

# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

## LYING WORDS: JEREMIAH 7-10



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*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Lying Words: Jeremiah 7-10*

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## Introduction to Jeremiah 7-10

How had the people of Judah and Jerusalem come to the place where God was preparing to visit them with wrath? They had strayed from Him and embraced the false deities of the surrounding nations. But it wasn't entirely their fault.

It began with their leaders. They would not listen to the prophets God sent to them. They disobeyed God's Word and turned to the lies of paganism, telling the people they could still worship God and enjoy all the benefits of Baal and his ilk.

By lying words the priests and leaders of Jerusalem and Judah had brought the nation to the brink of destruction. It was Jeremiah's unpleasant duty to get in their faces and call them to repent.

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## 1 Where to Walk

*Pray Psalm 33.13-17.*

The LORD looks from heaven;  
He sees all the sons of men.  
From the place of His dwelling He looks  
On all the inhabitants of the earth;  
He fashions their hearts individually;  
He considers all their works.  
No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;  
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.  
A horse is a vain hope for safety;  
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.

*Sing Psalm 33.13-17.*

(Truro: [\*Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns\*](#))

God from His throne looks down on men; He knows our works and made our hearts.  
Let not Your Church, let none depend on strength or skill or human arts.

*Read Jeremiah 7.1-27; meditate on verses 23-27.*

*Prepare.*

1. What did God call on the people to do?
2. Why were the people being hypocritical?

*Meditate.*

Jeremiah's fourth message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem was delivered "in the gate of the LORD's house" (v. 1). Try to imagine this setting. The people were gathering for worship. They were doing what they'd done every Sabbath for as long as they could remember, assembling at the temple for offerings, prayers, singing, and everything that goes with worshipping the Lord.

As they went in, instead of a smiling usher, handing them a bulletin, they were confronted by Jeremiah, threatening the wrath of God, denouncing their worship, and calling on them to amend their ways (vv. 2, 3). The people were trusting in the externals of religion: "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these" (v. 4). They were going through the motions of religion, but their daily lives were marked by sinful and idolatrous ways (vv. 5-10, 17-19). This was the kind of situation Asaph had warned about in Psalm 50, many years before Jeremiah's day. By their hypocrisy, the people had made the house of God a "den of thieves" (v. 8) – and *they* were the thieves, stealing God's glory by their grossly hypocritical lives.

Unless the people changed the paths they walked, they would not be allowed to continue dwelling in the land God had given them (vv. 3, 7). As God had dismantled the tabernacle at Shiloh, and replaced it with the temple, so now He would dismantle the temple, and cast the people out of His sight (vv. 12-15). A new "temple" would be coming, but only much later (cf. Jn. 2.19).

God instructed Jeremiah not to pray for the people (vv. 16-20). Prayer was of no use: His anger and fury were coming against them, "and it will burn and not be quenched" (v. 20).

God was not looking for "offerings or sacrifices" from His people – the mere externals of religion. He insisted that they listen to His Word and walk in the ways He reveals there (vv. 21-26). But they would not;

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and they would not listen to Jeremiah, either (v. 27). We can be certain that the prophet was beginning to be noticed, but not heard. Soon the powers-that-be would move to shut him up once and for all.

When people will not hear the Word of God, they don't become merely indifferent to it; they hate it.

*Reflect.*

1. Why is the outward practice of faith – going to church, being involved, worshiping, and so forth – not what God is seeking from His people?
2. What did God promise His people if they would obey Him (v. 23)? Why is that such an important promise?
3. Apparently, the people had committed a sin unto death, since God did not allow Jeremiah to pray for them (cf. 1 Jn. 5.16). What was their sin?

*He instructs both the people of Judea of that time and us today, who are seen to be constituted as the church. We are not to put our faith in the splendor of its buildings. Nor are we to put faith in its golden ceilings and decorated walls of marble. We are not to say "this is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." For the temple of the Lord is there where the true faith dwells, in holy living and the chorus of all the virtues. Jerome (347-420), Six Books on Jeremiah 2.32.2-4*

*Show me Your ways, O Lord, and I will walk in them today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 33.18-22.*

Seek the Lord for His grace, Presence, and help in all the work that lies ahead of you today.

*Sing Psalm 33.18-22*

**Psalm 33.18-22** (Truro: [\*Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns\*](#))

God watches those who fear His Name, who hope upon His grace and love;  
He keeps their souls from death and shame who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield; upon us let Your grace descend!  
We hope in You; to You we yield; we trust in Jesus to the end.

## 2 Truth Cast Away

*Pray Psalm 83.16-18.*

Fill their faces with shame,  
That they may seek Your name, O LORD.  
Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;  
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,  
That they may know that You, whose name alone *is* the LORD,  
*Are* the Most High over all the earth.

*Sing Psalm 83.16-18.*

(St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have not Known Thee as We Ought\*](#))

Fill with dishonor every face that they may seek Your Name, O Lord.  
Bring them to shame, dismay, and disgrace, and let them perish under Your Word,  
That they may learn Your infinite worth, O God Most High of all the earth!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 7.28-8.3*

*Prepare.*

1. Why did God instruct Jeremiah to cut off his hair?
2. What was the great sin of Topheth?

*Meditate.*

Once the nation had forsaken God's truth, they had no reliable anchor for their lives. With God's truth "cut off" from their mouths, there was nothing by which any behavior could be corrected, except whatever the leaders approved at any time (v. 28). And they were taking their cues from the surrounding nations, and had set up foreign gods within the temple precincts (v. 30).

God had Jeremiah cut off his hair and cast it away as a dramatic way of symbolizing what the people of Judah and Jerusalem had done with God's truth (v. 29). Following the lead of their unbelieving neighbors, the people of God sacrificed their own children in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, because they believed this would appease or please the false god Moloch. So many children had been sacrificed, that there was no longer any room to bury in that place (v. 32).

God had not authorized any of this; it had not even come into His heart (v. 31). But the people did it, going along with their unbelieving neighbors to get along on the issues of politics, mutual defense, trade, and so forth.

God's judgment would be terrible. His people would die in the land, their bodies left to the ravages of wild beasts (v. 33). Every remainder of happiness or mirth or of the familiar status quo would be eliminated, and the land would be left desolate (v. 34). Even the bones of their venerated ancestors would be disinterred and exposed to corruption by their enemies (8.1, 2). And all who remained of "this evil family" – the royal line of David – would be given over to death or driven into foreign lands (v. 3).

When people forsake the Law of God, they lose the ability to love anyone or anything but themselves (Matt. 12.24). They worship the god of self and convenience, and will do anything they think will keep those false deities happy. This was true in Jeremiah's day, and it's just as true in ours.

*Reflect.*

1. What kinds of ideas or other temptations draw us away from God's Word?

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2. Why was God's judgment going to be so severe against His people?

3. How can we know when we have begun to drift from God's Word?

*The wrath of the Lord, therefore, is just. It is kindled and poured out on a contemptuous and stiff-necked people who are unwilling to bear the words of God. Yet, as we said above, how God continued to send prophets to them all day long and even through the night! Jerome (347-429), Six Books on Jeremiah 2.42.1*

*Lord, don't let me drift from Your truth, but show me when I'm drifting so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 83.1-15.*

Pray that God would stay His hand of judgment against His Church, and that He would lead us to seek revival and renewal by His Word and Spirit.

*Sing Psalm 83.1-15*

**Psalm 83.1-15** (St. Chrysostom: [\*We Have not Known Thee as We Ought\*](#))

O God, do not be quiet now; do not be silent, nor be still!

See how Your foes erupt in a row and those who hate You chafe at Your will.

Shrewdly they plan, conspiring as one, against Your daughters and Your sons.

“Come, let us wipe them out,” they say. “Let Israel's name no more be heard!”

Bold they conspire to do us away, and covenant against You, O Lord.

Peoples and nations cast in their lot for this ambitious, wicked plot.

Deal with them, Lord, and bring them down, as You against old foes prevailed,

when You Midian cast to the ground and all her kings and princes assailed –

All who Your pastures sought to possess You brought to ruin and deep distress.

Make them like whirling dust, O God! Scatter them like the windblown chaff!

Rage like a fire consuming a wood, like flames that burn a mountain pass!

Blow like a tempest, bring them to harm, and terrify them with Your storm!

### 3 False Teaching

*Pray Psalm 12.6, 7.*

The words of the LORD *are* pure words,  
*Like* silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
Purified seven times.  
You shall keep them, O LORD,  
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

*Sing Psalm 12.6, 7.*

(Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined;  
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

*Read Jeremiah 8.4-17.*

*Prepare.*

1. What caused the people to turn away from God?
2. Why did the teachers turn away from God's truth?

*Meditate.*

The people of Judah and Jerusalem turned away from their natural course, which was to be worshipers and servants of God, Who had redeemed them. They were dumber than dumb animals in so doing (vv. 4-7). Every animal knows its natural course – how to build its nest, when to fly south, what to feed its offspring, and so forth. But God's people had "slidden back" into a "perpetual backsliding" (v. 4) because they failed to remember who they were.

How does that happen?

In this case – as in most others – false teachers turned the people of Judah and Jerusalem away from God and His Law. Why did they do this? Because it's what the people wanted to hear. It's what the people paid them to do. Instead of following the Word of God in their teaching, the scribes and priests and prophets followed the longings of the people, so that the people would support them generously (v. 10). And what the people wanted was to be something other than what God had saved them to be. They wanted to be like other nations – pagan nations. They turned, and their leaders turned to accommodate them. In so doing, they gave the people some comfort and hope (v. 11), but it was false and fleeting, and led the people away from God's holy and righteous and good Law into beliefs and practices that were shameful, abominable, and punishable (vv. 11-13).

And yet they continued coming before the Lord in assembly; and they continued believing their fortified cities would keep them safe from invasion (v. 14). Instead of peace and safety, they found bitterness (v. 14), trouble, fear, and pain (vv. 15-17).

When the people turned from God and His truth, so that they could be just like all the neighboring peoples around them, they and their leaders came under the wrath and judgment of God. Why should we think we are any different from them?

*Reflect.*

1. What kinds of things can draw us away from trusting in God and His Word?
2. What should we expect of those who have been entrusted with the ministry of the Word?

3. How can we know when we have begun to come under the discipline of the Lord?

*God, through Jeremiah, does not cease to reprove the hardheartedness of certain ones. Instead he says in this way: "When people fall, do they not get up again? If they go astray, do they not turn back? Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding? They have held fast to deceit. They have refused to return." God does not punish the sins in the sinner, if the neck of the sinner is not stiffened. Fulgentius of Ruspe (467-532), Letter 7.12*

*Keep me rooted and grounded in Your Word, Lord, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 12.1-5.*

Pray that God will bless and protect those who teach His Word, and that He will protect His Church from the lies of unbelief.

*Sing Psalm 12.1-5.*

**Psalm 12.1-5** (Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be; they who believe in Christ are few.  
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!  
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.  
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

## 4 Jeremiah's Sorrow

*Pray Psalm 13.1, 2.*

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my soul,

*Having* sorrow in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

*Sing Psalm 13.1, 2.*

(Melita: [\*Eternal Father, Strong to Save\*](#))

How long, O Lord, O Lord, how long will You forget me and my song?

How long will You conceal Your face and keep from me Your precious grace?

How long must I my soul consult? When shall my weary heart exult?

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 8.18-9.11.*

*Prepare.*

1. What's the cause of Jeremiah's sorrow?

2. How did the Lord respond to him?

*Meditate.*

We should not think of the prophets as callous, arrogant, or merely indignant. They loved God, and they loved His people. We see this in these verses, as Jeremiah is broken-hearted at the coming judgment of the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

He can fairly hear their cries from a distant land, crying out to return to their home (v. 19). No salvation is at hand, and no physician can heal their wounds (vv. 20-22). Their sorrow and suffering are inescapable.

Jeremiah longs for an ocean of tears to weep for his people (Jer. 19.1), for those who are slain, homeless, weary, and deep in sin (19.2). He wishes he could do something to shelter them from the Lord's judgment (v. 2), but he is already doing all he can for this adulterous and treacherous nation. God has to remind the prophet of why this is happening: The people have made their own sinful bed, and now they're having to lie in it (18.19b; 19.3-6, 11). Should He just stand by and do nothing to try to shake His people free from their sinful ways (19.7-9)? No, He must allow them to suffer the consequences of their foolish choices. They won't even be able to trust their closest friends (vv. 4, 5), and they will try to lie their way out of everything (vv. 5, 6).

Yes, Jeremiah knows this is the case (19.10); yet he can't not weep for them. Like Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem (Matt. 22.37, 38), and like we should weep for the lost people and wandering believers in our Personal Mission Field.

*Reflect.*

1. What is your attitude toward the lost people in your Personal Mission Field? How can you bring your attitude more into line with Jeremiah's?

2. Why does God allow us to suffer trials and difficulties? When we find ourselves in the midst of a trial, what should we do?

3. Jeremiah's weeping for the people of God takes the form of a dialog with God. What does this suggest to us?

*What should we do? Let us allow a spring of tears to flow every day, day and night. Let us, too, say with the weeping Jeremiah, the great prophet, "Who will give some water to my head, and a spring of tears to my eyes? I would weep for my sins day and night." Let us first of all confess our sins before this... which is full of terror and trembling tears. Let us invoke the goodness and mercy of our God, while we are in this exile of tears, before death overtakes us. Horsiesi (305-390), Instructions 1.3*

*Cleanse me of my sin, Lord, and use me today to...*

*Pray Psalm 13.3-6.*

Weep for your sins, and for the sins of God's people everywhere. Call on the Lord for cleansing and revival, and renew your trust and confidence in Him.

*Sing Psalm 13.3-6.*

**Psalm 13.3-6** (Melita: [Eternal Father, Strong to Save](#))

Exalt not, Lord, my enemy; Lord, hear my prayer and answer me!  
Give light unto my weary eyes; let not death claim me for its prize.  
Let not my foe rejoice to say that I have fallen in the way.

Yet I have trusted, Lord, in You; Your lovingkindness sees me through.  
My heart breaks forth in happy voice; in Your salvation I rejoice!  
Thus I will sing triumphantly: "My God has dealt full well with me!"

## 5 Who Is Wise?

*Pray Psalm 102.1-4.*

Hear my prayer, O LORD,  
And let my cry come to You.  
Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;  
Incline Your ear to me;  
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.  
For my days are consumed like smoke,  
And my bones are burned like a hearth.  
My heart is stricken and withered like grass,  
So that I forget to eat my bread.

*Sing Psalm 102.1-4.*

(Leominster: [\*Not What My Hands Have Done\*](#))

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!  
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!  
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.  
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 9.12-26.*

*Prepare.*

1. The “wise man” is mentioned twice in this passage, at the beginning and the end. What do we learn about wisdom?
2. What step did God take in these verses to heighten His people’s awareness of the coming judgment?

*Meditate.*

These verses make up a kind of *inclusio*, which is a literary device employed for emphasis. Note that the passage begins by asking a question: “Who is the wise man?” (v. 12) It ends with a word of counsel: “Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom” (v. 23). The focus of this passage is on wisdom, which comes with understanding (v. 12) and redounds to the knowledge and glory of God (v. 24). Jeremiah appeals to the sense of wisdom among the people, that they might desire to be wise and do the wise thing, before the judgment of God falls on them all.

The people have not acted wisely thus far, because they have left off God’s Law and given their hearts and minds to the false gods of the pagan nations (vv. 13, 14). That choice will lead to bitterness and destruction, unless the people repent (vv. 15, 16).

God commands Jeremiah to dramatize the urgency of this situation by hiring “mourning women” to lament the coming judgment (vv. 17-22). The mourning women were a kind of guild of professional mourners, who would weep and mourn and cry out in lamentation as they accompanied a funeral. Their purpose was both to empathize with those suffering a loss, and to call the community to join in that loss as well. Mourning women apparently passed their skills on to their daughters, to ensure continuity to their guild (v. 20). God instructed Jeremiah to hire this troupe of women (v. 17) to heighten and dramatize the severity of his preaching. He even gave them the script they were to use in their “skillful wailing” (vv. 18-22).

God wanted to make sure He had done everything possible to get the attention of His people, so that they would come to their senses, understand and be wise, and repent of their sinful ways. Then they would be truly wise, because they would know the Lord and give Him thanks and praise for His lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness (v. 24).

But the pericope ends on the same drumbeat of judgment, heightened once again by the inclusion of all the other peoples around Judah in the outpouring of God's wrath (vv. 25, 26). The call in the passage is for wisdom, but wisdom is not forthcoming. Therefore, judgment is sure.

We are not wise when we turn aside from God's Law and Word to our own best ideas about the way things ought to be (vv. 12-14). We should be warned, that God will no more sit by and watch us rob Him of His glory than He did with the people of Judah. If we do not want to come under the discipline of the Lord, we need to repent and return to the wise and righteous paths of the Lord (Heb. 12.3-11).

*Reflect.*

1. How can we grow in wisdom? Why should we want to grow in wisdom?
2. Why do we sometimes prefer our own best thoughts and judgments to the plain teaching of God's Word? How can we know when we're doing this?
3. What does it mean to "glory" in understanding and knowing the Lord?

*Our turning away from God is our own act, and this is evil will. But our turning to God is not possible, except he rouses and helps us, and this is good will. What do we have that we have not received? But if we received, why do we glory as if we had not received? Therefore, "he that glories must glory in the Lord." Augustine (354-430), On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism 2.31*

*Lead me in the wise path today, O Lord, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 102.12-28.*

Call on the Lord to revive you and all His people, to draw you deeper in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is eternal life (Jn. 17.3), and to use you to encourage your fellow believers in seeking the Lord.

*Sing Psalm 102.12-28.*

**Psalm 102.12-28** (Leominster: [Not What My Hands Have Done](#))

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.  
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!  
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones  
be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

Then let the nations fear the glory of the Lord!  
For He shall in His Church appear to heed our sighing words.  
Then let our children learn to praise the Lord above.  
He hears their groans and knows they yearn to dwell within His love.

Yet let us tell God's Name and praise His glorious grace;  
let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.  
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,  
our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.  
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.  
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.  
Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

## 6 God Great and Mighty

*Pray Psalm 145.1-3.*

I will extol You, my God, O King;  
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.  
Every day I will bless You,  
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.  
Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;  
And His greatness is unsearchable.

*Sing Psalm 145.1-3.*

(Brother James' Air: [\*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want\*](#))

I will extol You, God, my King, and ever praise Your Name!  
I bless You, Lord, for everything each day, and e'er the same!  
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 10.1-25.*

*Prepare.*

1. Why did Jeremiah mock the false gods of Judah?
2. In contrast to this, what did he say about God?

*Meditate.*

Jeremiah's next message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem aims right at the source of their problem: Faithless shepherds have led them to adopt and worship false gods, made by their own hands, which are incapable of doing anything for them.

This is how the Gentiles live, said Jeremiah, in the futility of their minds (vv. 1-3; cf. Eph. 4.17-19). They cut down a tree to fashion it into an idol, then they worship it. The idols can't speak. They can't move about. They have to be carried. They have no power to do either good or evil (vv. 4, 5). It is foolish and futile to devote oneself to such merely material gewgaws.

God, by contrast, is great and mighty. There is none like Him (v. 6). He rules the nations, though they all worship their own man-made idols (vv. 7-9). God is true and living and able to bring indignation and wrath against all who turn to vain idols (v. 10).

Jeremiah declares that God, not idols, have made heaven and earth (vv. 11, 12). God's voice rules all of creation (v. 13). Men are dull and foolish to worship statues they have themselves constructed; punishment form the Portion of Jacob and the Maker of all things is coming their way (vv. 14-16).

And it's coming to Judah as well, which will be wounded, plundered, and removed from their land (vv. 17-20). And why? Because "the shepherds have become dull-hearted" (v. 21). Their leaders caused them to turn from the clear and true Word of God to follow the vain imaginations of their hearts. And now God is coming to vindicate His rule over His people.

Jeremiah pleads with God to correct His people with justice, not anger, but to pour out His fury on the Gentiles, who "have eaten up Jacob, devoured him and consumed him, and made his dwelling place desolate" (vv. 23-25). While Jeremiah's preaching threatens the tearing down of Jerusalem, his compassionate praying reminds us of God's mercy and love for His people.

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*Reflect.*

1. People today devote themselves – time, effort, work, desire, and so forth – to many things other than God. Such as?
2. Why is it foolish and futile to devote ourselves thus to such things?
3. Why is God alone worthy of all our devotion and obedience?

*God, who made time, cannot be in time. Again, God cannot be imperfect, for a lesser being is plainly imperfect, seeing that it lacks somewhat whereby it could be made equal to a greater. This, then, is the teaching of our faith—that God is not evil, that with God nothing is impossible, that God does not exist in time, that God is beneath no being. Ambrose of Milan (333-397), *On the Christian Faith* 1.2.14*

*Lead and fill me today, Lord, so that I will declare Your praises and walk Your path as I...*

*Pray Psalm 145.10-21*

Praise the Lord for all His greatness, and resolve to speak His praise to someone today.

*Sing Psalm 145.10-21.*

**Psalm 145.10-21** (Brother James' Air: [\*The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want\*](#))

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord.  
Your reign we bless without restraint; Your power fills our words.  
Our children we shall educate in all Your splendor, Lord.

Your Kingdom evermore shall be; You reign forever, Lord!  
Your works You do so faithfully, according to Your Word.  
The falling You uphold and the oppressed You rescue, Lord!

The eyes of all look up to You to meet our needs each day.  
Open Your hand, provide the food we need, O Lord, we pray!  
Kindness and righteousness You do, O Lord, in every way!

Be near to all who call on You; all those who fear You, bless.  
Preserve all those whose love is true; save us in our distress.  
Our mouths will speak with praise of You; Your holy Name we'll bless!

## 7 Lying Words

*Pray Psalm 12.6, 7.*

The words of the LORD *are* pure words,  
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
Purified seven times.  
You shall keep them, O LORD,  
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

*Sing Psalm 12.6, 7.*

(Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined;  
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

*Review Jeremiah chapters 7-10; meditate on Jeremiah 7.8-11.*

*Prepare.*

1. How had the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem failed the people of God?
2. As the people turned from God, to what did they look for help and deliverance?

*Meditate.*

In his messages to God's people in this section, Jeremiah exposed the foolishness of their idolatry and the hypocrisy of their keeping idols and still worshiping God. As long as they continued going to the temple and offering sacrifices, the people considered that they were doing what was required of them from the Law of God (7.8-11). They were trusting in the temple, and their participation in it; but they had left God behind, and devoted themselves to the false, man-made gods of the surrounding pagan nations.

The leaders of Jerusalem and Judah had failed the people. They taught them lies, saying that as long as they kept up temple worship, they could live as they wanted, and embrace whatever idols seemed to meet their needs. This led the people into perpetual backsliding (8.5) and lives of deceit and abomination. No one listened to the true prophets, whom God sent to them. Jeremiah was sent to tell the people that they were not obeying God, and so they could no longer expect to be His people. Judgment was coming, and it would be severe.

Jeremiah overflowed with emotion at the thought of the coming judgment. He pleaded with the people to turn to God in their midst and to put away their idols (8.18, 19). Still, the people continued in their rebellious ways, and the knowledge of God languished (9.23, 24).

The true and living God will not suffer false, dead idols among His people. They may think that they can have it both ways, but God insisted they must repent and return wholly to Him. Since they would not, God would remove them from their land and make them slaves of strange gods in a strange land.

And all this trouble would come upon them because the shepherds of God's people had become "dull-hearted" and had not sought the Lord (10.21).

*Reflect.*

1. Why did the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem turn away from the Word of God and teach lies to the people they served? Do you think this happens in our day?

*Lying Words: Jeremiah 7-10*

2. How can believers keep from being led astray into lies and disobedience?
3. How would you describe Jeremiah's attitude toward the coming judgment of God's people? How does his attitude instruct us?

*It is indeed certain that they dealt dishonestly with God, when they attempted to satisfy his judgment by frigid ceremonies. He therefore shews that a reward was prepared for them; for they would at length find, that no fruit would come from their false dealings.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 7.8*

*Search me, O God, and show me any ways I have begun to drift from You, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 12.1-5.*

Pray that God will enable you to shelter in His Word, and that He will keep you from falling into the snare of lies and half-truths.

*Sing Psalm 12.1-5.*

**Psalm 12.1-5** (Hamburg: [\*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross\*](#))

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be; they who believe in Christ are few.

Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!  
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.  
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

*Lying Words: Jeremiah 7-10*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why would any leaders of God's people turn away from His truth?
2. How can we know when we might be in a situation of being led away from the truth of the Lord?
3. Why were the people of Judah and Jerusalem hypocrites? How does someone fall into hypocrisy?
4. What does it mean for God to be our God and us to be His people?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Jeremiah 7-10? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.