

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 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 by these gates to worship the LORD!’”

3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place.

4 Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’

5 For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor,

6 if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin,

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

8 “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail.

9 Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known,

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

11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*,” declares the LORD. [[Matt 21:13](#); [Mark 11:17](#); [Luke 19:46](#)]

12 “But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell 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 things,” declares 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 the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.

15 I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim.

Worship of the Queen of Heaven

16 “As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you.

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

18 The children gather wood, and 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 in order to spite Me.

19 Do they spite Me?” declares the LORD. “Is it not themselves *they* spite, to their own shame?”

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

A Disobedient Nation

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

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 and sacrifices.

23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.’

24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels *and* in the stubbornness of their evil heart, 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 sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending *them*.

26 Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.

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

28 You shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God or accept 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 bare heights;
For the LORD has rejected and forsaken
The generation of His wrath.’

Coming Judgment on Human Sacrifice

30 For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight," declares the LORD, "they have set their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.

31 They have built the high places of Topheth, 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, and it did not come into My mind.

32 "Therefore, behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth because there is no *other* place.

33 The dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten *them* away.

34 Then I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will become a ruin.

Desecration of Graves by the Enemy

8:1 "At that time," declares the LORD, "they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves.

2 They will spread them out to the sun, the moon and to all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served, and which they have gone after and which they have sought, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered or buried; they will be as dung on the face of the ground.

3 And death will be chosen rather than life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family, that remains in all the places to which I have driven them," declares the LORD of hosts.

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 "You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD,

"Do *men* fall and not get up again?

Does one turn away and not repent?

5 "Why then has this people, Jerusalem,

Turned away in continual apostasy?

They hold fast to deceit,

They refuse to return.

6 "I have listened and heard,

They have spoken what is not right;

No man repented of his wickedness,

Saying, 'What have I done?'

Everyone turned to his course,

Like a horse charging into the battle.

7 "Even the stork in the sky

Knows her seasons;

And the turtledove and the swift and the thrush

Observe the time of their migration;

But My people do not know

The ordinance of the LORD.

8 "How can you say, 'We are wise,

And the law of the LORD is with us?'

But behold, the lying pen of the scribes

Has made *it* into a lie.

9 "The wise men are put to shame,

They are dismayed and caught;

Behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD,

And what kind of wisdom do they have?

10 "Therefore I will give their wives to others,

Their fields to new owners;

Because from the least even to the greatest

Everyone is greedy for gain;

From the prophet even to the priest

- Everyone practices deceit.
- 11 “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially,
Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
But there is no peace.
- 12 “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done?
They certainly were not ashamed,
And they did not know how to blush;
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
At the time of their punishment they shall be brought down,”
Says the LORD.
- 13 “I will surely snatch them away,” declares the LORD;
“There will be no grapes on the vine
And no figs on the fig tree,
And the leaf will wither;
And what I have given them will pass away.””

The People’s Resignation to the Coming Invasion

- 14 Why are we sitting still?
Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the fortified cities
And let us perish there,
Because the LORD our God has doomed us
And given us poisoned water to drink,
For we have sinned against the LORD.
- 15 *We* waited for peace, but no good *came*;
For a time of healing, but behold, terror!
- 16 From Dan is heard the snorting of his horses;
At the sound of the neighing of his stallions
The whole land quakes;
For they come and devour the land and its fullness,
The city and its inhabitants.
- 17 “For behold, I am sending serpents against you,
Adders, for which there is no charm,
And they will bite you,” declares the LORD.

Lament for a Stricken People

- 18 My sorrow is beyond healing,
My heart is faint *within me*!
- 19 Behold, listen! The cry of the daughter of my people from a distant land:
“Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not within her?”
“Why have they provoked Me with their graven images, with foreign idols?”
- 20 “Harvest is past, summer is ended,
And we are not saved.”
- 21 For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken;
I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me.
- 22 Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?
- 9:1 Oh that my head were waters
And my eyes a fountain of tears,
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 wayfarers’ lodging place;
That I might leave my people
And go from them!
For all of them are adulterers,
An assembly of treacherous men.
- 3 “They bend their tongue *like* their bow;

- Lies and not truth prevail in the land;
 For they proceed from evil to evil,
 And they do not know Me,” declares the LORD.
- 4 “Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor,
 And do not trust any brother;
 Because every brother deals craftily,
 And every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.
- 5 “Everyone deceives his neighbor
 And does not speak the truth,
 They have taught their tongue to speak lies;
 They weary themselves committing iniquity.
- 6 “Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit;
 Through deceit they refuse to know Me,” declares the LORD.

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 the LORD of hosts,
- “Behold, I will refine them and assay them;
 For what *else* can I do, because of the daughter of My people?
- 8 “Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
 It speaks deceit;
 With his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor,
 But inwardly he sets an ambush for him.
- 9 “Shall I not punish them for these things?” declares the LORD.
 “On a nation such as this
 Shall I not avenge Myself?
- 10 “For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing,
 And for the pastures of the wilderness a dirge,
 Because they are laid waste so that no one passes through,
 And the lowing of the cattle is not heard;
 Both the birds of the sky and the beasts have fled; they are gone.
- 11 “I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
 A haunt of jackals;
 And I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.”
- 12 Who is the wise man that may understand this? And *who is* he to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined, laid waste like a desert, so that no one passes through?
- 13 The LORD said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it,
 14 but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baals, as their fathers taught them,”
 15 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink.
 16 I will scatter them among the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send the sword after them until I have annihilated them.”

A Lament over Jerusalem’s Destruction

- 17 Thus says the LORD of hosts,
- “Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come;
 And send for the wailing women, that they may come!
- 18 “Let them make haste and take up a wailing for us,
 That our eyes may shed tears
 And our eyelids flow with water.
- 19 “For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion,
 ‘How are we ruined!

- We are put to great shame,
For we have left the land,
Because they have cast down our dwellings.”
- 20 Now hear the word of the LORD, O you women,
And let your ear receive the word of His mouth;
Teach your daughters wailing,
And everyone her neighbor a dirge.
- 21 For death has come up through our windows;
It has entered our palaces
To cut off the children from the streets,
The young men from the town squares.
- 22 Speak, “Thus says the LORD,
‘The corpses of men will fall like dung on the open field,
And like the sheaf after the reaper,
But no one will gather *them*.’”

The Only Basis for Boasting

23 Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;

24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, [[1 Cor 1:31](#); [2 Cor 10:17](#)] that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

Circumcision Will Not Save You—Circumcise Your Hearts!

25 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised—

26 Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; 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 which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.

2 Thus says the LORD,

“Do not learn the way of the nations,
And do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens
Although the nations are terrified by them;
3 For the customs of the peoples are delusion;
Because it is wood cut from the forest,
The work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool.

4 “They decorate *it* with silver and with gold;
They fasten it with nails and with hammers
So that it will not totter.

5 “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they,
And they cannot speak;
They must be carried,
Because they cannot walk!
Do not fear them,
For they can do no harm,
Nor can they do any good.”

6 There is none like You, O LORD;
You are great, and great is Your name in might.

7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?
Indeed it is Your due!
For among all the wise men of the nations
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like You.

8 But they are altogether stupid and foolish

In their discipline of delusion—their idol is wood!

9 Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
And gold from Uphaz,
The work of a craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith;
Violet and purple are their clothing;
They are all the work of skilled men.

10 But the LORD is the true God;
He is the living God and the everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth quakes,
And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

11 Thus you shall say to them, “The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

12 *It is* He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom;
And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.

13 When He utters His voice, *there is* a tumult of waters in the heavens,
And He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain,
And brings out the wind from His storehouses.

14 Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge;
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;
For his molten images are deceitful,
And there is no breath in them.

15 They are worthless, a work of mockery;
In the time of their punishment they will perish.

16 The portion of Jacob is not like these;
For the Maker of all is He,
And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts is His name.

Announcement of Exile

17 Pick up your bundle from the ground,
You who dwell under siege!

18 For thus says the LORD,

“Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land
At this time,
And will cause them distress,
That they may be found.”

19 Woe is me, because of my injury!
My wound is incurable.
But I said, “Truly this is a sickness,
And I must bear it.”

20 My tent is destroyed,
And all my ropes are broken;
My sons have gone from me and are no more.
There is no one to stretch out my tent again
Or to set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become stupid
And have not sought the LORD;
Therefore they have not prospered,
And all their flock is scattered.

22 The sound of a report! Behold, it comes—
A great commotion out of the land of the north—
To make the cities of Judah

A desolation, a haunt of jackals.

Jeremiah's Prayer

- 23 I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself,
Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.
- 24 Correct me, O LORD, but with justice;
Not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing.
- 25 Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You
And on the families that do not call Your name;
For they have devoured Jacob;
They have devoured him and consumed him
And have laid waste his habitation.

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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."¹
- 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).

¹ 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.