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Heal Me, ADONAI, and I Will Be Healed, Save Me and I Will Be Saved Jeremiah's Fifth Complaint 17: 12-18

Heal me, ADONAI, and I will be healed, same me and I will be saved DIG: What are Jeremiah's countrymen saying about his ability to prophesy? What was the test of a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)? How did Yirmeyahu ask God to prove him right? How will the coming disaster bring both hope and terror to Jeremiah? Of what does Yirmeyahu need healing? How might he be confused with a false prophet?

REFLECT: Are there prophets today? Or is the canon of Scripture closed (Revelation 22:18-19)? What prompts people to become false teachers today? Do you think they believe what they're preaching (Jude 10 and Second Peter 2:12)? How honest are you with yourself? Could your heart be deceiving you about the motives of some of your actions at work? At home? In relationships?

606 BC during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim

Yirmeyahu continues to be poised between faith and doubt. There are seven passages in the book of **Jeremiah** labeled complaints or confessions: (1) **to see link click Ax - Oh, Adonai ELOHIM, Surely You Have Deceived This People**; (2) **Bj - The Plot Against Jeremiah**; (3) **Bk - Why Does the Way of the Wicked Prosper? Why Do All the Faithless Live at Ease?**; (4) **Cm - Woe to Me, Mother, That You Gave Me Birth**; (5) **Cs - Heal Me ADONAI, and I Will Be Healed, Save Me and I Will Be Saved**; (6) **Cx - Jeremiah's Response to a Threat Against His Life**; and (7) **Db - You Deceived Me, LORD, and I Have Been Deceived**. In each of these **Yirmeyahu** speaks in the first person. **He** opens **his** heart. **He** reveals what is going on inside while the fireworks are going off outside. **Jeremiah's** inner life is revealed in these confessions/complaints/prayers. When **the priest from Anathoth** was out of the public's eye **he** was passionate with **God**. **He** confessed/complained/prayed like we all do. This was **his** secret life. This was **a man** of prayer.¹⁶⁶

Isra'el's forsaken her hope: For **the righteous of the TaNaKh, the glorious throne, exalted from the beginning, was the place of their Sanctuary (17:12).** YHVH was **enthroned** above the ark of the Covenant in **the Most Holy Place.** God wanted them to come to the Temple with the right heart attitude, a reverent attitude, as if entering holy ground. But the attitude of **the vast majority of people in Jeremiah's** day bordered on blasphemy, which led **the citizens of Y'hudah and Tziyon** to believe that mere association with the Temple and its rituals was the only demand that **Ha'Shem** made upon **them.** Clearly **they** had lost their way. Because of **their** hearts of stone, **their** sacrifices meant nothing.¹⁶⁷

Jeremiah cried out: **ADONAI, You are the hope of the united kingdom of Isra'el;** but now **she** has **forsaken** the Sh'khinah glory (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ju - The Glory of the LORD Rises Upon You**). **All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who depart from You will be written in the dust (17:13a).** Words **written in the dust** are contrasted to words engraved in the rock. The former are easily obliterated and forgotten, so will be the fate of those who **depart from ADONAI.**¹⁶⁸



Their names would be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water (17:13b; also see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Gp - On the Last and Greatest Day of the Feast**). There is, however, an inherent danger in **forsaking the blessed hope (Titus 2:13).** It means, in essence, that **Y'hudah** had **forsaken her only hope.** **She** had **forsaken** the very source of **salvation** itself! What **she** needed to do was to turn to **ADONAI** in faith. *Then she* would live. The logic of the argument is the same as the **shuwb** summons of **Amos: Seek Me and live (Amos 5:4),** or the instruction in **Deuteronomy 30:19** to **choose life.**

Heal me, ADONAI, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for You are the One I praise (17:14; R'Fayanu, from the Amidah). Today, the fact that you are reading this probably means that you are **saved . . .** and that is a **miracle.** There are people who have had their life changed. There are alcoholics and drug addicts who have been redeemed. There are people who were living an immoral life that have turned around and are walking

in a different direction. There are people whose home was breaking up that have been given a new love and a new relationship. Did that happen because **deeds** or because of **His grace**?

For most in this world, it seems too simple to be saved by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Messiah** alone. So in **Galatians**, **Paul** declares **his gospel** of **grace** over and over and over again. It is not what we do . . . it is what **He** does. Some people think to themselves, "Surely there must be SOMETHING I have to do to have a right standing before **ADONAI!**" The Philippian jailer said: **What must I do to be saved?** And **Paul's** answer was: **Put your trust in the Lord Yeshua and you will be saved (Acts 16:30-31).**

What does putting your **faith/trust/belief** (Greek: *pisteuo* from *pistis*) in **Messiah** mean? If someone gave you a check for a million dollars as a gift and you go to the bank and speak to the teller and say, "Wow! Can you believe someone gave me this check for a million dollars!" She would say, "I've never seen anything like that. How wonderful for you." Then the teller would say, "But you have to endorse it." And after you endorse that check, you leave the bank and start telling people that you had *earned* that money just because you signed your name to it. Would anyone believe you? No! There is no way that anyone would believe that endorsing a check would mean that you worked for the million dollars.

Over two thousand years ago, **God** wrote a check and made it out to you for eternal life. And **He** wrote it in the name of **Yeshua Messiah**. And the way we endorse that check, the way we receive that gift is our **faith/trust/belief** in **Yeshua Messiah**, **His** crucifixion on Calvary and resurrection. It is **believing that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (First Corinthians 15:3b-4)**. It is nothing we *do*; but merely receiving the free gift of salvation that **He** has offered, in the same way that someone endorses a check.

Have you endorsed your check?

The reason **Yirmeyahu** asks **God** to **save him**, to rescue **him**, to vindicate **him**, from any situation is because **God** has been **Jeremiah's** praise. **The prophet** is now being attacked and accused of being a false prophet. **He** has spent years prophesying, but **his** prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. It had been about twenty years since he had been appointed as a **prophet** (see [Ai - Josiah Ruled For 31 Years from 640 to 609 BC](#)), and it would be another twenty years until **Judah** would fall (see [Gb - The Destruction of Solomon's Temple on Tisha B'Av in 586 BC](#)).

They keep saying to me, “Where is the word of the LORD?” And as if mocking **me**, **they** say: **Let it now be fulfilled** if true (17:15)! **Moshe** had defined how a false prophet could be identified: **If what a prophet proclaims in the name of ADONAI does not take place or come true, that is a message ADONAI has not spoken (Deuteronomy 18:22a).** There were both **near historical** and **far eschatological prophecies**. The problem with the **near historical prophecies** is that sometimes what was prophesied would take a few years, or in the best scenario, a few months to happen. Then **the true prophet of God** would be vindicated. The problem **Yirmeyahu** faced was that **the LORD’s** judgment had mercifully been delayed and, as a result, **the people** doubted **his** message. **YHVH** knew **His** judgment was coming . . . **Jeremiah** knew it was coming . . . but **the people** doubted.

The people of Jerusalem began to cast doubt and poke fun at **Jeremiah’s** prophetic office. **Yirmeyahu** vindicated **his** ministry to **God** in three ways. First, **I have not run away from being your shepherd. In other words, I had no intention of hastily abandoning my ministry because of the suffering it has entailed. The prophet** has not refused to follow **God’s** direction or to be **God’s** servant. Second, **You know I have not vindictively desired the day of despair** (that **he** had been prophesying). And third, **what passes my lips is open before you so that this coming disaster could be averted. The LORD** had known all of **his** prophecies because they originated from **Him** (17:16).

The prophet believes that **YHVH’s** judgment is sure, but **he** wants it sooner rather than later, and **he** does not doubt who deserves it. **Protect me! Do not be a source of terror to me; You are my refuge in the day of disaster. Let my persecutors be put to shame, but keep me from shame; let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction (17:17-18).**

Yirmeyahu asks that he might be brought through it all without being **terrorized, shamed** or **destroyed**. **He** entrusts **his** vengeance to **God** and will not take matters into **his** own hands.

God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything (First John 3:20). Because of this, **the Lord** knows exactly how to help us. Lasting heart-level change and real progress with our problems originate with **ADONAI**. Trusting **Him** and living to please **Him** means we can flourish and be truly free.

Here we find **Yirmeyahu** praying, addressing **ADONAI**, and listening to **God**. When we pray we approach **YHVH** as a living person, not merely “getting in touch with our spiritual

side." Prayer is the attention that we give to the one who attends to us. It is the decision to approach **the Almighty** as the center of our life, as our **Lord** and **Savior**. Prayer is personal language raised to the highest degree. The six confessions/complaints/prayers show **the prophet** in **his** unguarded and most personal times with **Ha'Shem**.

Nearly everyone believes in **God** and throws casual offhand remarks in **His** general direction from time to time. But prayer is something quite different. Imagine yourself at dinner with a person whom you very much want to be with. The dinner is in a fine restaurant where everything is arranged to give you a sense of privacy. There is adequate lighting at your table with everything else in the shadows. You are aware of the other people and activity in the room, but they do not intrude on your intimacy. There is talking and listening. There are moments of silence, full of meaning. From time to time a waiter comes to your table. You ask questions of him; you place your order with him; you ask to have your glass filled; you send the broccoli back because it arrived cold; you thank him for his attentive service and leave a tip. You depart, still in companionship with the person with whom you dined, but out on the street conversation is less personal, more casual.

This is a picture of prayer. The person with whom we set aside time for intimacy, for this deepest and most personal conversation, is **ADONAI**. At such times the world is not banished, but it is in the shadows, on the periphery. Prayer is never complete and unrelieved solitude; it is, though, carefully protected and skillfully supported intimacy. Prayer is the desire to listen to **YHVH** firsthand, to speak to **Him** firsthand, and then setting aside the time and making the arrangements to make it happen. Prayer originates from the belief that **the living God** is extremely important and that what goes on between us demands my full attention.

But there is a parody of prayer that we engage in all too often. The details are the same but with two differences, the person across the table is Self and the waiter is **God**. This waiter-**God** is essential but peripheral. You can't have the dinner without **Him**, but **He's** not an intimate participant in it. **He's** someone to whom you give orders and maybe at the end, give thanks. The person you are absorbed in is Self - your moods, your ideas, your interests, your needs, and your satisfactions or lack of them. When you leave the restaurant you forget about **the Waiter** until the next time. And if it's a place to which you go regularly . . . you might even remember **His** name.¹⁶⁹