



Jeremiah 7

Jeremiah CHAPTER 7

Turn to Jeremiah 7 then we will bounce back to 2 Chronicles 34.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 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 (7:1-2).

So this is the message that Jeremiah was to give while he was standing in the gates of the Lord's house. He was to preach this message to those people that were gathering to worship the Lord. Now in the Jeremiah 26 we have again Jeremiah during the reign of King Jehoiakim and he does date this for us. At the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim the Lord said, "Go and stand in the court of the Lord's house and speak to all the cities of Judah." Again later on he was commanded to go to the Lord's house and this time they wanted to kill him. They rebelled against what he was saying. The priests and the prophets that were there said, "This fellow deserves to die," They were determined to put him to death but he was saved by the intervention of some of the princes of the land.

In 2 Chronicles 34 we will read a little bit there and just skim it. Josiah was the king, during the thirteenth year of his reign is when Jeremiah began to prophesy. To give you a little background on Josiah, "he was eight years when he began to reign, he reigned in Jerusalem for thirty-one years. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, he walked in the ways of David his father and he declined neither to the right hand nor to the left," he was a straight shooter. In Josiah's eighth year of his reign, when he was sixteen, still young, "he began to seek after the God of David his father." In the twelfth year of his reign he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places. The thirteenth year of his reign is when Jeremiah began his prophecies.

In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from these high places which were the places that were made for worship of the pagan gods, and from the Ashteroth, these pornographic idols, and from the carved images which were pornographic and from the molten images. They broke down the alters of Baalim in his presence and their images that were high above them and he cut down the groves and the carved images and the molten images and he broke in pieces and made dust of them and strewed it on the graves of them that sacrificed to them. He burnt the bones of the false priests upon their alters and he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. He did this in all of the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon and even unto Naphtali. He went on up into the northern kingdom.

Under Josiah there was a real reform as they were getting rid of the pagan elements that had invaded the land at that time. When he had broken down all the idols and the Ashteroths and had beaten the graven images into powder and cut down the idols throughout all the land he returned to Jerusalem.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, this means that Jeremiah has been prophesying for about five years, when he had purged the land and the house he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the governor of the city and they came to Hilkiah the high priest and they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered at the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim and all the remnant of Israel and Judah and Benjamin.

They had taken an offering to refurbish the temple. It had fallen into great disarray. It became just a garbage dump for the people of Jerusalem. The worship had ceased in the temple, the sacrifices had ceased and the temple was forsaken and deteriorating. The idea was to restore the temple, to take offerings and collect the money and to have this restoration program for the temple. So they brought the money to Hilkiah the high priest and he in turn gave it to the workmen who had the oversight to the house of the LORD and those that worked in the house of the Lord to repair and amend the house. All of the craftsmen and the builders received the money to buy hewn stone and timber for the couplings and just a thorough remodeling

job of the temple. The men did the work faithfully and the overseers of them were named here and there were all types of men working on this project.

When they brought out the money for the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. The Law of the Lord, the Torah, had been lost. People were not interested in what God had to say. So Hilkiah, as they were going through the rubble cleaning out the mess he came across this Torah, the Law of the Lord. Hilkiah said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord." So he gave it to Shaphan and he carried the book to the king and brought the king word back saying, "All that was committed to thy servants they have done it. We have completed the job." They gathered together the money that was found in the house of the Lord and we have delivered it into the hands of the overseers and those that were working. Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." Shaphan read it before the king.

And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the Law that he tore his clothes and the king commanded Hilkiah and Ahikam the son of Shaphan and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe and Asaiah a servant of the king saying, "Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and Judah concerning the words of the book that have been found for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord to do all that is written in the book.

He realized how far they had gone from God. They inquired of the Lord and they were told that God's judgment would come but not in Josiah's day. In chapter 35 we read where Josiah instituted this great Passover and he donated 30,000 sheep for this feast out of his own flock plus 3,000 bullocks. The other princes in the land gave also of their herds as well as some of the wealth of the people. They had a huge Passover feast. It surpassed anything in their history. Never in the history had they had such a huge feast there at the temple.

It is very possible that it was at the time of this feast that chapter 7 takes place as the people were gathering in the temple of the Lord, the temple that had been rebuilt and restored. As now has come the time of the worship of God, people gathering from all over the land to worship God there in the temple. Many of them seeing it in its refurbished state for the first time. It was an awesome building, the architecture and the structure was extremely beautiful it was ornate it was covered with gold and it was just a very beautiful building and as they were coming into the gates there was a hushed awe as they said, "Oh the temple of Jehovah, oh the temple of Jehovah!"

So Jeremiah was to go down and as the people were entering into the temple through the gate.

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. 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 (7:2-3).

There was at that time the common belief that now that the temple was restored that it would provide safety and security for them from their enemies. They were trusting in the fact that we have this building here. And as long as this building is here we will have safety and protection from our enemies. They cannot conquer us now because we have the temple of the LORD. And thus they were looking to the temple itself as a good luck charm that would protect them from their enemy.

In the earlier history when the Philistines were attacking Israel, the people had turned from God and the Philistines were defeating them and someone got the bright idea, "Let's take the ark of the covenant into battle with us because this is so holy that if we have it then God will be with us and they cannot defeat us." So they brought the ark of the covenant into the camp and the guys all let out this hoop and this cheer and all and the Philistines said, "Oh what is going on." and they attacked and they defeated them and they took the ark of the covenant.

They were looking at it as some kind of a magical potion that would bring them victory over their enemies, sort of a religious kind of a superstition that people often have as they begin to trust in relics. You have probably seen in the cars of people in times past, the little statues of St. Christopher who was supposedly the patron saint of the highways and as long as you had this little statue of St. Christopher in your car you could drive like a madman you would not have to worry because Christopher would watch over you and keep you from danger on the highways. This is the same kind of an idea.

We have this building here and this is the temple of Jehovah and surely now with this building we will have divine immunity from attacks or defeat at the hands of our enemies. It turned out that St. Christopher did not really exist, he was sort of a figment of someone's imagination. All of those years they were trusting in St. Christopher they were really in danger of being in a wreck because St. Christopher actually did not exist.

The Lord is saying to them, "If you want to dwell in this place, if you want to have safety here then don't trust in the temple but amend your ways and your doings, change your lifestyles."

*Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD,
The temple of the LORD, are these (7:4).*

You are trusting in a false hope. This building will not save you. You're coming to worship at this building will not save you. What you need for salvation is a change of life, a change of your ways, a change of your doings. You are trusting in lying words if you are trusting in anything for your salvation other than the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your lives. Obeying him and following him.

There are people who are trusting in the church to save them. They are in the same position as the people of Judah, trusting in their religion to save them. A young man who used to be in my Sunday School class years ago when he was in high school came up to me sometime back and I had not seen him for many years. He said, "Chuck, I am not a Christian anymore, I am a Mormon now." I said, "What are you trusting in for your hope in eternal life." He said, "My faith in Jesus Christ and continued membership in the Mormon Church." Trusting in his membership in the Mormon church for salvation, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the LORD are these." If I am faithful, and wear my black underwear and all, then I will be saved. Hopefully I will have it on when I die so it will ensure things. He had no real assurance of his salvation and he thought we were rather presumptuous by saying we knew we were saved. He said, "You will not know until you die." I said, "Isn't that a little late to find out?"

Here they were saying the temple of the LORD and they were trusting in that. We are attending the temple, surely this will save us. If you want salvation, the LORD said, if you will thoroughly amend your ways and your doings. Now first of all He just said amend, now He says thoroughly amend.

*For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute
judgment between a man and his neighbour (7:5);*

That is if you will be fair and honest. Just be fair. That is what God is saying to you. Be fair with people, don't take advantage of people. Be fair in your dealings, be honest in your dealings with people.

If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (7:6),

Don't take advantage of people who are poor, weak, who have no one to defend them. So often in history children have been used in child labor, slave kind of conditions. It is happening today over in Thailand, one of the places. Little girls 9 and 10 years old are taken from the villages and brought into the cities where they become sex slaves and they have no life of their own. Their parents sell them to these dealers. It is a sad and tragic thing. So they take advantage of these children. God says not to do that. Don't take advantage of those who are in distress. If a person is going through bad times there are a lot of people who come and prey upon them, taking advantage of their misfortune.

and shed not innocent blood in this place (7:6),

There were just a lot of murders and killings that were going on in Jerusalem.

neither walk after other gods to your hurt (7:6):

If you serve the true and the living God it will always be for your good. God makes you a better person. You cannot really serve God without becoming a better person. In the same token you cannot serve and worship a false god without becoming a worse person. The psalmist observed that the heathens made their gods out of silver and gold, or they carve them out of wood. He said that they have eyes but they eyes cannot see, they have ears but the ears cannot hear, they have feet but the feet cannot walk, they have mouths but they cannot speak through them. Why? Because they are little wooden idols, stone images or molten images out of brass or iron. They are gods that can't see, hear, walk and then the psalmist said that they that made them have become like the gods that they have made.

Every man has his gods. We will be reading a little about Tophet, the moon goddess, Ashteroth actually, who was called the queen of heaven. She was supposedly in the consort of Molech who was the king of heaven. Thus to worship them involved prostitution, pornography and sex. Today if you are in to sex and pornography in an Old Testament sense you are worshipping Ashteroth or Molech. It is the same thing, they just called them gods. It just acknowledged that that guy was after sex, he is always trying to conquer some girl and in those days they would say that he really worships Molech, he is a devotee of Molech. Today we say he is just a sex hound or a partier.

They recognized that these things mastered people's lives. People's lives were being mastered by party going and by sex. This was all they were interested in, their whole life revolved around these things. So they were recognized as gods, that which controls your life or the master passion of your life and they just called them by names. We are too sophisticated to call them by names but you go through the same rituals in the worship of these gods.

We find that these gods, David observed, they that make them, every man has his god and man often makes his own god, but when he makes it he makes it as himself. When you carve out your little god you carve out little ears. Why? Because you have ears. You carve out feet on it. Why? Because you have feet. You are making it like yourself. An interesting thing is that you are making it a little less than yourselves. Because though you carve eyes on your little god the eyes cannot see. That is less than you, at least you can see. You carve ears on your little god but the ears the ears cannot hear. You carve a nose but it cannot smell anything. You carve a mouth on the little god but it cannot speak. So you have made a god, you have made it like yourself but you have actually made it less than yourself.

Then he said that they that worship them become like the gods that they worship. The truth is that a man becomes like his god. If you have made your own god like yourself but less than yourself, to worship that god is degrading, you are going down. That is exactly what God was saying through Jeremiah. You are worshipping God to your own hurt. To worship these false gods is to be on the road down. It will ultimately destroy you. So he rebukes them for worshipping these gods to their own hurt, to their own detriment.

If you will put aside these false gods, if you will thoroughly amend your ways, if you will be honest, if you will be fair, if you will just, if you start living right. Put aside these senseless killings and so forth and if you won't walk after these other gods to your own hurt then will I cause you to dwell in this place and in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. You are looking for security. You are wanting security in this land and you say, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD. We got the temple now, we are going to dwell here forever. We can go ahead and do our own thing, we can party and we can have sex and everything else. But man we go to the temple so it is all covered."

God says that they we're trusting in lying words. Don't trust in lying words, don't think that attendance at the temple is going to do it for you. In the same token, don't think that attendance at Calvary Chapel is going to be a substitute for a righteous holy life. It just does not work that way. You are trusting in lying words if you come in and say, "Oh Calvary Chapel, where the Spirit of God is at work and the Bible is being taught." Wonderful. Well, if you are not giving heed, if you are not living according to the Word than you

are resting in a false hope. Do not trust in lying words but thoroughly change your ways. Live the life that is pleasing to God. Live a life of purity, live a life of holiness. Deny the flesh, deny the old life and the old nature, take up your cross and follow Jesus and then you will have true security. Your security will be in Christ in whom you abide.

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit (7:8).

You are trusting in a false concept.

Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; 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? (7:9–10).

Because we come into the temple we are free then to do all these other horrible and abominable things. We have done our duty, we came to church on Sunday and now party time until next Sunday. The Lord says, “No, it does not work that way, you are trusting in lying words.” And to think that just because you come into the house that is called by the name of the Lord, that you can just go and live how you please and that God has freed you to do such things. Not so!

There was a very sad period of church history when they were seeking to raise money to build a great church in Rome and in order to raise money someone came up with the bright idea of selling indulgences. Do you want to commit adultery? Well you could go and buy forgiveness. For \$50 you could buy a little certificate that gave you absolving of that sin. So they were selling forgiveness of sin, indulgences. That is one of the things that ticked Martin Luther off, this was sort of the final straw. This business of selling of indulgences.

The idea is much the same here. They were thinking that somehow they were free to do these things. “We are delivered to do these things,” they said.

Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? (7:11).

Do you think that you can find safety like a bunch of robbers who gather together and feel safe because they are in their den? Do you make my house a place you feel safe from the consequences of your sin? Do you think you can escape the consequences of your sin just because you are in the house of God?

Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD (7:11).

I see you, saith the LORD. You are not hiding. Then God said to go up to Shiloh. Now when they first came into the land they put the tabernacle of God in Shiloh.

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 (7:12).

At this point it was in ruins. The Assyrians had conquered the Northern Kingdom. The people had been taken away captive and the city was just in ruins. So God told them to go and take a look at Shiloh.

where I set my name at the first (7:12),

Where the tabernacle of Jehovah was first erected when they came into the land. And see what happened to Shiloh. It wasn't a place of security. It did not cover their wickedness.

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; 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 (7:13–14).

What happened to Shiloh is going to happen here. It did happen. This temple of Jehovah that they were talking about was destroyed by the Babylonians. It was raised to the ground and the people were taken away

captive to Babylon. So as it happened to those in Shiloh so it happened to those in Jerusalem and for the selfsame reason. They turned their back on the true and the living God and they began to serve and to worship other gods.

And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore, [God is now talking to Jeremiah] 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 (7:15–16).

This is a heavy, heavy statement. God is saying to Jeremiah not to pray anymore for them. Don't intercede for them, don't cry in prayer for them because I will not hear you. It is possible for people to go so far in their rebellion against God that they come to a hopeless state where God says to them, "Don't pray anymore, don't intercede, I will not listen."

Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? (7:17).

God is saying to Jeremiah, "Do you see what they are doing there?"

The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven [the moon god, or Ashteroth], and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger (7:18).

The whole family were involved in this pagan worship of Ashteroth. The children would gather the sticks, the fathers would make the fire and the wives would fix the dough to make these little cakes to offer to this pagan goddess, the queen of heaven.

So the Lord says, "Do you see what is going on?" For a long time my wife used to say when she was asking for money, "Well honey, the Bible says that the women need their dough."

Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? (7:19).

What they are really doing is they are just bringing confusion upon themselves. It does not really hurt God in the sense that you are bringing God down or making Him any less than what He is. It is hurting you. Your rejection, your sinning and all, it does not really take away from God, it does not destroy God but it surely does destroy you. You do these things to your own hurt.

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 (7:20).

God says, "My fury is going to come and this place is going to be burned." You can go to Jerusalem today, you can walk from the dung gate and walk down the hill of Ophel and there in the excavations that were done about ten years ago, you can see a layer of ash that is four to six inches thick in the strata there. The ash which is the result of the burning of the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army shortly after Jeremiah made these prophecies. Mute evidence to the faithfulness of God to keep His word. They will burn this place God said.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh (7:21).

Now the burnt offerings were supposed to be that everything was burned. Nothing was kept for the people. When you offered a burnt offering that was the offering of sacrifice of consecration. "Lord, I am consecrating myself completely." So the burnt offering was to be totally burned, nothing was to come back. The peace offering the people would eat. They would burn the fat and then they would roast the lamb or whatever and you would have a big feast. The idea was that you were feasting with the LORD, He gets part of the lamb and you get part of it and you just sit down with the family and you just feast with the Lord.

But the Lord said, “These offerings of consecration, you might as well eat the flesh yourself. It is no value to offer these burnt offerings to Me unless you are really consecrating your life.”

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: 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 (7:22–23).

The Lord said that when they first came out I did not talk to them about sacrifices. I was talking to them about obedience. I gave them the rules and I said, “Obey My voice.” To keep the Law of God is to your benefit, it is good. It is the right way to live. Tell me, what do you have against what God said? God said to just be fair in your dealings with others, don’t take advantage of people’s problems or the weakness of people. Don’t shed innocent blood and do not walk after other gods, now what is so wrong with that?

When a society violates these laws, when people can no longer be trusted, when a man’s word is no longer good, when a person will promise you one thing and then do another, when people begin to steal from each other and lie and cheat, then your society is going to break down. No society can be maintained, no social structure can be maintained when the moral base is destroyed. This is what has happened in Russia under the Godless communism the whole moral base was destroyed and that is why the whole thing is crumbling at this time. You could not trust any body’s word. So society has got to be built upon certain moral planks if that society is going to continue. They thought that they had the temple, “That is all that we need, we can just continue to do these evil things, to cheat, lie and steal, murder and commit adultery and all but we have the temple so our society will go on.” No, no, no God says, that is a false hope. No society can be maintained apart from men living lives of integrity and honesty and uprightness.

So God said, “When I first brought you out of Egypt, I did not talk to you about sacrifices, there was nothing about burnt offerings.” And it is true when you get into the Law. The commandment of God came first and then when the people did not obey God, He gave them then the Law of sacrifices. Here is what you are to do to cover the sin. Here is how to make your way back to God, here is how to make the covering for your evil and then the sacrifices came. But then the sacrifices of your heart is not in it if you are just doing it while thinking, why, I will just go out tomorrow and do it again then I will just decimate my flock and live it up. It is not going to work. So God is saying, “Hey, eat it! Don’t bother giving it to Me. I don’t want it, it is of no value! Your burnt offerings are meaningless, you might as well go ahead and eat it yourself.”

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 (7:23).

It will be well if people will just follow the commandments of the Lord.

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 (7:24).

The people started out in a close relationship with God but they went backward, they did not continue forward in their relationship with God. It is always sad when people go away from God. They are going backward from God rather than going forward into the things of God. Oh that God would inspire our hearts to press on into the things of the LORD, to a deeper consecration, to a greater commitment to God and always pressing on closer and closer to the Lord. May God inspire our hearts to do so rather than moving away and saying, “How much can I get by with and how much can I do without losing fellowship? Is it all right to do this, how close to the line can I live, where do I cross over?” And people always trying to live on the line. Oh God help us! Let’s forget the line, let’s move so close to God we are not even concerned about lines. Let’s press in. They were going backwards, not forward in the things of God.

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: Yet

they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers (7:25–26).

Each generation was a little worse than the preceding generation. Hey, as I look around right now from the time that I was a kid each generation has become progressively worse. The kids are doing things now today that we would not have dreamed of doing even in our wildest moments. I think that TV and movies and the rock music has had a tremendous effect on bringing a lowered standard and greater opportunities for sin. They did worse than their fathers.

Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee (7:27);

Now this is the thing, God says, “Now you are to say all this to them but they are not going to listen to you.” Oh Lord, do I have to say it then, you know, if they are not going to listen. Here is the tragedy of Jeremiah’s ministry; God said, “You are to be there, you are to warn them but they are not going to listen to you.” That is to me interesting. God knows the people’s heart are hard, God knows that they will not listen but He is still faithful to warn. He does not just let them go without a warning and this total faithfulness of God is seen. He will not let you destroy yourself without warning you about what you are doing. Even though He knows that you are not going to listen, you are going to go out and do the same thing. At least He is faithful to warn.

Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee (7:26–27);

It is going to be a hard ministry, Jeremiah. It is going to be an unfruitful ministry. You are to speak but they are not to listen, you are to call but they are not to answer.

thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. 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 (7:27–28).

This nation is no longer listening to God and does not obey God. They will not receive God’s instruction.

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 (7:29).

The hair, the Nazarite vow was to let your hair grow. The Nazarite vow was a vow of consecration to God. These were to be a people who were consecrated to God. That was to set this nation apart from all other nations. What would make them different from all other nations of the world is that these were people, a nation who was dedicated to God. And the long hair of the Nazarite was the sign of his vow of dedication and consecration of his life to God. Now the Lord is saying to cut off your hair, to get rid of it because really you are no longer dedicated to God. You have broken your vows of consecration.

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 (7:30).

Even within the house of God they had established this alter to Baal.

And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom (7:31),

Going through Jerusalem on the south side of Mt. Zion is this valley of Hinnom, it is called Gehenna also. It is a rather deep valley and it pretty much goes the length of the city of Jerusalem. It joins down below into the Kidron Valley and then it goes on down to the Dead Sea. But this valley of Hinnom is the place where they built these alters unto Molech. It is there in the valley of Hinnom that they would have

these pagan festivals. So the Lord is talking about how they built there these high places which were places of worship of Tophet.

to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart (7:31).

God said, "I would never require that a person offer their child as a sacrifice to me." But yet here were these people who were engaged in their worship of Ashteroth and Molech, the queen and king of heaven. The worship really of sex, mastered by sex, dominated by their sexual passions. The little images of Ashteroth were pornographic little figures of the female body with exaggerated organs. Molech was the male and it was kind of pornography that was stimulating. So there was a careless free attitude toward sex. There was a lot of sexual promiscuity, fornication and adultery.

Wherever you have a society where they have lax moral values, where you have a lot of sexual activity, and that feeling of freedom for sexual activity, you also have a lot of venereal disease as well as unwanted babies. It is the byproduct of a sexually stimulated society. That is what happened to Judah. They had all of these little babies that were not wanted and so in the worship of Molech the god of pleasure and Ashteroth the female goddess of sex suddenly they were having all of these babies that they really did not want so they would build these bonfires in the worship of Molech and then take the babies and throw them into the fires. Or they would place the babies in the arms of these iron gods that were heated until they were glowing red hot and they would offer them as a sacrifice unto that god.

God said that they would burn their sons and daughters in the fire which I would not command them or would even come into my heart. That is just unimaginable that people could do such things. This is what God was talking about in shedding of innocent blood. The babies, how innocent, they were doing this. And thinking, well we have the temple. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. We will be preserved because we have this temple, we go to temple worship.

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 (7:32).

When the Babylonians come and when the city is destroyed they will cast the carcasses in the valley until the valley will have not room to bury all of the dead. It will be called the valley of slaughter. You have slaughtered your children and now your bodies and your carcasses will lie there.

And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth [jackals, wild dogs and wolves] and none shall fray them away (7:33).

The fray, that is an old English word. It comes from the same root word as frighten. There will be none to frighten, scare them away or to drive them off. In other words, no one will be there to protect these carcasses which will be consumed by the wild animals and birds.

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 (7:34).

You would not hearken to God. You worshipped these other gods to your own hurt. You would not listen, you hardened your neck, you moved away from God but you are doing it to your own hurt. It is going to hurt you in the long run. You are the one that will suffer. God is faithful, He is always faithful. He always warns of His impending judgment. It is up to you if you listen or not, whether you take heed or not. God is saying to these people in this corrupted state, "If you will thoroughly change your ways, if you will quit doing these evil things, if you will start being fair and honest and do what is right, then I will take care of you and you will stay in this place. Then you will not be conquered, I will be your defense."

So the Lord is speaking to you tonight. Not to trust in flimsy and empty hopes or in a lie. Thinking that because you go to church or because you sing choruses or support a church or whatever, it is all okay to live and do your own thing. The Lord is saying, "I want you to live righteously, moving forward into a relationship with Me and not away."

Father, we pray that we might give heed to Your Word tonight. May we hearken, may we listen, may we respond. Lord, we pray that You will help us to make those inner resolves that by Your Spirit and through the power of Your Holy Spirit, we will, Lord, deny ourselves that we might take up our crosses to follow Jesus. Lord, that we would not allow the world around us to corrupt us and we will not be caught in the corruption that is destroying the world in which we live. Lord, we will stand in the strength of Your Spirit against these forces of darkness that are flooding our world today. Oh God give us that strength to stand in the face of the pressures and the opposition of the enemy. May we determine that as for me and my house we will serve the Lord in Jesus' name, Amen. Shall we stand.

Now may the Lord be with you and watch over you, to preserve and keep you in his love. May you go forward in the things of God, pressing on into that whole, complete relationship with God through Jesus Christ determining to live a life that is pleasing, that is acceptable, denying the temptations to yield to the flesh and the things of the flesh, resolved to live after the Spirit. Thus, may your life be enriched and blessed as you have chosen the good path and you walk in the ways of the Lord. May you enjoy his fellowship and His love and His Spirit working in your life in Jesus' name.