

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part XVIII: God's Repudiation Of Religious Security Crutches
(Jeremiah 7:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. Church members regularly tell us how good it is to be "back at Nepaug Church" when they have been away for a week or several weeks of Sundays at-a-time, for they miss the fellowship and the ministries of this body.
- B. However, our Church's facilities, people and ministries can themselves become religious security crutches that replace the Lord Himself, what He cannot tolerate because it is a subtle form of religious idolatry.
- C. This was a big problem in ancient Judah, and God had Jeremiah address it in Jeremiah 7:1-15 (as follows):

II. God's Repudiation Of Religious Security Crutches, Jeremiah 7:1-15.

- A. When God had Jeremiah go to a gate of the Lord's temple to deliver the message of Jeremiah 7:3-15, Jehoiakim had just come to Judah's throne around 608 B. C. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jer. 7:2).
- B. Thus, nearly a century had passed since God had miraculously delivered Judah from the Assyrian army by slaying 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight during the reign of Judah's king Hezekiah, Ibid., fn. to Jer. 7:4.
- C. With this deliverance, the people of Judah had come to believe that since Jerusalem was the site of God's temple, the temple and surrounding city of Jerusalem were invincible to Gentile invaders, making a religious security crutch out of the temple precinct.
- D. This viewpoint of the people is critiqued in Jeremiah's message of Jeremiah 7:3-15 (as follows):
 - 1. God had Jeremiah stand in the gate of the temple and call out his message to all the people who were entering there to worship the Lord (Jeremiah 7:1-2).
 - 2. Jeremiah was to proclaim that the people of Judah needed to change their ways and their deeds with the result that the Lord would let them continue to dwell in that place, Jeremiah 7:3.
 - 3. The people were not to trust in the deceptive words then circulating of "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!" (Jer. 7:4 NIV) These words reflected the belief that the temple precinct was invincible to Gentile invaders because God had miraculously delivered Judah under king Hezekiah from Assyrian invasion nearly a century before since wanted to preserve His temple, Ibid.
 - 4. God referred to the need for the people truly to change their ways to deal with each other justly such as not oppressing foreigners, orphans and widows and not shedding innocent blood, and also relating to God properly by not worshiping false idols in His place. If they obeyed, God would let them continue to live in the area just as He had given these places to their forefathers forever, Jeremiah 7:5-7.
 - 5. However, the people were trusting in the deceptive words that reflected on the temple precinct as a kind of religious security crutch while continuing to practice their sins, Jeremiah 5:8.
 - 6. God critiqued this practice, asking if they would continue to steal, murder, commit adultery and perjury, to burn incense to Baal and follow other gods they before had not known only to keep coming to the temple that bear's God's Name and say, "We are safe" -- safe to do all such detestable things! (Jer. 7:9-10 NIV)
 - 7. Actually, this vileness had made God's temple into a den of robbers, people who selfishly stole from other people and from God what was materially and honorably due to them, but God had been watching all of this occur and He would deal justly with it, Jeremiah 7:11.
 - 8. To make His warning potent to people relying on the current temple precinct for security from invaders, God told the people to go to Shiloh up in the tribal territory of Ephraim where the tabernacle was first pitched and see what God had done to that place because of the nation's past wickedness, Jeremiah 7:12.
 - 9. God had formerly often warned past generations of His people to repent of these same sins He was addressing in Judah now, but since those generations had not listened, what God did to Shiloh in having it destroyed by the Philistines (in 1050 B. C.) He would now do to His Jerusalem temple, and He would thrust the people out of His presence as He had to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Jeremiah 7:13-15.

Lesson: *Since Judah's people were not repenting of sin, but relying on the temple precinct as a religious security crutch to avoid Gentile invasions due to God's past gracious deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army, God warned Judah that He would have Gentiles invade the Jerusalem temple just like He did at Shiloh when His tabernacle stood there and when earlier generations refused to repent of committing the same sins Judah now did.*

Application: *May we NOT rely on false religious crutches for our security, but on GOD, and thus HEED HIM!*