

# Obey Me, and I Will Be Your God and You Will Be My People

## 7: 21-28

**DIG:** How long had **God** been trying to communicate that **He** was more interested in the attitude of the heart than in empty actions in these verses? How were they trying to appease **HaShem**? What was being neglected? What is the basis of salvation? Has it always been so? What system is like that today? Will **Jeremiah's** words be listened to any more than any of the other prophets?

**REFLECT:** There is a faith that people see, outward works, and an inward faith, that people don't see. Cannot see. How are the two measuring up in your life? What would **Jesus** say about your relationship with **Him** right now? How would you rate your obedience on a scale from 1 to 10? Why are you doing so well? If not, what needs to change so you can get back the relationship with **Messiah** that you once had?

### 609/608 BC early in the reign of Jehoiakim

As the material is arranged in **Chapter 7** there is a certain logical development of the argument. **The Temple** in which the people trusted was a mere cover for every kind of sin and therefore would be destroyed. Alongside **the Temple** practices was the deep-seated worship of **the Queen of Heaven** that demonstrated a fundamental wickedness in the nation and was a symptom of **the people's** refusal to accept the sovereignty of **YHVH** and **His** will. In such circumstances, **the whole sacrificial system** (which was based on **faith**) became meaningless to **God**. It was never **His** intention that either **the Temple** or **the sacrificial system** should become an end to **themselves**.

This is what **ADONAI-Tzva'ot**, the **God of Isra'el** says: **Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves (7:21)**. In scathing irony **He** tells them to heap **their burnt offerings** upon **their other sacrifices**. **They** were missing the point. **Their** sacrificial meals (**Leviticus 7:14-19; Deuteronomy 12:5-12, 14:22-27, 27:7**) seemed more attractive to **them** and gained greater attention than the real purpose of **the sacrifice**, just as the "love feasts" connected with **the Lord's Supper** did in the apostle's time (**First Corinthians 11:20-22**).<sup>126</sup>

Salvation has always been **by faith**. When a man or woman came to the Tabernacle or Temple, each brought an acceptable sacrifice (see the commentary on **Exodus Fb - The Five Offerings of the Tabernacle: Christ, Our Sacrificial Offering**). Progressive revelation teaches us that it was this way from the beginning (see the commentary on **Genesis Bj - Your Brother's Blood Cries Out to Me from the Ground**). But the sacrifice, in and of itself, did not save. **The righteous of the TaNaKh** believed that **God** would receive their acceptable offering **by faith**. It was **their faith** that pleased YHVH, not merely the bringing of a piece of meat. **ADONAI is the same yesterday, today and forever. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast (Heb 13:8; Eph 2:9-10)**. Today there are many who think they are believers just because they go to church or a messianic synagogue; but you don't get to heaven by how you *behave*, you get to heaven by what you *believe*.

Samuel said it this way: **Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams (First Samuel 15:22)**.

**Because the basics of obedience was lacking, ADONAI refused to regard what went on in the Temple as a worthy sacrifice.** Having said that, the rest of the Temple Sermon (see Cb - **Jeremiah's Temple Sermon**) deals with their history. For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings (see my commentary on **Exodus Fe - The Burnt Offering**) and sacrifices, but I gave them this command. Saying: **Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Walk in obedience to all I command you (7:22-23)**. **Sacrifices were only of secondary importance to obedience. No amount of sacrificial rams could atone for their disobedience.** If they worshiped no other gods and only worshiped YHVH (which demonstrated **their faith**), they would have been **obedient** to Him because the act of **obedience** included the sacrificial system of **burnt offerings**. **Sacrifices**, however, did not have priority over **obedience (faith)**.

The purpose of **obedience** is "that it may be well with you." The **sacrificial system** was intended to be a part of the lifestyle of those who were **the righteous of the TaNaKh**. But most **Jews thought** that **that they could go on sinning so that grace could increase (Romans 6:1)**. They thought they could **sacrifice their way** out of being accountable for **their sin**. As a result, they elevated **sacrifice** above **obedience (faith)**.

Today many Roman Catholics do the same thing with the confessional. The hearing of the confessional sins to a priest instead of YHVH was instituted by Pope Innocent III in the Lateran Council (1215 AD). The Baltimore Catechism defines confession as telling the sins of the parishioner to an authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness. The priest has the power to forgive all sins and doesn't even have to ask **the LORD** to forgive your sins. Therefore, the priest stands in **Christ's** place. Any sin not confessed is not forgiven, and that the omission of even one sin may invalidate the whole confession. So in the Roman system the priest constantly comes between the sinner and **God**.

But no matter how serious the offense, whether murder, robbery, adultery or fraud, etc, no public jail sentence or fine is imposed, but instead only a few minutes of prayer, the saying of the rosary or of "Hail Mary's," and a verbal promise of reform. This secret process of forgiveness may be accomplished again and again as long as the sinner conforms to the Catholic regulations. A result of this easy forgiveness is that many take **obedience** to **God** more lightly and actually sin more freely just because they know a pardon is easy to obtain. So the confessional system itself becomes more important than **obedience** to them.<sup>127</sup>

There had been a steady line of prophets sent by YHVH, **but they did not listen or pay attention** (the verdict appears four times **7:24, 26, 27, 28**). **Instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts.** Their own **ancestors** disobeyed and regressed spiritually. **They went backward and not forward**, that is, they grew worse instead of better (**7:24**). **To desert the path of faithfulness and righteousness, no matter what new or attractive name, is always to go backward.**

The Ruach HaKodesh inspired the prophet to declare that their disobedience was as old as the Exodus and no new thing in Y'hudah. **From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, persistently, again and again I sent you My servants the prophets.** But all was in vain because **they did not listen to Me or pay attention. They were stiff necked and did more evil than their ancestors (7:25-26).** The people of Jeremiah's generation were thus the inheritors of a long tradition of disobedience.<sup>128</sup>

When you [Jeremiah] tell them all this, **they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer.** **It was the prophet's heartbreaking experience to know in advance that his ministry would fall on deaf ears.** This generation would not listen to **Jeremiah** any more than previous generations had listened to **their prophets.** Yet **Jeremiah** was to say to them, "This is the nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. **Faith** (the same word as in **5:1**) **has perished; it has vanished from their lips (7:27-28).** They practiced external compliance without internal **obedience.** Their mouths may have uttered prayers, but **they** were faithless prayers, mere babblings, because faith was cut off from **their** mouths, since it was no longer in **their** hearts.<sup>129</sup> The natural consequences of their actions would visit them twenty-three years later (see **Gb - The Destruction of Solomon's Temple on Tisha B'Av in 586 BC**).