

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Trusting in the Temple

Yahweh (the LORD) sent Jeremiah to what seems, to the casual observer, to be a most unlikely mission field. He told the prophet to go to the gate of the temple of Yahweh to proclaim His word to the people of Judah as they entered in to worship Him:

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

Yahweh told Jeremiah to call upon the worshippers to “amend” their ways and doings. That is another way of saying that the people of Judah needed to repent of their worshipping practices:

- 3 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

In other words, Yahweh told Jeremiah to stand at the entrance to the place the worshippers believed to be the headquarters of their religion. They thought that the temple was a holy and sacred place. When put in a modern perspective, it was as though Yahweh told his prophet to stand at the entrance of a great temple or cathedral of a large church organization and tell the people to repent of the very worshipping practices for which they were entering in to perform. We can only imagine the unpopularity of such a calling as was given to Jeremiah!

While the people had apparently been told over and over again by their leaders to put their faith in the temple of Yahweh, they were trusting in “lying words:”

- 4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. -Jeremiah 7

While proclaiming that they were entering the temple to worship Yahweh, they were actually on their way to perform the very things which He hated. It was not a place where the Word of God was proclaimed. Instead, the prophets and priests had changed it into the center of

abominable worship practices. They brought in all kinds of ungodly rituals and customs, which they claimed to be part of the worship of Yahweh. These included worshipping Baal, as well as the goddess (the grove or asherah), often as the sun and the moon. They also worshipped the planets and all the host of heaven in the temple of Yahweh (see 2 Kings 23:3-6).

Even though Yahweh continually warned His people to hear His word, they rejected His warning. He told the people of Judah, “I called you, but ye answered not:”

- 13 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; -Jeremiah 7

They loved His temple, but they hated His word. Therefore, Yahweh said He would destroy the temple and cast the people of Judah out of His sight:

- 14 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.
- 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, *even* the whole seed of Ephraim. -Jeremiah 7

He finally gave up on Judah. Once Yahweh had decided to cast His judgement, it was too late to even pray for them:

- 16 Therefore 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. -Jeremiah 7

Even though Yahweh had patiently warned Judah, His patience ended as they continued in their practice of devoting their time and energy into making sacrificial cakes and into pouring out drink offerings to worship the goddess, which was known as the “queen of heaven:”

- 17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?
- 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. -Jeremiah 7

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Trusting in the temple and in the rituals of the religion which they had devised, Judah had actually separated themselves from Yahweh. He had already rejected the northern kingdom of Israel for inventing their own religious practices, which He hated:

- 21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. -Amos 5

Even the songs which Israel had created and offered in worship were seen to Yahweh as objectionable noise:

- 23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. -Amos 5

Yahweh destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel for their false worship practices. Now He is telling Judah that they have made the temple, which was the house called by His name, a “den of robbers.” He warned Judah that they should recall what had happened to Israel:

- 11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD.
12 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. -Jeremiah 7

In His anger against their profaned worship practices, Yahweh finally destroyed Judah’s places of worship:

- 6 And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as *if it were of a garden*: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. -Lamentations 2

While the people believed the temple, or tabernacle, and the meeting places to be holy sanctuaries, Yahweh “abhorred” them. They were disgusting to Him:

- 7 The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made

a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast. -Lamentations 2

Even though the destroyed temple was eventually rebuilt by Judah, it likewise became the seat of misguided worship. As Yahshua (Jesus) entered the temple, He saw the same thing that Yahweh had seen in the first temple. He called it a “den of thieves:”

- 12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. -Matthew 21

While the people were trusting in a physical temple, Yahweh showed them through a prophesy about one named Joshua (Yahshua) that the true temple would be built by one named the BRANCH:

- 11 Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;
12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:
13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. -Zechariah 6

Yahshua told the Jews that he would show them a sign:

- 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?
21 But he spake of the temple of his body. -John 2

While the Jews were trusting in a temple which had been built with hands, Yahshua said that He would raise Himself up as the temple. Some Jews reported that they had heard Him say that He would destroy the temple made by hands and build up another one made without hands:

- 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. -Mark 14

While many today are trusting in the temple and even looking forward to rebuilding the temple with their own hands, God reminds us of the heavenly temple:

- 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. -Revelation 21

There are temples made with hands, but the true temple is made without hands. In which temple should we trust?

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