

Jeremiah's Temple Sermon

7:1 to 8:3

609/608 BC early in the reign of Jehoiakim

Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah king of Judah, this is a technical term meaning from the beginning of the actual reign. This, then, took place sometime between the king's accession to the throne, on the deportation of Jehoiakim's brother Jehoahaz to Egypt in the autumn or late summer of 609. In Judah renal years were counted from the month of Nisan of the first full year of a king's reign. So Jehoiakim would have begun to sit on Jerusalem's throne early the next year in 608 BC.

The Temple sermon shows the prophet in profound conflict with the dominant Temple ideology on which the state relied. The position taken here by the prophet could only be treated as treason by the state, because it destroyed the ideological underpinnings of the establishment (26:11). That dominant theology claimed that Zion was inviolate because YHVH had made unconditional promises to His people. This royal tradition, albeit now distorted, is rooted in the Temple and royal claims of David and Solomon. It is substantiated in the words of Isaiah a century earlier (Isaiah 37:33-35), and was regularly celebrated in the tradition of the Psalms, see Psalm 132:6-10. In short, the Temple cult became a "good-luck-charm" that made faith unnecessary in their minds.¹¹²

The Temple Sermon consists of four oracles that God commanded Jeremiah to give at the Eastern Gate to the Temple. It might have been one sermon, or possibly a series of sermons given in a short period of time. Only Ha'Shem speaks, but the inference is that He spoke through the prophet.

Cc - False Religion is Worthless (7:1-15)

Cd - They Knead Dough and Make Cakes for the Queen of Heaven (7:16-20)

Ce - Obey Me, and I Will Be Your God (7:21-28)

Cf - They Will Bury the Dead in Topheth (7:29 to 8:3)