

Jer. 26, The Temple Sermon
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Overview

1. 26-29 consists of three interchanges. In each,
 - a) Jer. presents a message of some sort;
 - b) There is hostile reaction to the message;
 - c) The Lord vindicates his prophet. (This emphasis represents a change of tone; up to now, Jer has been on the run.)

The three cases are:

- a) Temple sermon, early in Jehoiachin's reign: repent or I'll destroy this temple.
 - b) The Royal Yokes, early in Zedekiah's reign: submit to Neb. or be destroyed.
 - c) Letter to the Captives, early in Zed's reign: settle down and don't expect early delivery.
2. The first two cases offer a special contrast: God preserves Jer, but kills a false prophet.
 3. Internal structure of 26:
 - a) 1-7, Jer. preaches a sermon.
 - b) 8-23, he is brought to trial; outcome unclear.
 - c) 24, the Lord preserves Jer.

A. 1-7, Jer's Sermon

1. The time, 1.
Beginning of J'qim's rule. J'qim was set up by the Egyptians, thus establishing their control over Judah. They never threatened the temple. Not until the fourth year of J'qim's 12 year rule did Neb. come to the throne in Babylon. Thus, at this time, an observer without divine insight would not expect what Jer predicts.
2. The place, 2.
The gate of the temple, where he can address the people as they come to worship. NB: This appears to be the same sermon as that recorded in ch.7. There, we have the full sermon and no context. Here, we have only a brief summary of the sermon but more information on the events surrounding it.
3. The purpose, 3.
God seeks to motivate them to repent. It is not yet too late, and in keeping with his principle in 18:7-8, the nation can still seek his face and escape the coming judgment.
4. The message, 4-6.
Presented as a conditional warning. See sermon notes on ch. 7 for more detail.

- a) 4-5, The condition: they must heed two channels of God's revelation.
 - 1) "my law, which I have set before you"--the Law of Moses, corresponding for us to the Scriptures. The fixed, written revelation of God.
 - 2) "the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you"--the dynamic, current ministry of God's Spirit to his people, corresponding for us to the exercise of the gifts in the local assembly.
 - 3) *Application*: The Bible by itself is not enough. The RCC says, "Bible + tradition." The reformed churches say, "Bible + creed." We believe, "Bible + Spirit of God," and that Spirit has always worked through the people of God. It is tempting to say, "All I need is the Bible; I don't need to fellowship with other believers." Nothing could be further from the truth! We need BOTH the foundation of God's Word AND the continuing ministry of his Spirit to guide us in our daily lives.

- b) 6, The consequence. Earlier in Israel's history, at the time of Eli, the tabernacle was at Shiloh. The nation treated God like a lucky charm. They tried to guarantee victory over the Philistines by taking the ark of the covenant into battle ... but God allowed the Philistines to capture the ark, thus desanctifying the tabernacle at Shiloh. In just the same way, God can and will forsake the temple at Jerusalem -- and he will never honor those who treat him like a talisman, who view a cross around the neck or a leather Bible under the arm as a good luck charm.

- 5. The audience, 7. The priests, the (official temple) prophets, and all the people. These become the central actors in the next section, as they react to what they have heard.

B. 8-19, Jer's Trial

Jer's sermon leads to accusation and trial, resulting in a hung debate.

1. Parties in the debate:

- a) Jeremiah, who preached the sermon.

- b) Priests and prophets (7), the "clergy" of the temple. They take the lead in opposing Jer. Cf. Acts 7, where Stephen is stoned because he "ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place ... that [God] shall destroy this place" (Acts 6:13,14). The temple is the touchstone of their authority, the seat of their power. If it can be done away, so can they. As long as the people regard it as invincible and supreme, these leaders enjoy their power.

Application: The leaders of organized religion are often the most ardent opponents of true believers. Cf. the NCC recognition of Nelson Mandela this week, when a richly robed cleric introduced him as "the bright and morning star of our faith," a title of Christ! Do not assume that just because someone has "Rev." in front of his name or a collar on backward, he is more likely to protect the gospel than John Doe on the street. Just the opposite is too often the case.

Ironically, their power and influence stemmed from Josiah's reform only about 15 years before (622; J'qim's first year is 609). Josiah strengthened the temple in order to purge out idolatry. Now, not two decades later, the interests he vested with power have become corrupt. To understand why, recall that priests served from age 30 to age 50 (Num. 4:3). Their period of service is thus 20 years, and at the time of Josiah, the average priest would be on average 40 years old. Thus, by the time of this event, more than half of the priests would have come on board *since* the reform. They did not experience it first hand, but only preserved a second-hand acquaintance with it.

Applications: Beware second-hand reforms! You must deal personally with God in your own life, or else you will become hardened, traditional, and in fact rejecting to the truth of God. The last two thousand years have known numerous revivals and reformations. Every one has degenerated into opposition to the Lord Jesus.

- c) People (7), the worshippers gathered in the temple. We will see that they are fickle and undecided. Unfortunately, this is typical of most churchgoers, who do not think for themselves and search out the Scriptures on their own, but allow themselves to be blown around like a tumbleweed before the wind. The Bereans (Acts 17:11) and the teaching of Eph. 4:14 show us that this is not right.
- d) Princes (10) or "officials," members of the palace bureaucracy. They represent the king.
- e) Elders (17), probably older representatives of all of these groups.

2. Events of the debate:

The sequence of events through the trial correspond at many points to other trials in the Bible, notably those of our Lord in Matt. 26 and Luke 23; of the apostles in Acts 5; and of Stephen in Acts 6-7. We will point out similarities where they offer illuminating comparisons or contrasts.

- a) Arrest: the crowd, led by the religious rulers, seize him and say that he should die because of what he has said about the temple and the holy city. Both our Lord (Matt. 26:61) and Stephen (Acts 6:13) were accused on this basis as well, though

in their cases false witnesses were necessary. In Jer's case, he really was saying that the temple would be destroyed.

Application: When we are accused for Christ's sake, the things of which we are accused may be either true or trumped up.

- b) Convocation: The people and princes come to investigate. Apparently, the civil authorities have to be involved as well, reflecting a basic division of power throughout Israel's history. Again, compare the trial of Christ, first before the Sanhedrin, then before the civil leaders (Pilate and Herod), though this time for a different reason: the civil power had been taken out of the hands of the Jewish people entirely. The trials of the apostles and of Stephen have no civil involvement. Recall how Paul took advantage of the role of civil government in his trial, gaining both protection from Jewish zealots and access to Rome by appealing to Caesar.

Application: It is not unchristian to take advantage of whatever protection civil government can give us, so long as we do not compromise our principles by doing so. (But that advantage may not be great -- see below.)

- c) Accusation: As in Christ's case (Luke 23:1-2), the religious leaders accuse him to the civil leaders. As in Christ's case, the accusation focuses on the civil aspects of the charge (here: destruction of the city) rather than the aspects that really upset them, the end of the temple.
- d) Defense: Jer uses the opportunity to present his message. Since the princes had to come from the palace, we can assume they did not hear the original message. Jer addresses himself to them. A true messenger of God, he is much more concerned with getting his message out than he is with his personal survival. Contrast Christ, who "as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so opened ... not his mouth."

The response is chiastic.

- 1) It begins and ends (15b) by affirming that God has sent him. Prophets know that they are sent of God. These are not his ideas; they are the revelation of God. Doing away with him will not change the fact that God has spoken.
- 2) In the middle, two exhortations that grow out of this awareness that God has sent him.
 - a> 13, Repent, to avoid judgment. Here is the sermon once again, in capsule form. Get that message out as often as you can!
 - b> 14-15a, Take care how you treat me. I have done nothing wrong, but only brought you the word of God.

- e) Assessment: The princes and people declare him innocent. Once again, compare Pilate's civil verdict in the Lord Jesus' trial, Luke 23:13-16, and Paul before Gallio, Acts 18:14,15.
- f) Precedents: Like Gamaliel in Acts 5:34, the elders offer precedents for the group to consider. This is not out of order, any more than Gamaliel's comments are in Acts after the group has already reached a conclusion. Unlike Gamaliel, these elders cannot make a clear decision, but cite one precedent on each side. They are prototypes of James' "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."
- 1) Precedent in favor of Jer: Micah (the biblical prophet). Micah 3:12 threatened Jerusalem and the temple just as directly as Jer does. At that time, the Assyrian host, having demolished Samaria, was on its way to Jerusalem. Hezekiah, who was king at that time, did not punish the messenger, but heeded the message, and as a result God turned away the enemy and spared Jerusalem.

Conclusion from v.19b: This precedent suggests that our accusation of Jer constitutes a serious sin against the Lord.

- 2) Precedent against Jer: The recent treatment of Uriah, who again has the same message as Jer, shows the established direction of Jehoiachin's policies, suggesting that Jer. should be killed.

Technical note: Who utters this? Three possibilities.

- a> The narrator; but *ha(iyr hazo)t* makes this extremely unlikely. Local deictics are OK for conversations taking place in Jerusalem, but the narrator's conceptual space is shared with captives in Babylon for which a more explicit reference is necessary.
- b> The priests and prophets rebutting the elders, the princes, and the people; but then we need another IF.
- c> Conclude that it is a continuation of the elders' speech, and that it indicates their waffling.

- 3) *Application*: This is the other side of the value of taking advantage of secular protection: it may not be worth much. The elders are not bold enough to take a clear stand, but waffle around to please whomever they can. If we trust in man to deliver us, we will surely be disappointed.

C. 24, Jer's Delivery

The legal proceedings are ambiguous, but the Lord gave Jer a protector, Ahikam the son of Shaphan. He is one of the old guard, an advisor to Josiah during the reform (2 Kings 22:12,14), who knew the ways of the Lord at first hand. Not only does he protect Jer here, but his son Gedaliah harbors him later in the book.

Summary

If you speak God's word effectively, you will get people stirred up, and some of them may even seek to kill you. The fleshly solution is to weaken the message, but then no one ever gets saved. The godly approach is to press ahead with the message, and trust the Lord to deliver, as he does with Jer.

Ps. 41

Analysis

26. concession p: The Temple Sermon rejected by the Priests and Prophets, yet Jer is delivered.

A. text: sequence p: Jer's sermon leads to accusation and trial; outcome unspecified.

1. Jer preached a sermon.

quote p

a) quote f: 26:1 B.:/R")\$IYT MAM:L:KW.T Y:HOWYFQIYM
B.EN-YO)\$IY.FHW. MELEK: Y:HW.DFH HFYFH HA/D.FBFR HA/Z.EH
M"/)"T Y:HWFH L"/)MOR
26:2 K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH

b) quote: ampl p: Give the people this message; perhaps they will repent.

1) text: purpose p

a> text: command seq p

1> (:AMOD B.A/X:ACAR B."YT-Y:HWFH

2> paraphrase p

a: W:/DIB.AR:T.F (AL-K.FL-(FR"Y Y:HW.DFH HA/B.F)IYM
L:/HI\$:T.AX:AWOT B."YT-Y:HWFH)"T
K.FL-HA/D.:BFRIYM):A\$ER CIW.IYTIY/KF L:/DAB."R
) :AL"Y/HEM

b:)AL-T.IG:RA(D.FBFR

b> purpose: seq p

1> 26:3)W.LAY YI\$:M:(W.

2> W:/YF\$UBW.)IY\$ MI/D.AR:K./OW HF/RF(FH

3> W:/NIXAM:T.IY)EL-HF/RF(FH):A\$ER)FNOKIY XO\$"B
LA/(:A&OWT L/FHEM MI/P.:N"Y RO(A MA(AL:L"Y/HEM

2) ampl: quote p

a> quote f: 26:4 W:/)FMAR:T.F):AL"Y/HEM K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH

b> quote: conditional p

1> if: comment p

a: text:)IM-LO) TI\$:M:(W.)"L/AY LF/LEKET
B.:/TOWRFT/IY):A\$ER NFTAT.IY LI/P:N"Y/KEM 26:5
LI/\$:MO(A (AL-D.IB:R"Y (:ABFD/AY HA/N.:BI)IYM

b: comment <HANBI)IYM>: seq p

1:):A\$ER)FNOKIY \$OL"XA):AL"Y/KEM W:/HA\$:K."M
W:/\$FLOXA

2: W:/LO) \$:MA(:T.EM

2> then: coordinate p

a: 26:6 W:/NFTAT.IY)ET-HA/B.AYIT HA/Z.EH K.:/\$ILOH

b: W:/)ET-HF/(IYR {HA/Z.O)TFH} [HA/Z.O)T])ET."N
LI/Q:LFLFH L:/KOL G.OWY"Y HF/)FREC S

2. Everyone heard him.

26:7 WA/Y.I\$:M:(W. HA/K.OH:ANIYM W:/HA/N.:BI)IYM W:/KFL-HF/(FM)ET-YIR:M:YFHW. M:DAB."R)ET-HA/D.:BFRIYM HF/) "L.EH B.:/B"YT Y:HWFH

3. There was a debate over Jeremiah

26:8 WA/Y:HIY K.:/KAL.OWT YIR:M:YFHW. L:/DAB."R)"T K.FL-):A\$ER-CIW.FH Y:HWFH L:/DAB."R)EL-K.FL-HF/(FM

a) manner p: His auditors arrest him and advocate his death.

1) text: WA/Y.IT:P.:&W.)OT/OW HA/K.OH:ANIYM W:/HA/N.:BI)IYM W:/KFL-HF/(FM

2) manner: quote p

a> quote f: L"/)MOR

b> quote:

1> MOWT T.FMW.T

2> manner p

a: text: 26:9 MAD.W.(A NIB."YTF B:/ \$"M-Y:HWFH

b: manner: quote p

1: quote f: L"/)MOR

2: quote: K.:/\$ILOW YIH:YEH HA/B.AYIT HA/Z.EH

3: W:/HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T T.EX:ERAB M"/) "YN YOW\$"B

b) The people and princes come to investigate.

1) WA/Y.IQ.FH"L K.FL-HF/(FM)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. B.:/B"YT Y:HWFH

2) 26:10 WA/Y.I\$:M:(W. &FR"Y Y:HW.DFH)"T HA/D.:BFRIYM HF/) "L.EH

3) WA/Y.A(:ALW. MI/B."YT-HA/M.ELEK: B."YT Y:HWFH

4) WA/Y."\$:BW. B.:/PETAX \$A(AR-Y:HWFH HE/XFDF\$ S

c) quote p: Priests and prophets accuse Jer to the princes and the people.

1) quote f: 26:11 WA/Y.O)M:RW. HA/K.OH:ANIYM W:/HA/N.:BI)IYM)EL-HA/&.FRIYM W:/)EL-K.FL-HF/(FM L"/)MOR

2) quote: reason p

a> text: MI\$:P.A+-MFWET LF/)IY\$ HA/Z.EH

b> K.IY NIB.F))EL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T K.A/):A\$ER \$:MA(:T.EM B.:/)FZ:N"Y/KEM

d) quote p: Jer's defense: Because God has sent me, repent of your sin and do not abuse me.

1) quote f: 26:12 WA/Y.O)MER YIR:M:YFHW.)EL-K.FL-HA/&.FRIYM W:/)EL-K.FL-HF/(FM L"/)MOR

2) quote: chiastic reason p

a> reason-1: God has sent me.

Y:HWFH \$:LFX/ANIY L:/HIN.FB"))EL-HA/B.AYIT HA/Z.EH

W:/)EL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T)"T K.FL-HA/D.:BFRIYM):A\$ER \$:MA(:T.EM

b> text-1: repent, to avoid judgment

1> 26:13 W:/(AT.FH H"Y+IYBW. DAR:K"Y/KEM W./MA(AL:L"Y/KEM

2> W:/\$IM:(W. B.:/QOWL Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y/KEM

3> W:/YIN.FX"M Y:HWFH)EL-HF/RF(FH):A\$ER D.IB.ER (:AL"Y/KEM

c> text-2: take care how you treat me

1> 26:14 WA/):ANIY HIN/:NIY B:/YED/:KEM
2> (:A&W.-L/IY K.A/+ .OWB W:/KA/Y.F\$FR B.:/ ("YN"Y/KEM
3> quote p
a: quote f: 26:15)AK: YFDO(A T."D:(W. K.IY
b: quote: condition p
1: if:)IM-M:MITIYM)AT.EM)OT/IY
2: then: K.IY-DFM NFQIY)AT.EM NOT:NIYM (:AL"Y/KEM
W:/)EL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T W:/)EL-YO\$:BEY/HF
d> reason-2: God has sent me.
K.IY BE/):EMET \$:LFX/ANIY Y:HWFH (:AL"Y/KEM L:/DAB."R
B.:/FZ:N"Y/KEM)"T K.FL-HA/D.:BFRIYM HF/)"L.EH S

e) quote p: The princes and people declare him innocent.
1) quote f: 26:16 WA/Y.O)M:RW. HA/&.FRIYM W:/KFL-HF/(FM
)EL-HA/K.OH:ANIYM W:/)EL-HA/N.:BIY)IYM
2) quote: reason p
a> text:)"YN-LF/)IY\$ HA/Z.EH MI\$:P.A+-MFWET
b> reason: K.IY B.:/\$"M Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y/NW. D.IB.ER
)"L"Y/NW.

f) quote p: The elders cite conflicting precedents.
1) quote f: 26:17 WA/Y.FQUMW.):ANF\$IYM MI/Z.IQ:N"Y HF/)FREC
WA/Y.O)M:RW.)EL-K.FL-Q:HAL HF/(FM L"/)MOR
2) quote: contrast p
Apparently we have here two groups of elders, one rebutting
the other.

a> thesis: induction p: Some cite Micah to show that Jer
should be heeded.
1> evidence: seq p: God blessed Hezekiah for heeding
Micah.
a: 26:18 {MIYKFYFH.} [MIYKFH] HA/M.OWRA\$:T.IY HFYFH
NIB.F) B.I/YM"Y XIZ:QIY.FHW. MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH
b: quote p
1: quote f: WA/Y.O)MER)EL-K.FL-(AM Y:HW.DFH
L"/)MOR K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
2: quote: CIY.OWN &FDEH T"XFR"\$
3: WI/YRW.\$FLAYIM (IY.IYM T.IH:YEH
4: W:/HAR HA/B.AYIT L:/BFMOWT YF(AR
c: contrast p
1: thesis: 26:19 HE/HFM" T H:EMITUHW. XIZ:QIY.FHW.
MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH W:/KFL-Y:HW.DFH
2: antithesis:
A. H:A/LO) YFR"))ET-Y:HWFH
B. WA/Y:XAL)ET-P.:N"Y Y:HWFH
C. WA/Y.IN.FXEM Y:HWFH)EL-HF/RF(FH
):A\$ER-D.IB.ER (:AL"Y/HEM
2> conclusion: We are sinning in what we are doing.
WA/):ANAX:NW. (O&IYM RF(FH G:DOWLFH
(AL-NAP:\$OWT"Y/NW.

b> antithesis: seq p: Others cite Uriah to show what is
expected under Jehoiachim. (*ha(iyr hazo)t* makes it
extremely difficult to attribute this to the narrator;

if there were another IF, we would prefer to hear it on the lips of the priests and prophets.)

1> 26:20 W:/GAM-)IY\$ HFYFH MIT:NAB.") B.:/\$"M Y:HWFH)W.RIY.FHW. B.EN-\$:MA(:YFHW. MI/Q.IR:YAT HA/Y.:(FRIYM
2> WA/Y.IN.FB") (AL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T W:/(AL-HF/)FREC HA/Z.O)T K.:/KOL D.IB:R"Y YIR:M:YFHW.
3> 26:21 WA/Y.I\$:MA(HA/M.ELEK:-Y:HOWYFQIYM W:/KFL-G.IB.OWRFY/W W:/KFL-HA/&.FRIYM)ET-D.:BFRFY/W
4> WA/Y:BAQ."\$ HA/M.ELEK: H:AMIYT/OW
5> WA/Y.I\$:MA()W.RIY.FHW.
6> WA/Y.IRF)
7> WA/Y.IB:RAX
8> WA/Y.FBO) MIC:RFYIM
9> 26:22 WA/Y.I\$:LAX HA/M.ELEK: Y:HOWYFQIYM):ANF\$IYM MIC:RFYIM)"T)EL:NFTFN B.EN-(AK:B.OWR WA/):ANF\$IYM)IT./OW)EL-MIC:RFYIM
10> 26:23 WA/Y.OWCIY)W.)ET-)W.RIY.FHW. MI/M.IC:RAYIM
11> WA/Y:BI)U/HW.)EL-HA/M.ELEK: Y:HOWYFQIYM
12> WA/Y.AK./"HW. B.E/XFREB
13> WA/Y.A\$:L"K:)ET-NIB:LFT/OW)EL-QIB:R"Y B.:N"Y HF/(FM

B. concession: Jer was delivered.

1. 26:24)AK: YAD)AXIYQFM B.EN-\$FPFN HFY:TFH)ET-YIR:M:YFHW.
2. L:/BIL:T.IY T."T-)OT/OW B:/YAD-HF/(FM LA/H:AMIYT/OW P