

DOING JUSTICE / Sunday, August 9, 2015

Unifying Topic: **A CHOICE TO BE JUST**

Lesson Text

I. **The Temple Of The Lord** (Jeremiah 7:1-7)

II. **Judah's Disobedience** (Jeremiah 7:8-12)

III. **God's Judgment Upon Judah** (Jeremiah 7:13-15)

The Main Thought: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. (Jeremiah 7:3, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Many people show partiality, oppress the weak, and break the law as though they are unaware of the error of their ways. What are the consequences for persons who will not change their ways? Through Jeremiah, God sent messages of hope to those who will amend their ways, and messages of doom to those who will not.

Lesson Aim: To review the messages of doom and hope found in Jeremiah.

Life Aim: To help us see the error of our ways and take steps to make changes.

HISTORY:

¹The members of Jeremiah's family were priests. They lived in the town called Anathoth. It was about 3 miles (5 kilometres) away from Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied during the 7th century BC, when there were great political problems. His ministry began in Josiah's thirteenth year. Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, recorded the messages that Jeremiah dictated. Jeremiah warns the people to escape from Jerusalem in chapter 6 for their destruction from the enemy's hand would come from the north; they were to flee to the south. Having rejected the Lord, the people now find that He has rejected them. Hundreds of years of disobedience will be addressed. Now Judah must prepare for invasion and defeat (6:1-8) since she has rejected God's Word (6:9-15, and refused to walk in God's ways (6:16-26). Jeremiah's ministry will prove that Judah is like base metal, fit only for punishment (6:27-30).

LESSON:

Jeremiah 7:1-7 The Temple Of The Lord

7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,— This verse began with God's Word communicated to Jeremiah in which he would relate to God's people in Jerusalem.

7:2 Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Jeremiah takes God's message to the temple. This was Jeremiah's first temple sermon; another is found in chapter 26. It's called the Temple Sermon because it was delivered at the gate of the Temple. This was an act requiring great courage, because it set him in opposition to the people, prophets, priests, and kings alike. He was to say to all of Judah that enters in at these gates "*Hear the Word of the Lord... worship the Lord.*" Anytime we are admonished to "*hear the word of the Lord*", we are given another chance to respond to His Word. And to "*worship Him*" is another chance to give reverence and honor to Him.

7:3 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Jeremiah continues to tell them to *amend* (change) *their ways* (habits) *and doings* (separate acts), and *the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel* would *will cause them to dwell in this place*, which is Jerusalem, where the temple, the place of peace is. This would be their message of hope sent by God to totally turn their hearts to Him.

7:4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. Three times the people repeated, "*This is the Temple of the LORD.*" The Temple had become a fetish. Originated by the lies of the false prophets, the people chimed this religious chant. Just because they cried out the temple of the Lord, it didn't make them right in God's eyes. They were only lying to themselves if they thought He was worshiped there. They were not to trust in these lying words.

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/jeremiah1-10-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

7:5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;— "If" is a condition: ...if ye thoroughly amend ... if ye throughlyly execute...

7:6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt;— if ye oppress not... and shed not... God has His reasons, for ²they were not representing God in their day to day dealings with other people, and neither in the temple. They were believers in name only. They lived like the rest of the world. As a formality, they came to the temple at the required times. We see a list of the things wrong in their lives in these verses. God would not accept them as His family, until they had a change of heart, and lived every day as His representative on the earth. They must turn from the worship of false gods, and worship only the true God, and treat their fellowman as they would want to be treated.

7:7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. Now, comes the answer to the condition of the *"if."* If they did what God commanded in verses 5-6, then He would cause them to dwell in this place, the land that He gave to their fathers, for ever and ever—Canaan, The Promised Land; and have a long peaceful habitation there.

Jeremiah 7:8-12 Judah's Disobedience

7:8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Judah put their trust in deceitful words that could not yield a good return; putting their trust in flattering hopes. Just because the temple was there, they thought they would never suffer. They were only fooling themselves. It was a religion without personal commitment to God.

7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;— Jeremiah protested that God's people were treating God's covenant as license for immoral living. There were at least six violations of the Ten Commandments! How could they *"steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods"* and expect to be under God's covenant? The people followed a worship ritual, but maintained a sinful lifestyle.

7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?— How could they *"come and stand before God in the temple, which is called by God's name, and say, We are delivered (saved) to do all these abominations?"* This is their second chant, only to go right back to all these evil things again; just chanting lies that's not based on God's truth.

7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. God asks a question: *Is this my house; my Temple, a den of robbers; thieves in your eyes?*; meaning, is this the place thieves hang out after committing crimes; is this the place you go cover up your secret sins? They had turned God's house into a den of thieves, the same situation that Jesus faced centuries later. Instead of making His temple holy, they were making it unholy! When He says, *"Behold, even I have seen it"*, He lets them know that He not blind to their deceitfulness. God sees how we act; how our hearts betray us; how we nullify His name with deliberate sinfulness! It's not like we don't know our wrongness. We know, just as God knows. When we are in error, do we take steps to change? We should!

7:12 But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. Jeremiah reminded them that the temple that once resided in Shiloh, but because of Israel's wickedness this place was abandoned as their central worship center and later destroyed. The evil sons of Eli thought that carrying the *"Ark of the Covenant"* into the battle would defeat the Philistines, but they were slain, and the enemy captured the Ark. God then wrote *"Ichabod"* over the tabernacle, which means in Hebrew the *"glory"*

² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/jeremiah/08.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

has departed" (1 Sam.4-6: especially 4:21-22). The Lord destroyed it because of Israel's sin. This reminds us what God can and is able to do to any church that is set in His name! God's name and reputation is important. He has said "*called by my name*" in verse 10, 11, and set my name in verse 12.

Jeremiah 7:13-15 God's Judgment Upon Judah

7:13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;— God is really saying that He warned them while they were doing all those things. When they rose up early in the morning He was speaking to them, but they didn't listen. He called out to them early in the morning, but they didn't answer. And Jeremiah is showing that same frustration as God felt, as he spoke to them. It's like a parent talking to their children and they don't listen nor answer.

7:14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. Well, it all comes down to this, since they didn't listen and had closed ears and wouldn't answer Him, God says He will do the same as He did to His house in Shiloh, which was once called in His name; the place in which they rested their confidence, and the place He had given their fathers. Now, this would be God's message of doom to them.

7:15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. And that's not all: I will cast you out of my sight; I will drive you out of my sight; send you into exile as I have cast out all your brethren; your kinsmen, even the whole seed (race) of Ephraim. Ephraim was another name for Israel, the northern kingdom, and also the area where Shiloh was located. This means you have to learn your lesson the hard way. When God takes His hands off you, this means He's through talking; it's time for action!

SUMMARY:

³This was a word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord (v.1). It was to be preached by him at the gate of the temple to the men of Judah as they entered these gates to worship (v.2). If they would "amend their ways and doings" (repent), and return to God He would restore their peace and return to them in a way of mercy (v.3). The people believed that judgment would not come because the temple was in Jerusalem but God's protection would only come if they changed their ways (v.4). They must be honest and just in all their dealings between themselves and their neighbor (v.5). They are not to take advantage of the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow (v.6). Neither are they to walk after other gods, nor listen to those that would draw them into communion with idolaters; for it is, and will be, to their own hurt. He tells them that if they establish such a work of reformation and abide by it they will be able to dwell in the land that He gave to their fathers for ever and ever (v.7).

Any theology which said Jerusalem was safe because of the Temple failed to take note of the hypocrisy practiced there. Those who came to the Temple had been guilty of stealing, murder, adultery, and false swearing. They had sacrificed to Baal and walked after other gods. Yet because they went through the motions of rendering homage to God, they thought they were safe. What was worse, they thought this hypocritical lifestyle could continue unabated. They had turned the Temple into a refuge for those who had committed criminal acts. That sacred place was nothing but "a den of robbers!" Their spiritual hypocrisy had not gone unnoticed by God (vv.8-11). The people did not believe judgment would come to them because the temple was located in Jerusalem. They looked at the temple as a good luck charm that could ward off any attack. Jeremiah reminded them that the temple once resided in Shiloh but because of Israel's wickedness this place was abandoned as their central worship center and later destroyed (v.12).

God warned them while they were doing all those things. When they rose early in the morning He was speaking to them, but they didn't listen. He called out to them early in the morning, but they didn't answer (v.13). The point of Jeremiah's message was; if God did not preserve Shiloh because the tabernacle was there, why would He preserve Jerusalem because of the temple (vv.14-15)?

³<http://www.family-times.net/commentary/jeremiah-71/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>