

Class 3: Jeremiah 7-10

The Temple Address

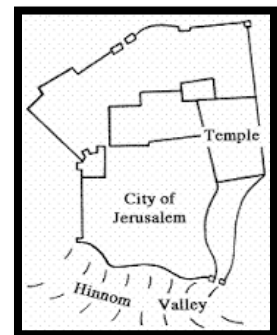
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Jeremiah 3:6 reveals that these things are being said in the reign of King Josiah. However it sounds very similar to the pronouncements during the reign of King Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 26.

Confidence in the Temple: previously it was established that Judah failed to see a warning in the deportation of the kingdom of Israel. It seems that they may have considered that since Israel lacked the priesthood, temple, furnishings and ceremonies that remained in Jerusalem, that this was why they were going to be preserved. God is amazed that they can worship idols, murder their children, and then walk into the temple (the very place Jeremiah speaks) and proclaim “the temple of the Lord”, as though this will preserve them. God commands them to remember Shiloh; there in 1 Samuel 4 Israel’s Ark was lost, and many infer from this and Psalm 78:60 that the tabernacle itself was overrun by the Philistines.

The people should have no confidence in their prayers and offerings; indeed, they had mind as well eat the offerings for the good it was doing. So long as they walked in sin, their sacrifices were an abomination themselves. In 7:22 Jeremiah says that Jehovah did not command Israel for (the sake of) sacrifices (as though He needed them, Psalm 50), but for obedience.

Idolatry: Chapter 7 introduces us to the valley of Hinnom. This valley was the sight of the human sacrifices to Baal and to Molech (Isaiah 30:33 and Jeremiah 32:35). Particularly the area called Tophet (possible Aramaic for “fireplace”) was where children were murdered. Josiah would destroy this place in 2 Kings 23:10, and defiled it (possibly by turning it into a public toilet). Jesus uses it as the image of Hell in Mark 9:43-45. God promises that this place will be filled with the dead of Judah (assumedly by the Babylonians). The worship of the queen of heaven (either Asherah or Astarte). Later the people will directly reject Jeremiah (44:15-18) and tell him that things were better when they did sacrifice to her.



In chapter 10 Jeremiah tells the people that idolatry is foolishness. It is wood and metal, and nothing more. Neither fear them nor praise them, but praise the one true living God Jehovah. Idolatry renders a man stupid and devoid of knowledge.

Stubbornness: The people of Israel are adamant in their refusal to return to God. They think they know God (8:8 – “we are wise, and the law is with us”), but they are greedy and deceitful. No one repents because of the message of peace preached to the people gives them false courage. But they will soon realize God is not with them (even if they accuse Him of abandoning them).

Jeremiah’s Sorrow: How unfair it must have felt to be in the shoes of the few righteous in Judah. “My sorrow is beyond healing, my heart is faint within me.... I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me”. Yet in this event, even the righteous will suffer the consequences of Israel’s rebellion. Jeremiah wants to simply get away, as the people will not listen, and he must watch them suffer.

Making Applications:

1. Judah's confidence was that only they had the instruments of worship given by God. Yet even when worship is right, when it is done by people in sin it is an abomination (Proverb 21:27). How should the church that belongs to Christ view this thought?
2. Idolatry is not just building an idol of a false god, but covetousness (Ephesians 5:5). What sacrifices do the people of our nation make to idols today? How are we drawn into their idolatry just as Judah was drawn into idolatry?
3. Samuel told King Saul *"rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king"* (1 Samuel 15:23). How is stubbornness related to idolatry?
4. What circumstances might the righteous suffer as a result of the actions of the unrighteous even now?