

## **Dr. Allan MacRae: Jeremiah: Lecture 6**

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### **Assignment: Jer 18-20 Relate to Jeremiah's Personal Life [00:00]**

I'd like to give you the assignment for next time now. It is only a very simple question about 3 chapters, Jeremiah 18-20. Glance over them and merely answer this question. In those chapters I simply want you to list the verses that are particularly related to Jeremiah personally rather than to the entire nation and to mention any problems that occur to you. Perhaps it will all be perfectly clear and no problem will occur to you, then all you have to do is list the verses. I want verses that are related to Jeremiah personally; that is to say, if it is a prayer by Jeremiah rather than his simply quoting what the nation as a whole would say, record it. If it is something that God says specifically to Jeremiah, I don't mean just if He says "speak these words or say this", but if He speaks something dealing particularly with Jeremiah personally, record that. Record what is related to Jeremiah--either his reaction, his prayer, how he felt about something, or what God said that was particularly about him, or to him, rather than to the nation as whole.

### **Sections of Jeremiah hard to isolate [2:06]**

Jeremiah is probably the most autobiographical of all the prophets. You get a few personal glimpses of Isaiah in the book of Isaiah. Here and there you get definite glimpses of some of his activities. You don't get much specifically about his feelings, and I can't think of anything that God says specifically to Isaiah except by way of telling him to do something, to bring His message home to people, or what to say. But in Jeremiah you have a great deal about his relationship to God and God's relationship to him. I don't ask you to study thoroughly those verses for this particular assignment, but as you read them, do they seem to you to raise some difficult problem? Now if they should, just mention what the problem is.

As for the assignment for today, I think most everybody did quite well on it. I don't think we need to discuss it at this time further, but we may touch on it a little as we come to those chapters. We were speaking last time about what I called section 4. It is very hard to divide the book of Jeremiah up into specific sections. Isaiah falls very naturally into a number of definite sections, rather sharply separated from other sections, but Jeremiah doesn't. And, of course, we have discussed the way that the book was put together, and we've noticed something of the reason for that; but in addition to that, there is the situation in which Jeremiah found himself as he brought a very unpopular message to the people. He sought various ways of making the message clear, and he saw himself burdened and overwhelmed--by not only the terrible message he had to give--but also by the great hostility of so many of the people, even of the great religious leaders that he thought would stand with him.

### **Jer 7 – Message at the Temple [3:08]**

There are rather rapid changes from one section to another, from one small part to another in the book. And so I rather roughly listed four sections up to the end of chapter six. And as I mentioned at the end last time, we would now look at section five as I would call it, the "Message at the Temple", which would run from 7:1 to 8:17. This message does not differ a great deal, in general, from previous messages and from following messages, but it is set apart by that specific introduction, which says that he is to go to the Temple and stand there at the gate of the Temple and to proclaim the Lord's message. And that is said not merely as showing us the certain circumstances under which Jeremiah spoke, but also to show that his attention is now being very specifically called to the religious life of the people. It is being called to their attitude and their attitude toward the Temple.

**Problem of Atheism not in ancient world but Self-sufficiency was [4:11]**

Now, there were situations in Jerusalem at that time, when Judah was very different from our situation today. In fact, in all of the ancient world as far as we know, at that time, there was nothing comparable to what we find so widespread today, the attitude of denying the very existence of God, the attitude of thinking that man is able to control everything himself, and therefore doesn't need any supernatural; or the attitude which has been so often cultivated in our schools over the last several decades that life is all a series of accidents, that there is no purpose in it, that there is no great Creator who has established and controls things, but things just happen by chance. I think it is very unfortunate that the term "evolution" has come to be widely used. It is, I think, one of Satan's clever schemes to divert people from a real understanding of the situation because it leads many people to think that if you don't believe in evolution, you believe in everything as being absolutely static and, of course, nothing can be further from the truth--either of life or of the Bible. You find that the Bible is a book of action, a book of change, and life has many changes in it, also. There are limits to these changes, but there are changes. And so it's very natural and easy for us to speak of the evolution of your thoughts and the evolution of your development and so on.

Change is a common factor in life, but what is distinctive about the teaching of evolutionary theory is the belief that there is no purpose in anything. That was the whole point of Darwin's theory: that life is purely accidental; that by a series of accidents everything that is in the world could have come into existence. For modernists, it's all just accident anyway and, therefore, you might as well give free reign to your impulses and feelings and whatever happens to come along. But that attitude was seldom, if ever, found in the ancient world. But that attitude that demands self-sufficiency is very, very widespread today.

### **Problem of Ceremonialism [6:16]**

Now we find this attitude dealt with in the Scripture. We find much in the Scripture that gives us the answer to our origins, but it is not stressed or brought into clear relief because it was not a major problem the prophets had to face directly. In chapter 7 then, Jeremiah is dealing not with the problem of atheism and unbelief; he is dealing with the problem of those who claim to be believers in God, but who ignore God's commands and who live their lives the way they feel inclined to instead of trying to follow God's laws. But who would think by performing ceremonies, or by going through certain forms, or by saying certain words, they can get protection and safety? And of course, that also is a very widespread attitude today, although it's not so prominent today because of the great hold that atheism and evolution have on our periodicals and on all our media, in general. But there are still a great number of people in the world, and great numbers in this country, who believe in the existence of God and think if they go through certain ceremonies, if they say certain words, if they do certain particular things which they think of as almost magical, they can think they can find satisfaction and salvation.

### **Temple is Not Going to Deliver You--Deception [7:32]**

And so, here Jeremiah is commanded to stand at the gate of the Lord's house and to proclaim this message. The Lord says in verse 4, "Do not trust in deceptive words and say 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.'" Well those are true words, so how were they deceptive? This was the Temple of the Lord, very definitely. And so we must realize that the word "deceptive" as we use it today tends to mean something that tells you what is untrue. But the word "deception," or "deceive," as used in the Scripture--while it has an element of that meaning in it--quite generally is more apt to have as a central idea that of leading you into what you should not do. Leading you to take an attitude that is unwarranted.

Leading you to do what is wrong. It is deceiving you in the sense of leading you astray. These words are absolutely true, but truth misused can be very deceptive. Truth misused can lead astray. And these words are deceptive words when they lead people to think that the fact that this is God's Temple, in and of itself, will give them protection and deliverance. The Temple of the Lord and all its ceremonies, and everything is associated with it in the physical realm, simply should represent to our mind something that is vital in the spiritual realm. The Temple represents something of God's truth, but in itself it has nothing in which we can put our trust or our faith. And so he says, "Don't trust in these deceptive words. 'This is the Temple of the Lord'". The fact is, it is indeed the temple of the Lord, but that's not going to deliver you; that's not going to give you protection; that's not going to make your lives worthwhile in this life or in the next. All the ceremonies that you could possibly do will not mean anything unless they represent truth, unless they represent a heart relation to God. And so Jeremiah stresses that a good bit here.

### **Actions over religious words [9:38]**

In a time of trouble, people turn to the supernatural. They turn to looking to God for deliverance. Even if they have always declared they don't believe anything, yet when trouble comes, almost everyone turns to some sort of supernatural and looks to it for deliverance. And so, in this time, when the forces were gathering around which would eventually destroy the nation of Judah, the people tended to go to the Temple more than they had. They tended to talk more about religious matters than they had. But as Jeremiah points out here, that is absolutely worthless unless it affects their lives, unless it shows itself in what they do. No amount of words or saying things is going to deliver them.

You can say, “Oh my there’s hell ahead, there’s misery, there’s eternal suffering if you don’t believe in Christ”. And somebody gets real frightened and says, “Alright I believe in Christ. I will accept Christ.” Well, if they are merely trying to get the deliverance by saying certain words, it means absolutely nothing. The words have to represent a heart attitude, an attitude of repenting of one’s sins and of realizing that there’s no hope in oneself, but that there is the free offer, the free gift of the grace of God. It is freely offered to all, but must be accepted and received in sincerity and in truth and not merely a matter of saying certain words. And so this is the central point of this section, like verse 9 says, "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods you’ve not known, and then come and stand before me in this house which bears my name and say, 'We are safe'? Has this house, which bears my name, become a den of robbers to you? Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my name and see what I did to it." Now Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was, the place where the people were to come to worship God, and you remember that when they turned to wickedness, God enabled the Philistines to defeat them. And then the Israelites took the Ark of the Covenant out, thinking that it would guarantee them deliverance. They had this sacred thing with them, they must win now. God, however, permitted them to be completely defeated.

### **Shiloh was not delivered [12:17]**

We are not specifically told in the historical books about the destruction of Shiloh, but we are told about the great defeat of the people, about the deaths of their leaders, about how the Ark was in the hands of the Philistines for a time. Then later it was brought back but was never returned to Shiloh. We don’t find Shiloh mentioned again in the historical books and so we wonder, “What happened to Shiloh?” And when we get into the Prophets, we find this

statement, “Go to Shiloh and see what I did”. It was obvious to people living then what had happened, that Shiloh had simply become a ruin even though that’s not specifically mentioned earlier.

We shouldn’t expect the Scripture to tell us everything, we shouldn’t expect it to tell us everything even that is important. Often, we have to gather things by inference as we do here. But in the Prophets, where we find them saying, “Go to the place in Shiloh, go and see what happened”, it’s perfectly obvious then that there had been a terrible destruction in Shiloh and that it had never been rebuilt.

### **Excavation of Shiloh [1929] [13:20]**

When I was in Palestine in 1929, I don’t say Israel because there was no Israel at that time; that time it was Palestine, a British Mandate. And when I was there, I saw two Danish archeologists, one of them who was tremendously interested in ancient civilizations, and he was very anxious to discover anything he could about ancient civilizations. There are many in archeology who are like that. It is purely a matter of interesting study, and I fear that most of the organizations that are now working in archeology are largely headed by people of that type. There’s a tendency now, just in recent years, to try and get away from talking about biblical archeology because what they’re interested in is the archeology of the history of ancient times, what happened then, and they tend to dismiss the idea of “biblical archaeology.” They get away a little ways from biblical archaeology and then they come right back because biblical archeology is easy to raise money for and there are many who will give money to have an excavation to learn more about the Bible. But to give money simply to learn about ancient times, there aren’t so many. And yet the men who are doing archaeology, to a large extent, are simply interested in ancient civilizations, and they are disappointed by the fact that their support largely comes from

people who are interested in the discovery of matters relating to the Bible.

But these two archeologists, one as I said, was very interested in ancient times, I don't know whether he was a Christian or not; he may have been a very ardent Christian for all I know, but at least he was not primarily interested in learning about the Bible, while the other was a very earnest Christian man who wanted to find the place where the Tabernacle had been, and perhaps some remains of it. And that's what he wanted to find. They had gotten a permit to excavate there and they had dug down and they found a Byzantine church, which had a wonderful and beautiful mosaic floor. And this floor had all these little pieces of mosaic in it and the man who was so interested in the Bible wanted to cut through that and get underneath and see if we could find out where the Tabernacle was. But the other man said, "Oh, but look what we have learned about Byzantine history, Byzantine art, Byzantine life." And then, of course, they had permission from the government to excavate, but the director of antiquity said, "Oh you can't bulldoze an important church from the fourth century AD here". This was information, and it would take them two to three years of earnest work to pick up and examine carefully and study every detail of that before they could get below. And the man who was interested in the Bible lost heart in that, and the other one became indignant at him, and the whole thing stopped. I understand it's just being started again in attempt to excavate Shiloh now in hopes of finding something out about the Tabernacle. I haven't heard whether the Byzantine church has been carefully dug up and examined as yet or not. But, maybe one of these days we will have physical evidence to relate concerning what Jeremiah here could simply say, "Just go to Shiloh and look at and see what is there."



### **East & West Berlin [16:47]**

There are many places where we could go now and see where there has been a mining camp, for instance, that is now abandoned, and you'll see the old houses or something like that. But the most important things of today, we don't have much left to show. When I was in Berlin in 1947, and there you go down street after street, just one great big heap of ruins after another, just utter desolation. Frightful condition. But when I was there just a few years later, you would see the wall there separating it from communist East Berlin, and beyond the wall you could see ruins, which were left for half a block at that time, but West Berlin had been completely rebuilt. You would never dream that there had been anything wrong there except the great beautiful memorial church, the memorial church to the first emperor of modern Germany. That church, I had attended service there when I was a student, and it was a very, very beautiful modern type of church, quite different from the old cathedrals in the area, but during the war, one whole half of the church was completely reduced to ruins by the bombs. On the other side there was one high part standing up and the rest just ruins. They had torn down all except this one thing standing up there gauntly to remind you of what had been. Now whether that's still there, I don't know. But, of course, in ancient times, when there were maybe a sixth as many people in the world, maybe a sixtieth as there are today, why there was plenty of room, and instead of rebuilding, people simply moved to another place.

### **Trusting in God not Shiloh [18:24]**

And so you have this, "Go to Shiloh and see what happened." This was the place where God made a dwelling for His name. It was the place where the Tabernacle was. It was a place of where the Word of God was proclaimed and sent out through the land. But He says in verse 14, "What I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears My Name, the Temple you are

trusting, the place I gave to you and your fathers, I will thrust you from my presence just as I did all your brothers, the people of Ephraim.” And so, there is much in this section of Jeremiah stressing the importance of our putting our trust in reality, in the unseen God, and in His relation to us and not in material things, nor in forms or ceremonies.

And it is really sad how often people will compromise on all the major tenets of the faith, but they will stand rigidly on some matter of ceremony, or form, or some observant. And I think that’s one thing God wants us to learn is that all ceremonies, all religious objects, are merely for the purpose of reminding us or bringing something to our mind, and they are no inherent value within themselves. But this is a very hard thing for people to come to fully realize.

### **Jer 7:21 and interpreting things in context (irony) [19:41]**

Now, in verses 21 and following, here we have verse 22 that critics have seized upon, and it is interesting to notice the difference between the NIV translation of it and the King James. I think I’ll read you the King James first. This is Jeremiah 7:21 where he naturally goes on from speaking about a place like Shiloh to speaking about a ceremony, and he says in verse 21, “Thus saith the God of Israel, the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Put your burnt offerings onto your sacrifices and eat flesh.” Now there’s a command in the Scriptures. Does that mean the most important thing to do is to perform ceremonies? Well, you have to read it in context and you’ll find that is the very opposite of what he’s saying. But it is a reminder of the fact that writing is merely a way of representing what is said, and what is said is not merely words, but it is accent, it is emphasis, it is expression. And it is difficult to express all this in print. In print, we have punctuation marks. They did not have those in ancient times. You have to have context to interpret a sentence, particularly if you can’t see the person speaking and listen to the precise tone of his voice. Here if you take the verse alone, it would be a fine verse to express the great

importance of sacrifice. Jeremiah says, “Put your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat, eat flesh”. That means eat the sacrificial things. But the emphasis, the tone of his voice was, “Do this all you want and what good does it do you”. That’s obvious from the next verse, so we must never take a verse out of context and say “Thus saith the Lord”. You can take a verse and find a wonderful expression of God’s will in it, but you must be sure that it truly represents what the word is and that the sentence is in context. Otherwise, you can be greatly misled by quoting any one verse.

### **Jer 7:22 and Leviticus [21:45]**

And so he finishes this with the words in verse 22, “For I speak 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 I commanded them saying 'obey my voice and I will be your God and you shall be my people and walk ye in all the ways I have commanded you that it may be well unto you.’” And you see how it contradicts the plain, simple translation of verse 21, and makes it plain that in that verse there is a tone that says, “Oh, you go ahead and do this. What good will it do you?” That is the tone of it. Verse 21 would give an idea utterly contrasted with the rest, but then you take verse 22. And he says, “I speak not to your fathers nor commanded them in the day I brought them out of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, obey my voice and walk in all the ways I commanded you.” Well, there are some among the higher critics who say, “Here is clear proof that the book of Leviticus was not written until after the exile. Because Leviticus says that as they came out into the wilderness, God commanded all that detailed account of sacrifices that they were to perform in the book of Leviticus, and also to some extent in Exodus and touched upon in Numbers and

Deuteronomy. But here it says, God said, "I did not speak to your fathers or command them when I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices."

### **Understanding Jer 7:22 in light of its context [23:22]**

Now, of course, if you want to try to build just on a few words you say, "In the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, no God didn't speak to them on that day about sacrifice, He did it a few months later", that would clearly be a possible understanding, but one that no sensible person would take from the passage. "In the day I came out of Egypt," here is clearly not a 24 hour day. It clearly refers to the whole period of the coming out of Egypt. And, of course, if it did mean the 24 hour day, how about the killing of the firstborn in Egypt? They were each to sacrifice a lamb. Was that not the very day they came out of Egypt, or was that a couple days before? So, you read these words here as cold print, and they seem sharply to contradict the Pentateuch, and the higher critics have seized upon it and say everything about sacrifice in the Pentateuch comes from a later time. And who says that no part of the Bible contradicts any other part. Well, the Bible, like anything else, is full of contradictions if you can take a few words out of context, but if you take it as a whole and try to understand it, you find that when he says, "I did not speak to them concerning that but concerning this," he is meaning, "I was not putting my stress then on the performance of sacrifices or the carrying out of specific actions of ceremonial type, but the big stress was on the personal relationship to God and the carrying out of His commandments," and the ceremonies given there were to give them certain truths, driving certain truths into their minds, and ceremonies have an important place in this.

### **Jer 7:22 Translations and Interpretation (NIV & KJV) [25:08]**

Now, you read that verse in the New International Version, and it is interesting to see how they have translated it. Verse 22, the NIV says, "For when I brought your forefathers out of

Egypt and spoke to them, I did not *just* give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command, 'Obey me and I will be your God and you will be my people.'"

One little word, "just," of four letters inserted, but it makes a big difference in the interpretation, in the meaning. Unfortunately, those four words do not occur specifically in the Hebrew, and so we have to say that the translators of the NIV felt that those words are implied and that to make a proper translation of the verse, to give you the idea what is meant there, it is necessary to insert those words. Of course, if it was the KJV, they would have put the words in italics. I don't know whether the NASB has inserted something like that and put it in italics, or whether they have simply translated the words that are there. But I believe the insertion of the word "just" is warranted by the context. The word "just" is inserted, and it simply says "I did not just speak to you about this". And I think that is clearly what is meant: God's emphasis was not totally on ceremony, otherwise, you have this passage sharply contradicting the rest of the Scripture. And of course we do not believe that there is a contradiction. If you take the whole trend of Jeremiah, it is on the individual's relationship to the Lord; there's no teaching in it that you can win your way to heaven by works, by performance, by a good life. There's no stress on that, but the great stress is on the turning away from God and following their own impulses and desires. But here Jeremiah stresses the fact that religious observances will not in themselves, save the people. I don't argue with the interpretation that the NIV gives, but we've lost the sense, I think, the sense of irony by adding "just" to what the Lord says. He's speaking by way of irony. I believe that to say it in a certain tone will give a better representation of the meaning than to insert the word "just". But I don't know how you're going to represent that in cold print unless you put a footnote in, and they didn't want to put interpretative notes in. So, I think that the tone is perhaps closer to the original meaning than putting in the word "just". But the word "just", does

get a lot nearer to the meaning than having it in cold print without any indication.

And so, I'm not sure whether I would have voted for or against the NIV if I had been in that particular committee that voted on the translation of Jeremiah. It may very well be by a vote of 5 to 4 that it was decided to put "just" in it. And that is true of any translation that is done by a group. You don't know whether the whole group agreed to a reading, or whether there was a slight majority in favor of it. But I think the thought of it is clear and I think it is a very important thought. Ceremonies are important, but they are not important in themselves. They are important in what they represent, and they are to drive home thoughts to our minds and to hold those thoughts before us so that we will have them in our consciousness. It is those thoughts that God wants to be there. And so, this is a passage then, which is showing the futility of ceremonies, religious buildings, or physical buildings, in bringing deliverance by themselves. But this passage is in no way against the observation of rituals and ceremonies that will drive home important thoughts to your mind.

### **Ceremony and Religious Expression [29:09]**

I think there is an important thing that many people don't realize: the great difference between the fact that the ceremonies in the Old Testament are given in such complete detail--exactly how to perform them--but then in the New Testament where it tells how Christians are to carry on their religious life, there is very little that describes how ceremonies are to be performed. And the whole Christian world was sharply divided into two parts by a dispute about the Lord's Supper in the time of the Reformation. As for the Lord's supper, there have been great disputes between parts of the Christian world over this particular ceremony but we have one sentence in the New Testament that makes it absolutely clear what the Lord wanted us to continue enacting the Lord's supper. As for Old Testament ceremonies, I believe that the

difference is that the Old Testament ceremonies looked forward to the life of Christ, and forward to what he would do on Calvary's cross, forward to the great events that people did not know in detail. They knew certain great truths about what God had in store, and therefore in order to bring various aspects of these truths before their minds, it was necessary to make sure that these ceremonies were carried on precisely. But now we look back at these events; we have full detail on how they occurred, and, therefore, it is not necessary to have so much detail in reminding us about them, and therefore in the New Testament ceremonies are briefly sketched, and often sketched in such a way that there can be a great variety in interpretation.

I know a church that practically divided once because some said that grape juice is not wine and when Jesus took this cup, it must have been wine. Thus, we must use fermented wine, too. And others said that is wrong; we must not; there's many a person that have a tendency to alcoholism and it is not fair to put the temptation before him of drinking it in the ceremony. Grape juice represents the blood of Christ just as well as the wine does. Well, I don't think the Lord wants us to split churches or to divide Christians over forms and ceremonies, but He wants us to be very, very careful that we get the realities clearly expressed and clearly followed.

### **Problem of Trusting in Words not in God of the Word [31:23]**

And so in this passage [Jer. 7:21ff], He is stressing the wrong of putting your trust in such words as "This is the Temple of the Lord". God can cast away His temple and He will if you put trust in it. When the Israelites came out of Egypt and they were in the wilderness and the poisonous serpents came upon them, and bit them and many died, God commanded that they should take a brazen (brass) serpent and put it on a pole, and whoever looked at the brazen serpent on the pole would be restored from his illness. This served as an illustration of the spiritual fact that we must look to Christ, that there is nothing we can do to deliver ourselves

from our sin. We must look to Him and through His free grace, we find deliverance. And the brazen serpent was a very wonderful representative of God's marvelous grace to the Israelites and of our means of salvation. And yet we find that one of the good things that Hezekiah did was to take that brazen serpent and to grind it up and destroy it because the people were making it an object of worship in itself. And that which was a good thing, as a wonderful symbol of God's love and mercy, had become an idol, and so God destroyed it. And He wants us to tear down every idol throne, even if the idol throne at one time, properly understood, was actually something that was good and that carried a real purpose in God's economy.

### **Jer 8:11 and Post-Modern Culture [33:00]**

Now, I wish we had the time to go into more details in this section because it is a very important truth for our days. We should look at verse 11 of chapter 8. Verse 11 of chapter 8 says, "They dressed the wounds of my people". The NIV translates it, "As though it were not serious." Chapter 8, verse 11, the KJV translated it, "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly". I think the word "slightly" gets the thought across, "they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly." But I think the NIV gets the idea across a little more clearly, at least to people today. "They dressed the wound of my people as though it were not serious. Peace, peace they say when there is no peace." And that is a note that Jeremiah stresses quite frequently in his book, saying "peace, peace when there is no peace".

Of course, that is the one thing we are finding very commonly today in America. We are finding people who say, "What we want is peace, let's throw away all the weapons of war, let's simply have peace and it's good." God wants us to have peace, but we are present in a world where sin is all around. But we have no right to throw away the locks to our doors and to do away with our police departments, and then just look to God to protect us. He expects us to use



normal methods to protect us. And particularly, those who ignore sin ignore the needs of our hearts and simply try to heal our wounds lightly. In other words, they give us psychological methods of living a better life, or psychological counseling methods that would make us feel better, and so on. If they don't deal specifically with our sin and with the solution we find through Jesus Christ, they can be like putting a band-aid on a mortal wound. It may make it feel a lot better for awhile, but in the end we are far worse off than as if we did not have it. This "peace, peace when there is no peace" is a thing that Jeremiah returns to again in later passages, in sometimes almost the same words as here.

### **Jer 8:13 Economic Results of Misplaced Trust [35:14]**

In chapter 8, verse 13, he refers to the economic result of the people's turning from God, "I will take away their harvest, declares the Lord. There will be no grapes on the vine. There will be no figs on the trees and their leaves will wither. What I have given them will be taken from them." He wants us to realize that everything we have is by His mercy and given to us from Him, and when it is taken away, it may be because of our poor management, but it may be because God is trying to drive us to think about the things that are vital, and to see where we have sinned and to look to Him for remedy.

### **Jer 8:18-9:17 Divine Sorrow and Necessary Punishment [35:54]**

Now I think I'll go on to what I'll call the sixth section, which is "Divine Sorrow and Necessary Punishment," in 8:18 to 9:17. Now, in a way, I hate to start a section there because that first word is one that is very difficult to know exactly how to translate. But I think the idea is quite clear, even though it is difficult to know the exact interpretation. It begins in the NIV, "Oh my comforter in sorrow". And on the word "comforter" there is a footnote, "the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain". The King James renders it, "When I would comfort

myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me”. The word “when” is in italics and it is pretty difficult to know the exact meaning, but the general thought is certainly quite clear. Jeremiah is looking to the One from whom he should find comfort, but he is finding it difficult to be comforted because of the situation he is facing.

**Jer 8:18-9:17 Who is Speaking God or Jeremiah? [37:00]**

In this section, 8:18 to 9:17, is one in which it is difficult at times to be sure whether it is God speaking or whether it is Jeremiah expressing his sorrow. Certainly, God isn’t saying, “Oh my comforter in sorrow,” or “when I would comfort myself against sorrow”. It is Jeremiah reacting to the situation where God has sent him to carry this message, which is so disliked by the people. He says, “Listen to the cry of my people from a land far away. Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her king no longer there?” When he refers to the land far away, the people in the land far away, does this give us some clue as to when this message was given? Was it during Josiah’s reign? If that is so, he’d be referring to the people from the northern kingdom, who are in the land far away, but whom, as we have already seen in an earlier section, were still God’s people just as the people in Judah were. Or, is this a section that was written later, after a small group had been taken to Egypt, as you remember when the king was carried off, and a larger group taken to Babylon in the fourth year of the reign of King Jehoiakim. Is he referring to those people from Judah who have been taken to exile, or to the great numbers from the kingdom of Israel who were already in exile? At any rate, there are people in exile when he writes this who are God’s people and who are crying to God for help. And so he refers to those people, but his message is primarily to the people still in Jerusalem and in the towns round about it, towns in the kingdom of Judah.

**Time of harvest has passed [38:45]**

And he pictures God as saying, “Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols, and then they answer, ‘the harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.’” I have heard very fine evangelistic messages given on this verse, and it is certainly not taking it out of context to use it for an evangelistic message. I think it is a warning to us at all times in our lives, very good thing for you not to have to say the day before exams start, “The harvest is passed, the summer has ended, and we’re not saved.” It is a good thing to realize that God wants us to look ahead and not to say, “Well, I will look to the Lord before I die, I’ll turn to him. But now, I want to enjoy myself.” I will work very hard the week before exams start, but just now, I might as well postpone some of these things until the big rush then. It is a verse that can have many applications, but it is the verse that I think is good for us to have in mind to use to remind us and to remind others that now is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time. And there are many things that can be postponed, but there are other things that shouldn’t be--particularly, the important matters in our relationship to God. Now I’ve given you the assignment for next time and we’ll continue then.

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