



Preaching in Unsafe Places **Jeremiah 7:1-11, 21-23**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD (Jeremiah 7:1-2—ESV).

God did not give His prophets easy speeches or places to preach. God sent Amos to warn the people of Israel about God’s coming judgment if they refused to repent. They refused and Israel perished. God sent Jeremiah to the temple gate so every political and religious leader and the people they ruled could hear God’s warnings of future punishment if they refused to change their ways and actions. God commanded Jeremiah to list the people’s specific sins so they would know how God expected them to change and reform their behavior. To motivate them, God wanted everyone to hear about His threat of future judgment both before and after they worshiped in His house. If the people and their leaders refused to repent and obey God, they had no one to blame but themselves when Jerusalem was destroyed, for God had sent them sufficient warnings of coming judgment. Instead of returning to God and obedience, which included treating others justly with mercy, the leaders in Jerusalem arrested Jeremiah and threw him into prison (Jeremiah 37). Then, as God promised and Jeremiah foretold, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and carried many of the most influential survivors into exile. Jeremiah was right in preaching God’s word, but tradition states that Jeremiah was forcibly carried to Egypt where the leaders of Judah stoned him to death. However, Jeremiah’s loyalty to God was honored in the days of Jesus, because some thought Jesus was Jeremiah returned or at least a prophet similar to Jeremiah (Matthew 16:14-17). The New Testament also shows us that Jesus warned the religious leaders and people to repent in no uncertain terms or receive God’s just punishment. God kept His promise and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.