

Jeremiah 7

The scenario now shifts to the gate of the Temple. One of the problems of the people was a devotion to the Temple and its practices but the lack of righteousness in their lives. One person called it "ritual over righteousness." The Temple was the focus of Israelite worship. The trust in the Temple and ritual can be seen in verse 4, *The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD*, was their cry.

The "word of the LORD" in this chapter came to Jeremiah in the early part of Jehoiakim's reign (609 - 605 B.C.) and the result of Jeremiah's address to the people is recorded in chapter 26.

- 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Vs. 1 God speaks through Jeremiah after the death of Josiah and the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign.

Vs. 2 Jeremiah is told to stand in the gate that leads to the Temple and proclaim God's word to all that come to the Temple to worship. This was his first public sermon.

Vs. 3 Once again, God tells the people to change their actions and they will dwell safely.

Vs. 4 Three times the people said the Temple of the Lord - a 3x repetition is a major emphasis on the subject.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 9:3

Jeremiah 31:35-36; 33:20-21; 25-26

- 35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:
- 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.
- 20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;
- 21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.
- 25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;
- 26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

The people believed the Temple was so holy, it guaranteed the people and the nation protection.

- 5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;
- 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:
- 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

In vs. 5-6 the people are told to "thoroughly" change their ways and, if they do, vs. 7, God will protect them and they will dwell in the land for ever. Four specific changes need to be made; 1) exercise justice; 2) concern for the alien, the orphan, and the widow; 3) avoidance of "legal" murders; 4) abandonment of idolatry.

- 8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
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;
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?
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.

The hypocrisy of the people is glaring. They trust in lies and are specifically guilty of breaking 5 of the 10 commandments; 1) theft; 2) murder; 3) adultery; 4) swear falsely; 5) worship and follow after other gods, vs. 8-9, and yet come into the Temple to worship Jehovah, vs. 10-11.

- 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.

The destruction of Shiloh has no historical account in the Bible, but it is mentioned as happening.

Psalm 78: 60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;
61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.
62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.
63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.
64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

The Tabernacle was to Shiloh and the judges as the Temple would be to Jerusalem and the kings.

This was a reminder that there is nothing so sacred on earth that God won't destroy it because of sin.

- 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;
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.
15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

Vs. 13 God continuously warned the people but they didn't respond.

"Rising up early and speaking" is a phrase exclusive to Jeremiah (7: 25; 11: 7; 25: 3-4; 26: :5; 29: 19; 32: 33; 35: 14-15; 44: 4) speaking of God's reaching out to the people.

2 Chronicles 36:

- 15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:
16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

Vs. 14 God promises to destroy the Temple (and the city) because of their sin and refusal to listen

Vs. 15 Israel will be judged by God.

2 Chronicles 36:

- 17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

- 16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

Can a nation get to the place that God tells people to not even pray for the nation?

ABSOLUTELY!

- 17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?
 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.
 19 Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

Vs. 17 God tells all to see what the people have done.

Vs. 18 The men, women, and children (families) are involved in worship of other gods (for the first time the queen of heaven is mentioned).

Deuteronomy 6:

- 10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,
 11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;
 12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.
 13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.
 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;
 15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.
 16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.
 17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.
 18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers,
 19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.
 20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?
 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:
 22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:
 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.
 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.
 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Vs. 19 They have provoked God to anger and he will send them confusion.

In godless societies. Romans 1: Bold added

- 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:
 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

In the Tribulation Period. 2 Thessalonians 2: Bold added

- 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

"If perplexity and confusion are, as we think, judgements of God on sinful nations, we need to confess that God's hand is manifestly 'stretched out' (Isa. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4) upon us at this hour. For confusion and perplexity are everywhere to be seen — from the throne to the poor-house and from the prince to the prelate. In just about every sphere of life there is a widespread uncertainty and agony of distress. Our jobs and our currencies are about as unsteady as our morals. Those who lead us appear frequently to be without any sense of vision. Too often they are found wanting in their private lives. Our modern world has become sophisticated and clever. But the problem is that God is cleverer still and he frustrates us at every stroke by turning our unblessed efforts to vanity and futility. Concerning very few of our modern societies would it be true to say: 'Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure' (Isa. 33:6). God has set his face against us and thrown over us the mantle of confusion.

"If society today is to be raised again from its acknowledged depravity and confusion, it must be done in the same way as in the past. God will bless what he has given to man as the gospel, and he will bless nothing else.

"But it is at this point that the churches of Christ are generally failing today. Preachers are themselves confused. The true message is not sounding forth from even one pulpit in twenty. The generality of preachers do not tell their people of their sinful and lost state. The wrath of God is not pronounced against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Jesus Christ is not being held forth as the only Saviour of hell--deserving sinners. And the New Birth is not being preached as indispensably necessary to men. Those preachers who do proclaim these old truths are few and precious. Even once evangelical pulpits are sliding into the sleepy confusion and apathy which has come to be the prevailing norm. Preaching has given way to something akin to entertainment. The trumpet has been muted. Heaven and hell are not felt realities in the consciences of most preachers. We are all in danger of becoming so polite that the sinners who come to listen to us will never hear one awakening sermon till they die in their blood.

"God has darkened our age very extensively with judicial blindness at every level of society. The mists of confusion thicken visibly. But our glorious confidence is that the same God is well able to remove the veil of obscurity which covers the eyes of the multitudes. This he always does, when he does it to mankind, only by one means: by the old gospel preached faithfully and 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven' (1 Pet. 1:12)." *Maurice Roberts, Confusion: A Judgement on Society*, September 10, 2019

<https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/articles/2019/confusion-a-judgement-on-society/>

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

The people's sin results in judgment upon them and nature.

21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.

22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

Jeremiah is speaking mockingly, saying the people should not only offer the sacrifices but to eat that which was normally reserved for the Lord. The people had put their trust in ritual so, in essence, God never commanded burnt offerings and sacrifices, but required righteousness.

23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Vs. 23 God requires obedience to what He says - not hypocritical lip-service.

Psalm 51:

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

The eschatological phrase "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" will be the result if the nation, "them," respond to God.

Vs. 24 But, the people didn't listen to God and went backward because they followed the "counsels and imagination of their evil heart."

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

26 Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

Vs. 25 God repeatedly warned Israel, from the Exodus on, to follow Him.

2 Chronicles 36:

14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

Vs. 26 But, the people refused.

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

28 But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

Vs. 27 Jeremiah is to speak God's word to the people and call upon them to respond. But they won't answer.

Vs. 28 Jeremiah is to tell the nation:

1. The nation won't obey God.
2. They won't receive correction.
3. They won't accept truth and is not present in their discussions (they lie).

29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

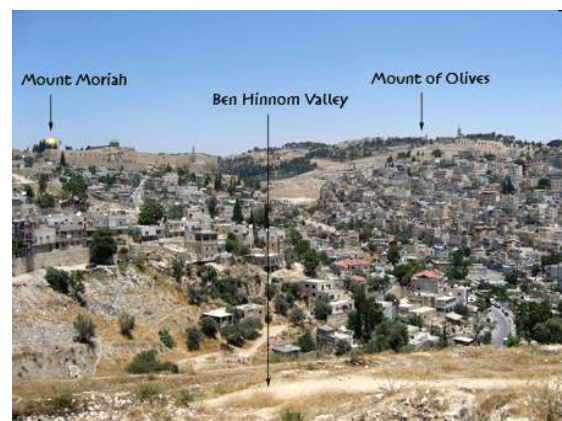
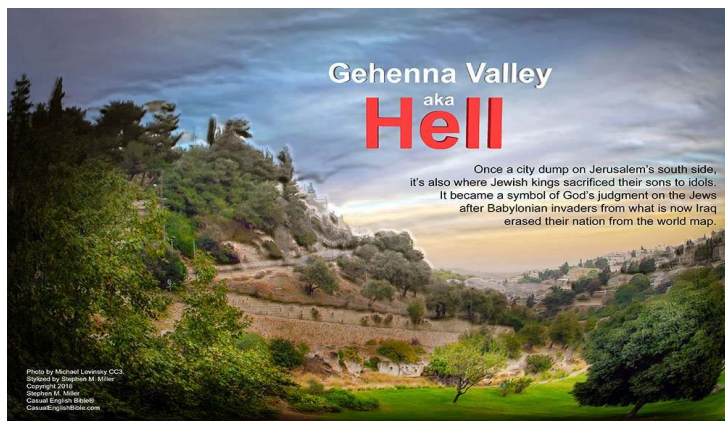
Vs. 29-30 The lamentation of Jerusalem is because of her sin.

1. "Cut off thy hair...and cast it away" speaks to her shame.

1 Corinthians 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

2. They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. They have polluted the Temple.

3. They have offered their children as sacrifices to pagan gods in the valley of the son of Hinnom.



Vs. 31 God did not command child sacrifice. He never even considered child sacrifice.

32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.

The "valley of slaughter" became the figurative "location" of hell.

The following is from Samuel Fisk's book Problems of the afterlife: What destiny awaits unbelievers?, The Word Hell - Vagaries and Verities, Chapter 6.

Gehenna the Final Abode of the Lost

In short, *gehenna* indicates what will be the final place of endless suffering of the lost of both the Old Testament and New Testament periods. (Matthew 18:8, 9; 23:33; Luke 12:5). But no true believer will ever go there, unlike *sheol-hades* before Christ's ascension.

After His resurrection Jesus may have descended "into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9) to announce His triumph, and then "when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive" (Eph. 4:8); but He never went down to *gehenna*, never, despite what the old creed so often repeated says, "he descended into hell..."

Gehenna is also designated the "lake of fire" (Revelation 20:13-15; cp. Mark 9:47, 48). To show that *gehenna* is identifiable with the lake of fire, note how Jesus Himself connects the word *gehenna* with fire in Matthew 5:22; 18:8, 9 and Mark 9:43, 47. And in Matthew 13:40-42 Jesus spoke of final destiny in terms of fire or burning. Comparing these references with Revelation 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8, it is clear that *gehenna* and the lake of fire are one. (As a sidelight on the lake of fire, see above p. 46-48).

The term *gehenna* was early derived from Ghi-Hinnom or the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, where apostate kings of Judah offered heathen sacrifices (even children) to be burned as offerings. Later it became a place of burning city refuse, including carcasses of animals considered unclean and corpses of criminals and unclaimed dead persons. But that does not detract one whit from its elevated use, chiefly by our Lord, as a fearful place of final suffering. Thousands of words in any age, from early Bible times to the present, have had an origin from more common things, then through various stages, raised to a higher level of meaning. We saw this principle in the development of the word eternal from *aión* (see pages 33-34 above). Just so it was with the word *gehenna*.

Gehenna Straight From Jesus Himself

With but one exception (James 3:6), all the occurrences of *gehenna* are from the lips of the Lord Jesus. Some may think this shows a decidedly limited use of the word. On the other hand, if they all had been in the apostle Paul's writings, critics would have been quick to assert the term was invented by Paul, pronouncing it a "Paulism." But coming from Him who so declared the love of God, its force is unquestionable. To those sentimentalists who think Jesus spoke of nothing but love, this may come as a shock and upset their prating. Those who assume a low view of Apostolic teaching, say, "Back to Jesus, what did Jesus say?" Very well, what He said on this all important subject is quite clear. His declarations on a final hell stand fast. None can seal His lips.

As indicated, then, *gehenna*, after the final judgment, will be the permanent abode of impenitent sinners of both the Old Testament (*sheol*) and the New Testament (*hades*). (Matthew 18:9; 23:33; Luke 12:5). As an imperfect illustration, it may be said that *hades* is like the condition of a guilty prisoner awaiting sentence, *gehenna* is like an escape-proof prison into which he is cast after final judgment is passed.

To reiterate, at Christ's ascension the faithful in the first division of *sheol-hades* were transported to heaven, paradise. Believers now also at death go to that blessed place where they are with Christ. Those in the second division (the New Testament *hades*) now await the final judgment, after which they will be consigned to *gehenna* the lake of fire.

Briefly, then, there is an awful place of final destiny, a place of utter and eternal woe, most certainly to be avoided, *call it what you may*.

God's inspired Word was given to us for our enlightenment and warning, and taken at its face value, there can be no question but that it sets forth a terrible place where human souls may be destined to everlasting sorrow, loss, and regret, but which may be avoided if only one will flee to the sure refuge to be found in Christ.

Thus, if your neighbor makes a flippant joke out of hell, or if the man down the street uses the word as a common cuss word, a warning would well be in order that it is really a serious matter, that try to shake it off as you will, such a place exists, and the trifler who ignores it, ignores it to his eternal peril.

33 And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

34 Then will I 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 be desolate.

Once again, the promise of destruction is pronounced.