

Fact Sheet for **“God’s Heart and Our Trust”**  
**Jeremiah 26**

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Today we will be in Jeremiah 26. There is a change in Jeremiah at this point. In chapters 2-25 we have seen 13 prophetic messages to Judah. You now are going to find a lot more story, like you find in Genesis or Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

Life seems to bring us both the good and the bad. It’s easy to trust God when everything is going well, but it is a challenge when things aren’t going so well. There’s an encouragement here from Jeremiah’s example to stand firm in the tough times.

This chapter will also remind us of God’s heart within his justice.

Do you remember the last three kings of Judah before Jerusalem was destroyed? They were Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Let me add the two preceding kings, Josiah and Jehoahaz. Josiah was a godly king. He sought to purge idolatry from the land. The temple was repaired during his reign, the book of the Law was found, and a great Passover was observed. The last 4 kings of Judah were not like Josiah. They all did evil in the sight of the LORD.

When Josiah died the people made Jehoahaz his son king. He reigned for only three months before he was deposed by an Egyptian Pharaoh who then took him to Egypt and exacted tribute from Judah (2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 36).

That Pharaoh made Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king. Notice that it was not the people of Judah that made him king. Jehoiakim would tax the people in order to pay this tribute (2 Kings 23:35). And we saw in chapter 25 that in Jehoiakim’s 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made Jehoiakim his servant. Judah now would serve Babylon, not Egypt.

So we come to Jeremiah 26 and God’s message that Jeremiah was to speak. *Read Jeremiah 26:1-6.*

When Joshua led the people into the land the tabernacle was set-up in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). This was where Hannah brought Samuel (1 Samuel 1). But God had reduced Shiloh to ruins because of the evil of the Israeli people (Jeremiah 7:12). God would do the same to Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. This would happen during the reign of Zedekiah. But, don’t miss the LORD’s heart in this.

**ESV Jeremiah 26:3** **It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds.**

This reminds me of 2 Peter 3:9. In his foreknowledge God knew that the people would not turn from their evil ways. The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem was already a foregone conclusion.

Remember Josiah's character (2 Kings 23:25)? But consider the very next two verses (1 Kings 23:26-27). Jerusalem's destruction was a foregone conclusion. But we still hear God's heart in his justice.

Then Jeremiah is arrested. *Read Jeremiah 26:7-9.*

The officials came and court was convened. *Read Jeremiah 26:10-11.*

Jeremiah gave his defense. *Read Jeremiah 26:12-15.*

Notice that Jeremiah does not waver. You can almost hear God's promise (Jeremiah 1:17-19) ringing in his ears.

What has God told us? Here are a few samples (Matthew 6:34; Romans 13:1; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 13:5-6). The question is, "Will we stand firm in trusting God when our tough times come?"

Then the officials announced their decision... with a precedent from history. *Read Jeremiah 26:16-19.* They quoted Micah 3:12. But then they cited a second case about a prophet that is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture. Listen carefully. Doesn't it seem to say the exact opposite of the first case? *Read Jeremiah 26:20-23.* Why did they cite this second case? Why were these words recorded by Jeremiah? How do they move the story along?

When I have questions like this that I can't answer it tells me that I don't understand the passage well enough, so I went looking. I looked at the notes in several study bibles. I consulted several commentaries. I re-read the history of Josiah through Jehoiakim in Kings and Chronicles. Finally I came across this in one commentary.

"Another reason for the insertion of the narrative here may have been to contrast Jehoiakim with Hezekiah. Hezekiah listened to Micah, and disaster was averted; Jehoiakim refused to listen to Jeremiah. The intended conclusion the reader was expected to draw is obvious—Jehoiakim was bringing disaster to Judah."<sup>1</sup>

It isn't a very long stretch to conclude that Jehoiakim's popular support in Judah was waning. Jehoiakim wasn't made king by the people. He was installed as king by an Egyptian Pharaoh. He was taxing the people to pay tribute to him. He would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. Even his own officials used him as a bad case study in contrast with Hezekiah's good response.

Though the priests, the prophets, and the people in the temple that day were angry at Jeremiah it was these officials who brought a reasoned response. And God rescued Jeremiah.

**<sup>24</sup> ¶ But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that he was not given over to the people to be put to death.**

What have we seen for us today? 1. We have been reminded of God's heart in the midst of his justice (Jeremiah 26:3; 2 Peter 3:9). 2. We have been given the example of Jeremiah who was confident in the LORD as people were seeking his life, and the LORD rescued him.

Trust God in all that you are facing, and will face. He won't make all your problems vanish, but he will see you through all of them.

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<sup>1</sup> The New American Commentary, Broadman: Jeremiah and Lamentations, p.239.