

DO NOT TRUST IN DECEPTIVE WORDS October 15, 2006 **Jeremiah 7.1-29**

Jeremiah was born (646 B.C.) in the last decade of King Manasseh's rule (697-642 B.C.). Manasseh was the worst king Judah ever had.

"But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites." 2 Kings 21.9

This is the world in which Jeremiah learned to walk and talk and play. No worse environment in which to raise a child can be imagined. It was a slum society. Fifty-five years of such misrule brought the faith close to oblivion.

*"The wicked freely strut about
when what is vile is honored among men."* Psalm 12.8

Josiah's Reforms

Under King Josiah (640-609 B.C.) began one of the most remarkable chapters in the story of these people, who are our ancestors. In the eighteenth year of his reign (622 B.C.), he began what was to be a significant reform in Israel's worship (2 Kings 22.3-23.25; 2 Chronicles 34.8-35.19). Josiah began to ask some questions: How could a better rule be established? What could he do as king to recover health and goodness in the garbage dump that was Jerusalem? He had to start someplace. He started at the place of worship.

Psalm 122

A Ringside Seat

Jeremiah had a ringside seat in the arena of this reform. It is hardly conceivable though that he remained a spectator. He was not the sort of person to stand on the sidelines. He helped. He participated in the reform with his preaching. In Jeremiah 2-6 we have fragments of his sermons that are really accusations of covenant unfaithfulness.

Jeremiah 2.9, 13, 17-19; 3.2, 22-25; 4.1-4, 4.30; 6.13-16

Only Skin Deep Reform

It didn't take Jeremiah long to realize that the reform was only skin deep. Everything had changed, but nothing had changed. The outward changes had been enormous; the inward changes were imperceptible.

Jeremiah 7.1-29

This sermon by Jeremiah is so important to us. It is especially important in times of success, when everything is going well, when the church is admired and church attendance swells. We think everything is fine because the appearances are fine and the statistics are impressive.

Images without Substance

It is not enough to be in the right place; it is not enough to say the right words; it is never enough until we are walking with God 24 hours a day everywhere we go, with everything we say an expression of love and faith.