

A Choice to Be Just

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Jeremiah 7:3

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 7:1-15

ALTHOUGH GOD HAS MANY attributes, justice is a foundation principle upon which he deals with all intelligent beings. The Scriptures testify concerning the Heavenly Father that “justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.”—Ps. 89:14

Prior to the fall of Judah to Babylon, Jeremiah was commissioned by the Lord to deliver a message to the people of Jerusalem at the gate of the Temple.

(Jer. 7:1,2) In the words of our Key Verse, the prophet declared that God would not bring the promised judgment if Judah would repent in words and deeds.

“Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour,” continued Jeremiah, “Then will I cause you to dwell in this place . . . for ever and ever.”—vss. 4,5,7

The depth of Judah’s unrighteous conduct included mistreatment of the weak and defenseless members of society, acts of murder, idolatrous worship, and committing adultery. Even though these deplorable practices were rampant throughout the nation, God was willing to extend mercy because of his great love, if the people had demonstrated a spirit of genuine repentance.

Unfortunately, the Jews ignored God's message to them through Jeremiah. They instead hearkened to false prophets, who encouraged them to believe that engaging in the various abominable rituals and obligations associated with worship at the Temple would give them immunity from the foretold punishment for their wickedness.—vss. 6-11

Prior to the erection of the Temple at Jerusalem during the reign of Solomon, the center of religious worship was at Shiloh, where the Tabernacle of Meeting and the altar of God remained for many years. Nevertheless, because of Israel's iniquity, Shiloh was destroyed even though the Ark of the Covenant had resided at that location. (Ps. 78:58-60) The lesson of Shiloh, therefore, was given by the Prophet Jeremiah as an example of how God would bring a similar judgment against the people of Judah in Jerusalem, because the people ignored the Word of God which exhorted them to repent of their evil ways.—Jer. 7:12-15

After Jeremiah concluded speaking the words of the Lord at the Temple gates, God informed him not to pray for the people who continued in their abominable, idolatrous worship and refusal to receive correction. Their obstinacy would result in a terrible slaughter, and ultimately the land would be left desolate.—vss. 16-34

Since the time that Israel was conquered by Babylon, well before Christ's First Advent when he offered himself to the Jews as their King, they have continuously been under the domination of foreign powers, until the middle of the twentieth century. Even today, after being reestablished in their own land as a sovereign people, the countries that surround them are generally hostile opponents, desirous of destroying them.

We are thankful, however, that under the provisions of the New Covenant, Israel will finally be at peace. With God's law inscribed in the hearts of the Jewish people, they shall fully return to divine favor, walk in God's ways and experience lasting blessings.—Jer. 31:31-34 ■