

October 12, 2025

“Jeremiah’s Message”
Lesson 2

Jer. 7:1-11, 21-23

Intro

Chapter 7 and chapter 26 appear to be describing the same event, often called the “Temple Sermon”. This is shortly after the death of King Josiah in a battle against the Egyptians. The message was given early in the reign of King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah. He was installed as ruler by Pharaoh Necho when Egypt had taken control over Israel, and Israel was required to pay a high tribute to Egypt. In about the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign, Babylon besieged Jerusalem, and Israel became a vassal state, now paying tribute to Babylon. Several years later, Jehoiakim rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, resulting in Jehoiakim being exiled to Babylon. Jehoiakim was an evil king, mentioned over two dozen times in Jeremiah. Jeremiah here speaks of the danger of trusting “lying words”; his warning still holds true for us today.

Read Jeremiah 7:1-11

1. vs. 1-2a: What Jeremiah is about to say is not his own words; these are God’s chosen words
He is to say these words at the gate of the temple, “the Lord’s house”

2. vs. 2b: This message has a very specific target group:
The people of Judah who are coming through the gates to go into the temple
These people are there to “worship the Lord”
What message does God have for people entering His temple?

3. vs. 3: The speaker is again noted: “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says:”
Repeating something shows it is important and should be treated that way
The message is a simple “if...then” statement
If the people will reform their actions, *then* God will let them continue in the land
The actions were just mentioned in Jeremiah 6
They include oppression, wickedness, and corruption (6:6-7, 28)
The word “reform” indicates what God wants these people to do
Change their actions to do what is right instead of what is wrong
The implication of the “if/then” statement is that the opposite will happen if they don’t
No reform means they will be removed from the land

4. vs. 4: The key element for these people is in who or what they trust
God says not to trust in “deceptive words”
These are the proclamations from the false prophets, who counter Jeremiah’s words
The phrase “the temple of the Lord” is repeated three times here
The false prophets have apparently been saying that the temple is eternal and inviolable
It will stand forever, and nothing can harm it
The people are trusting more in the building than in the One it is intended to honor
The people seem to think that if the temple is to be preserved, then so are they
They feel like they are protected from harm, regardless of their actions

5. vs. 5: Jeremiah here begins to state which actions are in need of change
He notes “your ways and your actions” have not been what God expects
Specifically, he notes the area of dealing “with each other justly”
Right behaviors are either “do this” or “don’t do that”
This one is a “do” action
6. vs. 6a: This verse shows a list of “don’t do” actions
Specifically, they are not to “oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow”
These three groups are the most vulnerable to abuse and oppression
Foreigners are obviously different, likely in looks, habits, and speech
The fatherless and the widow don’t have an adult male looking out for them
All three of these groups live in daily fear of hurt or exploitation
God’s concern for these people is shown in numerous OT verses (see Deut. 27:19 for one)
Jeremiah mentioning these groups shows the callous hearts of the people he addresses
They have no compassion or empathy towards the neediest in their worlds
They are also commanded not to “shed innocent blood”
King Manasseh was guilty of these actions, which likely continued after him
He reigned a few decades before Jeremiah speaks this warning
Saying it here indicates the actions are still continuing
He committed what are called “judicial murders”
Innocent people were executed because the courts were compromised
They accepted false testimony to do this
Therefore, they broke both the 6th and the 9th commandments
7. vs. 6b: The last “do not” is to not follow other gods
God’s message to the people is that harm will come to people who do follow other gods
People who do this have broken the first commandment
Many false prophets and bad kings in the OT were guilty of doing this
King Manasseh was the worst; he sacrificed his son to a false god
So shedding innocent blood is here connected to idol worship
God will not overlook such vile wickedness
The self-harm is realized by missing out on blessings from the God of Heaven
Instead, the people will reap what they have sown (see Prov. 11:18-19)
8. vs. 7: Here is the “then” part of the “if / then” statement
If the people do as God calls, then they will live in the land “for ever and ever”
The residents of Judah have been in the land for over 800 years by this time
God is long-suffering; this is not the first warning the people have been given
9. vs. 8: Here is the heart of the problem
The people believe the deceptive words of the false prophets and evil leaders
This shows the false prophets have gained influence over the people
They believe “feel good” statements rather than Godly counsel
God will not allow dishonesty and corruption to thrive in the long run

10. vs. 9: Here is a list of “charges” against the people, how they have disobeyed God
They have stolen, murdered, committed adultery and perjury, and followed other gods
Six of the 10 commandments have been broken in doing these actions
Of them, the charge of idolatry is the most serious offense
Following another god leads to other actions that offend God
Jeremiah refers to Baal 12 times in his book
A century before Jeremiah, Hosea warned the northern kingdom of Israel about Baal
The northern kingdom of Israel didn’t listen then; these people appear not to listen either
11. vs. 10: This verse concludes the question begun in vs. 9
Can the people do those things, and then come into God’s house without fear?
They think they can, saying to themselves, “We are safe”
They think the temple will somehow protect and safeguard them
But God says, “How can you do these detestable things and stand before Me?”
God through Jeremiah is calling out their hypocrisy
They break God’s laws and don’t feel and guilt or remorse
They continue to do these “detestable things”
12. vs. 11: The temple is a place that “bears My name”, says God
God’s name and reputation are at stake
Because of these immoral actions, God’s name has been dishonored
God affirms this to be true by stating, “I have been watching”
He is not pleased with people who act without fearing Him or His name

Read Jeremiah 7:21-23

13. vs. 21: Jeremiah’s tone is serious here, using “The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel” again
God here is not saying “do this”—this is a sarcastic statement
He’s saying, “Go ahead, keep violating the rules about burnt offerings!”
It’s like a parent saying, “Go ahead—touch the fire!”
God says for them to add this burnt offering to their other sacrifices
This indicates that they have been conducting their sacrifices improperly
14. vs. 22: God is warning His people about their attitudes and actions in all things
He gave them commands about how to do burnt offerings and sacrifices
But he indicates He said more to them than just about those
The next verse will reveal this
15. vs. 23: The people were told to obey God and walk with Him in obedience
It’s not just about doing the right action—checking off the box, in other words
It’s about the condition of the heart, about *why* the action is being done
God wants willing obedience from those who claim to follow Him
If the heart isn’t right, none of the sacrifices matter
And God gives several promises/benefits to following Him willingly
God will be their God—a personal and close relationship
They will be God’s people—He will claim them as belonging to Him

Life experiences will go well for the people who obey

Application: Many Christians have at times placed their trust in things that are temporary. Today, it might be trust in a particular church or a particular preacher. The thinking is, “As long as I go here” or “As long as I follow what he says...”, then everything is going to be fine. The Israelites of Jeremiah’s day kept saying, “The temple of the Lord!” They saw the building as a talisman or good-luck charm. Jeremiah’s plea from God is for a relationship based on our willing obedience, not on some building or some insincere ritual. God wants worship from sincere hearts. Jeremiah’s message here is timeless. Let us all strive to hear it, truly understand it, and respond with repentance and obedience.

Prayer: Father God, help us to hear Your voice as we read Your Scriptures, and then respond with repentance and obedience. You value mercy more than sacrifice. Help us to heed this call. In Jesus’ name, Amen.