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**Covenant - Jesus
Did Not Just
Predict
Jerusalem's Fall -
He Reenacted
Jeremiah**



By Dan Maines

Jesus Did Not Just Predict Jerusalem's Fall - He Reenacted Jeremiah

Introduction

† Jesus did more than predict that Jerusalem and its Temple would fall. His actions and words deliberately stood in the tradition of Israel's covenant prophets, especially Jeremiah.

† Jeremiah stood at the gate of the Temple, confronted a generation that trusted in the Temple while rejecting God, condemned corrupt leadership, warned that the sanctuary would become like Shiloh, and announced the coming

Babylonian judgment.

† Centuries later Jesus entered Jerusalem, confronted the Temple establishment, cleansed the Temple, quoted Jeremiah's own words, pronounced judgment upon the religious leaders, wept over the city, and announced that their house would be left desolate.

† The parallels are powerful. Jeremiah warned Jerusalem before the Babylonian destruction. Jesus warned Jerusalem before the Roman destruction. Both generations trusted in the presence of the Temple while refusing the covenant faithfulness God required.

† But Jesus' warning went beyond Jeremiah's. Jeremiah announced judgment that would destroy the city and Temple while the Old Covenant order continued afterward. Jesus announced the judgment that would bring that covenant age to its final end. The Temple would fall, its sacrificial system would cease, and the obsolete covenant order would disappear as the New Covenant stood complete in Christ (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 9:8-10; Hebrews 12:26-28).

† When we read Jeremiah beside the words and actions of Jesus, Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 doesn't appear as an unrelated historical tragedy. It appears as the covenant judgment Jesus Himself announced upon His generation (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22).

Jeremiah 7:1-4

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, "Stand at the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the Lord!'" This is what the Lord of armies, the God of Israel says: "Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.'

† Jeremiah was sent directly to the Temple to confront people who believed possession of God's sanctuary guaranteed their security. Their confidence was in the Temple while their lives

demonstrated covenant rebellion.

† The Temple had become a false source of security. They assumed that because God's name was associated with that building, judgment couldn't reach Jerusalem. Jeremiah told them that the building wouldn't protect an unfaithful generation. † This is essential background for understanding Jesus. By the first century, Jerusalem again possessed a magnificent Temple, an established priesthood, sacrifices, religious leaders, and confidence in its sacred status, yet Jesus warned that judgment was approaching that very house (Matthew 23:37-38; Matthew 24:1-2).

Jeremiah 7:8-11

"Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, offer sacrifices to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known, then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are saved!'-so that you may do all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I Myself have seen it," declares the Lord.

† Jeremiah called the Temple a den of robbers because the people were using God's house as a refuge while continuing in rebellion. The expression wasn't originally about merchants conducting ordinary business. It was a prophetic condemnation of covenant corruption.

† Jesus later deliberately used Jeremiah's language when He cleansed the Temple. That connection matters. Jesus wasn't merely objecting to commercial activity. He was standing in Jeremiah's prophetic tradition and condemning a corrupt Temple establishment that was approaching judgment (Matthew 21:12-13).

† The quotation carried Jeremiah's judgment context with it. Anyone familiar with Jeremiah's Temple sermon would know what followed the warning about the den of robbers, the destruction of the sanctuary itself.

Jeremiah 7:12-15

"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the beginning, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things," declares the Lord, and I spoke to you, speaking again and again, but you did not listen, and I called you but you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, just as I did to Shiloh. I will hurl you out of My sight, just as I have hurled out all your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.

† Jeremiah destroyed the argument that God's sanctuary couldn't be judged. Shiloh had once been the location of God's dwelling place, yet God allowed it to be destroyed because of Israel's rebellion.

† The lesson was unmistakable. God's presence wasn't permanently tied to a building. Jerusalem's Temple wasn't immune from judgment just because God's name had once been placed there.

† Jesus gave the same kind of warning in His generation. The first-century Temple was impressive, but Jesus told His disciples that not one stone would be left upon another (Matthew 24:1-2). Sacred history couldn't protect a covenant-breaking generation from the judgment God had announced.

Jeremiah 26:4-6

And you shall say to them, 'This is what the Lord says: "If you do not listen to Me, to walk in My Law which I have set before you, to listen to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I have been sending to you again and again, but you have not listened; then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.'"

† Jeremiah's Temple sermon wasn't an abstract prophecy. It was a direct warning that both the Temple and Jerusalem were facing destruction.

† Jeremiah stood in the Temple courts and announced judgment against the religious center of the nation. That

message immediately placed him in conflict with the priests, prophets, and people (Jeremiah 26:7-11).

† Jesus followed the same prophetic pattern. He confronted Jerusalem's religious authorities in their own center of power and warned them that judgment was coming. Like Jeremiah, His message challenged the belief that Jerusalem and its Temple were untouchable.

Jeremiah 26:12-13

Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and to all the people, saying, The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. Now then, reform your ways and your deeds and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will relent of the disaster which He has pronounced against you.

† Jeremiah explicitly said his prophetic message was against both this house and this city. The coming judgment involved the Temple and Jerusalem together.

† Jesus followed the same pattern. He condemned the Temple establishment, pronounced the house desolate, and then announced Jerusalem's coming destruction (Matthew 23:37-38; Matthew 24:1-2).

† This strengthens the parallel because neither Jeremiah nor Jesus was merely criticizing religious behavior inside the Temple. Both were announcing covenant judgment against the Temple and the city connected with it.

Matthew 21:12-13

And Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those who were selling and buying on the temple grounds, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, "It is written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers."

† Jesus physically entered the Temple and performed a prophetic sign. His actions weren't disconnected from His message. The cleansing dramatized His judgment against the

Temple establishment.

† His words joined Isaiah's house of prayer with Jeremiah's den of robbers (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). The Jeremiah quotation places Jesus' action within the setting of Jeremiah's Temple judgment sermon.

† Jeremiah had announced that the den of robbers would not escape destruction. Jesus used the same language shortly before announcing that Jerusalem's house would be left desolate and its Temple demolished (Matthew 23:38; Matthew 24:2).

† Jesus' audience didn't have to guess where that phrase came from. The words den of robbers came from Jeremiah's Temple sermon, where the warning immediately continued with the destruction of God's house (Jeremiah 7:11-15).

† Jesus wasn't promising the restoration of that Temple system. He was confronting it before its judgment.

Matthew 21:33-41

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and he leased it to vine-growers and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his fruit. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they did the same things to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let's kill him and take possession of his inheritance!' And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the fruit in the proper seasons."

† Jesus placed Himself at the climax of Israel's prophetic history. God had sent His servants, the prophets, and they had

been rejected. Finally the owner sent his son.

† This makes the connection with Jeremiah even stronger. Jeremiah was one of the servants sent to warn Israel. Jesus wasn't merely another servant. He was the Son standing at the climax of the covenant story (Hebrews 1:1-2).

† The religious leaders understood that Jesus was speaking about them (Matthew 21:45). The parable wasn't describing leaders thousands of years later. Jesus was confronting the leaders standing before Him.

Matthew 23:29-36

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, and you say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You snakes, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"

"Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† Jesus identified His opponents with the generations that had persecuted God's prophets. The prophetic pattern that included Jeremiah had reached its climax.

† Jesus didn't place this judgment thousands of years into the future. He said all these things would come upon this generation. The audience and the timing were stated directly.

† The generation rejecting the Son would fill up the measure of its fathers. Jerusalem's coming judgment was therefore presented as the culmination of a long history of rejecting God's messengers (Matthew 21:37-39).

† This is why AD 70 matters to fulfilled prophecy. Jesus attached the coming judgment to His own generation.

Matthew 23:37-39

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

† Jeremiah mourned over a nation heading toward destruction. Jesus likewise lamented Jerusalem while announcing its desolation. Judgment wasn't something He celebrated.

† Notice the prophetic charge, Jerusalem killed the prophets and stoned those sent to her. Jesus interpreted Jerusalem's approaching destruction within the history of Israel's rejection of God's messengers.

† Then came the sentence, your house is left unto you desolate. Immediately afterward Jesus left the Temple, and His disciples called His attention to its buildings. He responded by announcing their complete destruction (Matthew 24:1-2).

† The movement is striking. The Temple was called God's house, Jesus pronounced it your house, declared it desolate, departed from it, and then predicted its destruction.

Luke 19:41-44

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known on this day, even you, the conditions for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will put up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground, and throw down your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

† Jesus didn't describe an undefined worldwide catastrophe. He

looked directly at Jerusalem and described what would happen to that city.

† Enemies would surround Jerusalem, build siege works against it, enclose it, destroy its inhabitants, and tear it down. This is siege language directed specifically at Jerusalem.

† Jesus wept because the judgment was real and devastating. Like Jeremiah before the Babylonian destruction, Jesus mourned over the city He knew was approaching destruction.

† The reason Jesus gave was also covenantal, Jerusalem hadn't recognized the time of its visitation.

Luke 21:20-22

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus removed any uncertainty about the identity of the city. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies, and its desolation would be near.

† His disciples were given a visible warning and told to flee Judea. These instructions only make sense for people who could personally encounter the approaching siege.

† Jesus called these the days of vengeance and said they were connected with the fulfillment of what had been written. The language reaches backward into Israel's prophetic warnings and places Jerusalem's coming destruction within that prophetic story.

† Jeremiah had warned of Babylonian armies against Jerusalem. Jesus warned His generation of armies surrounding Jerusalem again. In AD 70, Roman forces destroyed the city and Temple.

Matthew 24:1-2

Jesus left the temple area and was going on His way when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. But

He responded and said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

† Jesus had just pronounced the house desolate. Now He physically left the Temple and announced its destruction. The sequence shouldn't be separated.

† The disciples were looking at the actual first-century Temple. Jesus said these buildings would be thrown down. His prediction had a specific object, a specific city, and a specific historical audience.

† Jeremiah's warning against Solomon's Temple ended in Babylonian destruction. Jesus' warning against the second Temple ended in Roman destruction in AD 70.

† But unlike the Babylonian destruction, no biblical command followed AD 70 telling God's people to rebuild the Temple, restore the Levitical priesthood, or resume animal sacrifices. Christ had already offered the once-for-all sacrifice and established the New Covenant reality to which the old system pointed (Hebrews 9:11-12; Hebrews 10:10-14).

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† Hebrews explains the covenant transition taking place during that first-century generation. The first covenant had become old and was near its disappearance.

† This helps explain why Jesus' Temple judgment was greater in covenant significance than the Babylonian destruction. After Babylon, the Temple system returned. The Temple was rebuilt and sacrifices resumed.

† The judgment Jesus announced came after Christ had established the New Covenant through His blood. The old order wasn't awaiting another restoration, it was near its disappearance (Hebrews 9:8-10; Hebrews 10:9).

† AD 70 didn't create the New Covenant. Christ established the New Covenant through His death. AD 70 publicly and

historically removed the Temple-centered system that belonged to the covenant declared obsolete.

Historical References

† Flavius Josephus, an eyewitness to the Jewish War, described the Roman siege of Jerusalem, famine within the city, internal violence, the burning of the Temple, and Jerusalem's devastation in *The Wars of the Jews*, especially Books 5 and 6.

† Josephus records that the Temple was burned during the Roman conquest under Titus in AD 70 and describes the enormous destruction that followed. His account provides important historical testimony to the catastrophe Jesus had warned would come upon Jerusalem.

† Eusebius later recorded the early Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed the city before the war and went to Pella, connecting their escape with an oracle given before the conflict. This is historically significant when compared with Jesus' command for His followers to flee when Jerusalem's danger became apparent.

† The historical record doesn't prove Jesus' prophecy by itself, Scripture does that. The historical writers are valuable because they document the first-century events that correspond to the kind of siege, destruction, and devastation Jesus described.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We shouldn't take prophecies spoken directly to first-century Jerusalem and move them thousands of years beyond the audience Jesus addressed. Jesus said the judgment would come upon this generation (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).

† We don't need an earthly Temple, an earthly priesthood, or animal sacrifices. Christ is our High Priest, His sacrifice is complete, and God's people are His dwelling place (Hebrews 10:10-14; Ephesians 2:19-22).

† We shouldn't place our confidence in religious buildings, institutions, traditions, or outward systems. Jeremiah's generation learned that possessing the Temple wasn't the same as faithfully belonging to God, and Jesus confronted the same

false confidence in His generation.

† We should read Jesus as His original audience heard Him, against the background of Israel's prophets. His Temple actions weren't random events. They were prophetic signs pointing toward covenant judgment.

† Most importantly, we live on the other side of that covenant transition. We aren't waiting for the Old Covenant world to disappear. We belong to the kingdom that cannot be shaken and come to the heavenly Jerusalem through Christ (Hebrews 12:22-28).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Was Jesus actually repeating Jeremiah's warning?

A: Jesus directly quoted Jeremiah's den of robbers language while cleansing the Temple. Jeremiah 7 places that expression inside a sermon warning that the Temple would be judged. Jesus then announced Jerusalem's desolation and the Temple's destruction (Jeremiah 7:11-15; Matthew 21:13; Matthew 23:38; Matthew 24:2).

Q: What was different between Jeremiah's judgment and Jesus' judgment?

A: Jeremiah warned of Babylonian destruction, after which the Old Covenant Temple system was eventually restored. Jesus announced Jerusalem's destruction after His once-for-all sacrifice had established the New Covenant and while the first covenant was becoming old and nearing its disappearance (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:9-14).

Q: Did Jesus say when this judgment would happen?

A: Yes. Jesus said all these things would come upon this generation, and He later said this generation would not pass away until all these things took place (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean Jesus was unconcerned about those who suffered?

A: No. Jesus wept over Jerusalem while warning of its destruction. His tears show compassion even while He pronounced righteous judgment (Luke 19:41-44).

Q: Why is the connection with Jeremiah important?

A: It shows that Jesus' warnings belong within the biblical pattern of covenant judgment. Jeremiah warned Jerusalem before Babylon. Jesus warned Jerusalem before Rome. Jesus' use of Jeremiah's own Temple language helps identify what His actions were announcing (Jeremiah 7:8-15; Matthew 21:12-13).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Jeremiah 7:1-4; Jeremiah 7:8-11; Jeremiah 7:12-15; Jeremiah 26:4-6; Jeremiah 26:12-13; Matthew 21:12-13; Matthew 21:33-41; Matthew 23:29-36; Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-44; Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:1-2; Hebrews 8:13

† Historical writers: Flavius Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Books 5-6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3

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