**Jeremiah 7 (Lesson 5a)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 7 – God’s House Is Defiled (3.5 min.)**

A. Misplaced Confidence in the Temple (7:1-7; cf. Deut. 7:12-15; 1Sam. 4; Ezek. 8-11)

 1. Jeremiah delivers a scorching sermon at the Temple. It reminds one of Jesus’ many searing sermons at the Temple (e.g. Matt. 23-25).

 2. The people had made the Temple itself an idol! (cf. Mic. 3:11) *“The false prophets fully believed that, in an emergency, God would intervene directly to save Zion, His sacred mount. For them, therefore, Temple worship was little better than a charm for averting evil, and they had beguiled the people into trusting in material buildings, forgetful that God required living persons as His temple (cf. Is. 57:15; 61:1f; 1 Cor. 3:16ff).”* (Harrison, *TOTC*, 86)

B. A Den of Thieves (7:8-11; cf. Matt. 21:13; 2Kgs. 21:4)

 1. *“They have profaned God’s house by making it a place of retreat between acts of crime (cf. Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46).”* (Harrison, *TOTC*, 86)

C. Remember Shiloh? (7:12-15; cf. Ps. 78:60; Jer. 26:6; post-1Sam. 4?)

 1. The tabernacle was first set up in Canaan in Shiloh (Josh. 18:1; 1Sam. 3). It resided there and was the seat of worship for over 300 years! Shiloh uncovered in 1920s & evidence of destruction at 1050 B.C. was found.

 2. *“The divine landlord serves His notice of eviction.”* (Harkrider, 28)

D. Idol Worship (7:16-20) – queen of heaven = Ishtar (cf. 44:17)

 1. Intercessory prayer is useless at this point (cf. 11:14; 14:11f).

 2. Their burnings to idols will cause God to burn them (cf. Dt. 32:20-25).

E. Faithful Obedience Over Sacrifice (7:21-28; cf. Ps. 50:7-15).

 1. They would be better off just eating the meat than sacrificing it.

 2. Israel did sacrifice in the wilderness, but covenant morality was priority.

F. The Valley of Slaughter (7:29-34; cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5) – mourning, unholy

 1. Manasseh’s altars to pagan idols in the Hinnom Valley (cf. 2Kgs. 21:5-7) would become permanent memorials of the folly of idolatry.

 2.*Topheth* (Aramaic: *fireplace*) is the pit in which humans were burned.

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 7**

 A. Is there a place for blistering sermons? When?

 B. Is there ever an appropriate time to stop praying for someone? (cf. Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; 15:29; Jn. 9:31)

 C. This chapter idiomatically uses “rising early” to indicate repeated attempts. What principles can we derive from this concept and example?

 D. In what ways might we make God’s house a den of thieves?

**III. Applications For Chapter 7**

 A. Ritual form and pride in “having the truth” are poor substitutes for faithful and loving obedience to the Lord. We must worship correctly and have sound doctrine; we must also and equally (more?) important, have sound words and lives (7:4, 21f; cf. 8:8; Ps. 51:16f; Mic. 6:6-8; Matt. 15:7-9; 1Cor. 11:23-30)

 B. God will not force the truth on us while we are living (7:28; cf. 2Thess. 2:10-12; Matt. 13:4, 19). *“God has provided enough evidence in this life to convince anyone willing to believe, yet he has also left some ambiguity so as not to compel the unwilling.”* (Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 31).

**Jeremiah 8 (Lesson 5b)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 8 – Desecration & Destruction (2.5 minutes to read)**

A. Grave Desecration (8:1-3; cf. Amos 2:1) – see LA Mott, 66 quote from Josephus

 1. Carryover from the end of chapter 7. Death spreads well beyond the valley and even reaches those already in the grave.

2. Desecration could have been: a deliberate insult on the community, exposure of the powerlessness of the false deities, an attempt to uncover buried valuables, or incidental to the building of a siege ramp.

 3. The refugees will have preferred death (cf. Lev. 26:36-39; Deut. 28:65-67).

B. Abominable False Teaching (8:4-7)

 1. People usually pick themselves up after falling; Israel found ways to fall after having already fallen.

 2. They were innovators of immorality (cf. Rom. 1:30).

C. Dead People Walking (8:8-13)

 1. The Temple had becomes an idol (7:4); so had the Law of Moses! As such, neither item was of any avail.

 2. vv. 10-12 reiterate 6:13-15.

3. v. 13 calls the people sterile (cf. Is. 5:1-10; Matt. 21:18f; Jn. 15:1-8)

D. The Invading Army (8:14-17)

 1. The Babylonians press forward and devour, devastate, and destroy.

 2. The people lament that they should not have heeded the false prophets.

E. The Weeping Prophet (8:18-22)

 1. Jeremiah laments the senselessness of the people and the destruction (cf. Ps. 73:23-26).

 2. No relief will come for the people and Jeremiah identifies with the people. Their hurt is his hurt. Yet the people w/ fatal disease refuse treatment.

 3. *Balm of Gilead* derived from turpentine, pistachio, and/or balsam trees.

 4. *“Jeremiah truly cared about the people and worked hard to help them avoid this pain of separation and judgment from God. Jeremiah would shame many would-be preachers of today, who have no deep burden for the souls of the people to whom they preach.”* (Humphries, 101)

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 8**

A. Disturbing graves remains (for most) an abominable action. Why? And what significance does this have on the first few verses of chapter 8?

B. Is there anything instinctual about serving God? (8:7; cf. Eccl. 3:11; Rom. 2:14f)

 C. What does 8:7 tell us about God as far as intelligent design?

 D. What other passages speak of a salve or balm? What is God’s balm for sin?

**III. Applications For Chapter 8**

 A. False teaching is deceitful and leads one into the gall of bitterness (cf. Heb. 3:12f).

B. Teachers have a HUGE responsibility on their shoulders (8:8-12; cf.2Tim. 2:15; James 3:1; 2Pet. 3:16).

C. We should be grieved over national malaise (8:18-23).

D. *“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears attend to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.”* (Ps. 34:15f).

E. We need to follow God’s way for us and if we should ever diverge from the path He has given, let us migrate back to Him! (Is. 1:3).