

**Deceptive Words (Jeremiah 7:1–20)**  
**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (2/2/2020)**

**Introduction**

1. In the progress of considering Jeremiah’s message, the theme of looming judgment continues.
  - a. Judah followed Ephraim’s tendency to reject the Lord and pursue the worship of the Baals.
  - b. The Lord patiently pleaded with the nation to repent and return to her covenant obligations.
  - c. Judah’s refusal to hear the message, take it to heart, and acknowledge her error left no option but to put her under judgment, the Babylonian exile.
2. Faithful commitment is the foundation of God’s dealings with His covenant people.
  - a. The Lord challenged the prophet to search the city of Jerusalem and see if he could find just one faithful man so that He might spare the city (5:1).
  - b. The Lord’s purpose was to find that faithful man: “*Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love [hesed, covenant love], but a faithful [emown, covenant faithfulness] man who can find?*” (Proverbs 20:6).
  - c. The truly “Faithful Man” whom the Lord desired was His own Son, Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 23:5, 6).
3. The text before us is very similar to that recorded in Jeremiah 26 and many believe it to be the same message.
  - a. Because of that message, Jeremiah was threatened with death (26:11).
  - b. The issue was conflicting messages: *deceptive words* from false prophets assuring peace and safety and *the truth* of impending judgment from the Lord by Jeremiah. As we approach the end of the age, we too must beware of deceptive words (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

**I. Shiloh**

1. The temple of the Lord
  - a. The message of the prophet at the gate of the Lord’s house was “*not to trust in deceptive words*” (v. 4). After this, the prophet declares, “*This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*” (a triple repetition as an emphatic declaration, Isaiah 6:3). A *temple* is where God dwells with His people (Ezekiel 37:27; 2 Corinthians 6:16).
  - b. The deceptive words led to false confidence: “*We are delivered!*” (v. 10), a mere profession of self-assurance that the Lord would save them anyhow. Although the people lived in disobedience to His commandments (vv. 5, 8, 9), they expected their *external* show of religion to be sufficient for Yahweh to accept and bless them.
  - c. The people also misunderstood the ultimate design as it relates to the gospel and viewed the temple as a kind of permanent charm, blessing all who associated with it, no matter how much they sinned. This was because God promised to David an *eternal dynasty* in the chosen city of Zion, Jerusalem, which they viewed as proof of Judah’s permanent status (2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Psalm 132:13, 14).
  - d. The term translated *worship* means “to bow down and prostrate oneself before one of high estate to whom allegiance is owed.” That allegiance must be demonstrated in fear and love, submission and obedience, not merely as Judah by the performance of ritual acts, calling it worship.

e. If the people's worship was to be truly accepted of the Lord, He expected them to *amend* or make right "*their ways and their deeds*" (the letter and intent of the law; vv. 3, 5)—that is what constitutes true repentance. Thus, the Lord warned them: "*Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel*" (v. 12).

2. The Lord directed their attention to *Shiloh*, 18 miles north of Jerusalem.

a. Through the days of the judges, the worship of nation centered in the tabernacle located in Shiloh (Psalm 78:60, 61; Joshua 18:1).

b. First Samuel opens with a sad description of the spiritual condition of the priests (2:12). The Lord judged Eli's house and allowed the Ark of the Covenant to be taken captive by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:1–11).

c. In the face of Eli's judgment, the Lord declared His ultimate purpose (1 Samuel 2:35). Jesus is that faithful priest (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; remember Jeremiah 3:16). The Lord now threatened to do the same to the temple in Jerusalem.

## II. Yahweh

1. How did the temple of the Lord become a den of robbers?

a. The Lord asked, "*Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?*" (v. 11; compare Matthew 21:13 and Isaiah 56:7).

b. The Lord previously urged Israel that if they returned, He declared "*to me you should return*" (4:1, 2, 22; 9:3, 6).

2. Who is Yahweh, the "*I am who I Am*"? (Exodus 3:13–15). John Piper preached at a conference in Belfast, Ireland, introducing his message with ten truths about God's absolute being:

a. God had no beginning. He always was and is.

b. God is without end. If He didn't come into being, He can't go out of being.

c. God is absolute reality. There's no reality outside of Him unless He wills it and creates it.

d. God is utterly independent. He depended on nothing to bring Him into being. He depends on nothing to support Him. He depends on nothing to counsel Him. He depends on nothing to make Him what He is. He is absolutely independent.

e. Everything depends on Him. God is primary, absolute, first, last, glorious. Everything else is secondary.

f. Nothing compares to God. "*All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness*" (Isaiah 40:17).

g. God cannot be improved. There is no development in God, no progress, because absolute perfection cannot be improved.

h. God sets the ultimate standard. He is the absolute standard of truth and goodness and beauty.

i. God always does right. He is utterly free from any constraints that don't originate from His own will.

j. Nothing is worth more. He is the greatest, the most beautiful, the most valuable, and the most important person in existence. Therefore, He is more worthy of interest and attention and admiration and enjoyment than all persons and all realities put together, including the entire universe.