAC*, pp. 103–104 and J. Barton Paine, "The Arrangement of Jeremiah's Prophecies," *JETS* 07:4 (Fall 1964), pp. 121–128.