

Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 5

Chapter 7: Jeremiah's Final Appeal

The oracles in part of the book seem to date from the reign of King Jehoiakim (609-598 BC). He was a son of Josiah who became the king of Judah after the Egyptians deposed his brother in 609 BC. The Egyptians then established him as their vassal. It was at this time that the worship of pagan gods and goddesses, abuses in Temple worship, and child sacrifice was renewed in Jerusalem and continued when Jehoiakim became a Babylonian vassal in 605 BC.

In the call to return to true worship, Chapter 7 is divided into four sections:

1. The Temple will not save them (7:1-15).
2. The condemnation for worshipping alien gods (7:16-20).
3. The practice of insincere worship (7:21-28).
4. The threat of exile (7:29-34).

God promises salvation is still possible for the Jerusalemites in Chapter 7, but the people must amend their ways. The violations named in Chapter 7, in addition to apostasy from the covenant, idol worship, and the sexual sins named previously, include nine sins (nine is the number of judgment in Scripture):

1. taking advantage of foreigners (Jer 7:6a)
2. exploiting orphans and widows (Jer 7:6b)
3. shedding innocent blood (Jer 7:6b, 9)
4. following false gods (Jer 7:6c, 7:9c, 18)
5. theft (7:9)
6. adultery (7:9)
7. perjury (7:9)
8. child sacrifice (7:31)
9. insincere and illicit worship of Yahweh (7:10, 21)

Chapter 7:1-15 is divided into 4-parts with an introduction followed by three Temple oracles in prose: Introduction, verses 1-2; Oracle #1, verses 3-7; Oracle #2, verses 8-11; and Oracle #3 in verses 12-15.

Four conditions necessary to save Jerusalem in 7:5-6:

1. Do not exploit the stranger/foreigner.
2. Do not exploit the orphan and widow.
3. Do not shed innocent blood.
4. Do not follow other gods.

The term, "Queen of Heaven," is only found in the Old Testament in Jeremiah 7:18 and in 44:17, 18, 19 and 25. Some have accused the Catholic Church of using a pagan title in referring to the Virgin Mary as "Queen of Heaven," but the use of the title is entirely different, as is the Hebrew word for "queen" in this verse and the Hebrew word used for the Davidic Queen mother. The mother of a Davidic king bore the Hebrew title

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Gebira/Gebirah; it identified her as the Queen Mother and the most important person in her son's kingdom. In fulfilling the office of Gebira, the king's mother acted as an intercessor between her people and her son. In addition to the title of "Intercessor/Mediatrix" (CCC 969), Mary also deserves the titles "Mother of Christ," "Mother of God," "Mother of the Living," "the New Eve," "Daughter of Zion," "Ark of the New Covenant," and "Handmaid of the Lord" (see CCC 411, 466, 494-5, 509, 511, 510, 726, 963-70, 2676). See the document on the Virgin Mary's role as the "Queen Mother of the New Davidic Kingdom" on the website's document section/Mary.

Jeremiah 7:32 is the first time Jeremiah uses the phrase "Look/Behold the days are coming." The same phrase is repeated six times in 7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 23:5, 7 and in 31:31, and no other prophet except Jeremiah uses it.

Chapter 8: The Harvest is Past

"Harvest is over, summer at an end, and we have not been saved!"

Jeremiah 8:20

Chapter 8:1-3 contains a 2-part prophecy:

1. The tombs of the people, from kings to commoners, will be desecrated and their bones will be left exposed (verses 1-2).
2. The survivors will prefer death to exile (verse 3).

Chapter 8:4-23/9:1 is divided into four or five parts depending on the Bible translation:

1. The people's perversity (verses 4-9)
2. The failure of the priests and scribes (verses 8-9)
3. Repetition of Jeremiah 6:12-15 (verses 10-12)* not in the Greek Septuagint
4. Threats against Judah the Vine (verses 13-17)
5. Jeremiah's lament (verses 18-23/9:1)

In 8:14-16, Jeremiah articulates the people's response to the warnings—they acknowledge that they need to get ready and to seek refuge in the fortified towns. The "poisoned water" they are forced to drink because of their sins in verse 14 may be a reference to:

1. God's punishment for making the Golden Calf in Exodus 32:20 when the people were made to drink water mixed with the dust of the pulverized statue.
2. Or it may refer to the test for an adulterous wife in Numbers 5:12-13, 16-31.
3. Or it may refer to the common practice of the enemy poisoning the fresh water supply.

17 Yes, now I am sending you poisonous snakes against which no charm exists; and they will bite you, Yahweh declares. This metaphor for the enemy recalls:

1. Deuteronomy 32:24, He will *send the fangs of wild animals and the poison of snakes that glide in the dust.*
2. The poisonous snakes that attacked the rebellious Israelites in Numbers 21:4-6.
3. The image of the great serpent in the Garden of Eden.