
JEREMIAH 7: 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Mere begins another section of prophecy, ending with the ninth chapter. It opens with exhorting to amendment of life, without which the confidence of the Jews in their temple is declared vain, Jer 7:1-11. God bids them take warning from the fate of their brethren the Israelites, who had been carried away captive on account of their sins without any regard to that sacred place, (Shiloh), where the ark of God once resided, Jer 7:12-15. The iniquities of Judah are so great in the sight of God that the prophet is commanded not to intercede for the people, Jer 7:16; the more especially as they persisted in provoking God by their idolatrous practices, Jer 7:17-20. The Jewish sacrifices, if not accompanied with obedience to the moral law, are of no avail, Jer 7:21-24. Notwithstanding the numerous messages of mercy from the time of the exodus, the people revolted more and more; and have added to their other sins this horrible evil, the setting up of their abominations in the temple of Jehovah; or, in other words, they have encumbered the Mosaic economy, which shadowed forth the glorious truths of Christianity, with a heterogeneous admixture of the idolatrous, impure, and cruel rites of heathenism; consequently, the whole land shall be utterly desolated, Jer 7:25-34.

Verse 1

The word that came to Jeremiah - This prophecy is supposed to have been delivered in the first year of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, who, far from following the example of his pious father, restored idolatry, maintained bad priests and worse prophets, and filled Jerusalem with abominations of all kinds.

JEREMIAH 7: 2 "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the LORD's word, all you of Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.'"

Verse 2

Stand in the gate of the Lord's house - There was a show of public worship kept up. The temple was considered God's residence; the usual ceremonies of religion restored by Josiah were still observed; and the people were led to consider the temple and its services as sacred things, which would be preservatives to them in case of the threatened invasion.

JEREMIAH 7: 3 Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

JEREMIAH 7: 4 Don't trust in lying words, saying, 'the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple, are these.'

Verse 4

The temple of the Lord - In the Chaldee the passage stands thus: - "Do not trust in the words of lying prophets, which say, Before the temple of the Lord ye shall worship; Before the temple of the Lord

ye shall sacrifice; Before the temple of the Lord ye shall adore; thrice in the year ye shall appear before it." This the Targumist supposes to have been the reason why the words are here thrice repeated. They rather seem to express the conviction which the people had, that they should be safe while their temple service continued; for they supposed that God would not give it up into profane hands. But sacred places and sacred symbols are nothing in the sight of God when the heart is not right with him.

JEREMIAH 7: 5 For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbour;

Verse 5

If ye thoroughly amend your ways - Literally, If in making good ye fully make good your ways. God will no longer admit of half-hearted work. Semblances of piety cannot deceive him; he will not accept partial reformation; there must be a thorough amendment.

JEREMIAH 7: 6 if you don't oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, and don't shed innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt:

JEREMIAH 7: 7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even forever more.

JEREMIAH 7: 8 Behold, you trust in lying words, that can't profit.

JEREMIAH 7: 9 Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods that you have not known,

Verse 9

Will ye steal, murder - Will you continue to commit such abominations, and pretend to worship me; and thus defile the place that is called by my name; and so make my house a den of robbers? I have seen this, - and can you expect to escape condign punishment? Ye shall not escape.

JEREMIAH 7: 10 and 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?

JEREMIAH 7: 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD.

JEREMIAH 7: 12 "But go now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

Verse 12

But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh - See what I did to my tabernacle and ark formerly: after a long residence at Shiloh, for the iniquity of the priests and the people, I suffered it to fall into the hands of the Philistines, and to be carried captive into their land, and to be set up in the house of their idols. And because of your iniquities, I will deal with you and this temple in the same way; for as I spared not Shiloh, though my ark was there, but made it a victim of my wrath, so will I do to Jerusalem and her temple.

JEREMIAH 7: 13 Now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you didn't hear; and I called you, but you didn't answer:

JEREMIAH 7: 14 therefore will I do to the house which is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.

JEREMIAH 7: 15 I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

Verse 15

The whole seed of Ephraim - Taken here for all the ten tribes, that of Ephraim being the principal.

JEREMIAH 7: 16 "Therefore don't pray for this people, neither lift up a cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear you.

Verse 16

Therefore pray not thou for this people - They have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and they must become examples of my justice. How terrible must the state of that place be, where God refuses to pour out the spirit of supplication on his ministers and people in its behalf!

JEREMIAH 7: 17 Don't you see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

JEREMIAH 7: 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of the sky, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

Verse 18

The children gather wood - Here is a description of a whole family gathered together, and acting unitedly in idolatrous worship.

1. The children go and collect wood, and bring it to the place of sacrifice.
2. The fathers lay it in order, and kindle a fire.

3. The mother and her maids knead dough, make their batch, and out of it form cakes, and bake them for the honor of the queen of heaven; most probably the moon, though perhaps not exclusive of the sun and planets, generally called the host of heaven.

Family worship is a most amiable and becoming thing when performed according to truth. What a pity that so few families show such zeal for the worship of God as those apostate Israelites did for that of their idols!

JEREMIAH 7: 19 Do they provoke me to anger? says the LORD. "Don't they provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?"

JEREMIAH 7: 20 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my anger and my wrath shall be poured out on this place, on man, and on animal, and on the trees of the field, and on the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."

JEREMIAH 7: 21 Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat meat."

Verse 21

Put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh - I will receive neither sacrifice nor oblation from you; therefore you may take the beasts intended for sacrifice, and slay and eat them for your common nourishment. See on Jer 7:29 (note).

JEREMIAH 7: 22 For I didn't speak to your fathers, nor command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

JEREMIAH 7: 23 but this thing I commanded them, saying, 'Listen to my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

Verse 23

This thing commanded I them - Obey my voice - It was not sacrifices and oblations which I required of your fathers in the wilderness, but obedience; it was to walk in that way of righteousness which I have commanded; then I should have acknowledged them for my people, and I should have been their God, and then it would have been well with them. But to my commands,

1. They hearkened not - paid no regard to my word.
2. They inclined not the ear - showed no disposition to attend to my counsels.
3. They walked in the imaginations of their evil heart - followed its irregular and impure motions, rather than the holy dictates of my Spirit.
4. They went backward and not forward. Instead of becoming more wise, obedient, and holy, they grew more corrupt; so that they became more profligate than their fathers.

JEREMIAH 7: 24 But they didn't listen nor turn their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

JEREMIAH 7: 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

JEREMIAH 7: 26 yet they didn't listen to me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers.

JEREMIAH 7: 27 "You shall speak all these words to them; but they will not listen to you: you shall also call to them; but they will not answer you.

JEREMIAH 7: 28 You shall tell them, 'This is the nation that has not listened to the voice of the LORD their God, nor received instruction. Truth has perished, and is cut off from their mouth.'

Verse 28

Nor receiveth correction - They have profited neither by mercies nor by judgments: blessings and corrections have been equally lost upon them.

JEREMIAH 7: 29 Cut off your hair, and throw it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

Verse 29

Cut off thine hair - גזי נזרך gozzi nizrech, shear thy nazarite. The Nazarite was one who took upon him a particular vow, and separated himself from all worldly connections for a certain time, that he might devote himself without interruption to the service of God; and during all this time no razor was to pass on his head, for none of his hair was to be taken off. After the vow was over, he shaved his head and beard, and returned to society. See Num 6:2 (note), etc., and the notes there.

Jerusalem is here considered under the notion of a Nazarite, by profession devoted to the service of God: but that profession was empty; it was not accompanied with any suitable practice. God tells them here to cut off their hair; to make no vain pretensions to holiness or religion; to throw off the mask, and attempt no longer to impose upon themselves and others by their hypocritical pretensions. On the same ground he orders them, Jer 7:21, to devote to common use the animals destined for sacrifice; and to make no more vain shows of religion while their hearts were not right with him. Dr. Blayney thinks the address is to the prophet, who was a Nazarite by virtue of his office, and who was called to cut off his hair as a token of mourning for the desolations which were coming upon his people. That cutting off the hair was a sign of distress and mourning may be seen, Ezr 9:3; Isa 15:2; Jer 41:5, etc. But I think the other the more natural construction.

On high places - That the lamentation may be heard to the greater distance.

The generation of his wrath - Persons exposed to punishment: used here as children of wrath, Eph 2:3.

JEREMIAH 7: 30 "For the children of Judah have done that which is evil in my sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.

JEREMIAH 7: 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 didn't command, nor did it come into my mind.

Verse 31

Tophet - in the valley of the son of Hinnom - Tophet was the place in that valley where the continual fires were kept up, in and through which they consecrated their children to Moloch.

JEREMIAH 7: 32 Therefore behold, the days come", says the LORD, "that it shall no more be called Topheth, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of Slaughter; for they shall bury in Topheth, until there is no place to bury.

Verse 32

The valley of slaughter - The place where the slaughtered thousands of this rebellious people shall be cast, in order to their being burnt, or becoming food for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, Jer 7:33. These words are repeated, and their meaning more particularly explained, Jer 19:6-15.

JEREMIAH 7: 33 The dead bodies of this people shall be food for the birds of the sky, and for the animals of the earth; and no one shall frighten them away.

JEREMIAH 7: 34 Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become a waste."

Verse 34

Then will I cause to cease - the voice of mirth - There shall no longer be in Jerusalem any cause of joy; they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, for the land shall be totally desolated. Such horrible sins required such a horrible punishment. And they must be horrible, when they move God to destroy the work of his own hands.