

Fact Sheet for **“Are You Drifting from God?”**
Jeremiah 7-10

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Today we will be covering the third message from God to His people through the prophet Jeremiah in chapters 7-10. If you remember from previous weeks Jeremiah 2-25 include 13 such messages. This is one of the two longest. Each of these messages has its own character or thrust. My goal is to preach from the character of these messages with applications related to that character. I won't be covering every verse of these four chapters today, but I am going to give you the basic message of those chapters.

Let's begin by looking at one of the choruses you are familiar with.

**There is none like You.
No one else can touch my heart like You do,
I could search for all eternity Lord
And find, there is none like You.**

Is there anything wrong with these verses? I can't see anything. These words convey the thought that there is none like God because only He can touch my heart like He does.

But be careful of a danger. Don't let a song interpret Scripture for you! The first line of this chorus (“There is none like You”) does come from the Bible, but it means something else there. If you search all the major translations of the Bible you will find only four occasions when the words “There is none like You” appear (depending on your translation).

1. 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Chronicles 17:20
2. 2 Chronicles 14:11
3. Psalm 86:8
4. Jeremiah 10:6-7

In each of these four occasions these words have to do with God's greatness as the only true God. They have nothing at all to do with my response to Him as He touches my heart.

God created the world (Jeremiah 10:12-13).

God directs our steps (Jeremiah 10:23).

Compare Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 16:9; 20:24.

And God can bless us or judge us in this life, as well as in eternity (Jeremiah 7:34).

On the other hand gods like Baal were no gods at all (Jeremiah 10:1-5). And look at what the worship of Baal included. The following two quotes are from www.thattheworldmayknow.com with Ray Vander Laan.

“At times of crisis, Baal's followers sacrificed their children, apparently the firstborn of the community, to gain personal prosperity.”

(See Jeremiah 7:31)

“Asherah was worshiped in various ways, including through ritual sex. Although she was believed to be Baal's mother, she was also his mistress. Pagans practiced "sympathetic magic",

that is, they believed they could influence the gods' actions by performing the behavior they wished the gods to demonstrate. Believing the sexual union of Baal and Asherah produced fertility, their worshipers engaged in immoral sex to cause the gods to join together, ensuring good harvests. This practice became the basis for religious prostitution (1 Kings 14:23-24). The priest or a male member of the community represented Baal. The priestess or female members of the community represented Asherah. In this way, God's incredible gift of sexuality was perverted to the most obscene public prostitution. No wonder God's anger burned against his people and their leaders."

They even erected their idols in Solomon's temple there in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 7:30).

But, there is another nasty consequence of Baal worship. In order for the Jewish people to engage in Baal worship they had to absolutely walk away from obeying God's commands for righteous behavior. Morality, ethics, and true spirituality went out the window. And yet, they still wanted to engage in the religiosity of the Jewish temple services (Jeremiah 7:1-11). When Jesus cast the moneychangers out of the temple He quoted Jeremiah 7:11 (Matt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46). The moneychangers were doing exactly what Judah was doing in Jeremiah's day. They were engaging in religiosity, not the worship of God. God wanted their obedience (Jeremiah 7:22-23). (*The NLT gives a good sense of these two verses.*) But their prophets and priests did not preach this. Instead they only encouraged the people not to worry about God's wrath and promised destruction (Jeremiah 8:11).

Jeremiah expressed his mourning over Judah (Jeremiah 8:21-22). "'Balm' was the resin of the storax tree that was used medicinally. Gilead, east of the Jordan River, was famous for its healing balm (cf. Gen 37:25; Jer. 46:11; 51:8; Ezek.27:17)."¹

We have this spiritual in our hymnals ("There is a balm in Gilead"). Jeremiah was using this actual healing balm to illustrate the healing that Israel needed for their sin, and the wounds God had already inflicted and would inflict on them. Our hymn has reference to healing for sin in Christ. Jeremiah 9:23-24 is what God desired from them. Paul quotes verse 24 in 1 Corinthians 1:28-31 when talking about human wisdom vs. God's wisdom.

What can we take home today from this third message from God in Jeremiah 7-10?

1st – Go home and read these four chapters today! Don't wait until later this week!

2nd – Are you drifting from God? Whenever we are drifting away from God, whenever something or someone else is becoming more important in our lives than God, we will find that we are becoming less and less concerned with God's commands for us. Instead we will be more and more rationalizing the wrong choices we want to make.

3rd – Memorize Jeremiah 9:23-24. Meditate on these two verses. Let them sink deep into your soul.

ESV Jeremiah 9:23-24 ¶ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 1141.