

## The Broken Covenant

Jeremiah 11:1-17

### Introduction:

1. Jeremiah has been described as the “weeping prophet.”
2. As author of the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations he grieves because the people of God have forsaken Him and gone after other gods.
3. In Jer. 11 he is commanded to go into the cities and proclaim God’s grievance against them. “They have broken My covenant,” God said.
4. It was not that they had simply sinned against Him, but they had revolted. They had mutinied. They had turned away from Him to serve other gods.
5. As a wife she had scorned her husband and now she had no right in His house.
6. What would God’s response be? What will God’s response be if we do the same?

### Discussion:

#### I. “Hear the words of this covenant” (11:1-5).

- A. In this initial statement God brings His grievance before the people.
  1. Like in ancient suzerainty treaties, the sovereign King is confronting those who have violated their commitment.
  2. Such treaties, like God’s covenant with His people, involved both blessings and curses (Deut. 27-30).
  3. Because the covenant has been violated this text begins by reminding of the curse (vs. 3).
- B. What is the covenant under consideration?
  1. It is specified in verse 4: It is that covenant that God commanded when He brought them out of Egypt.
  2. Note Ex. 24:3-8. This statement follows the instruction stemming from the ten commandments and the other ordinances and laws given in Ex. 20-23. I would suggest that what is contained in Ex. 20-23 is only representative of what God was looking for. These laws were reflective of the kind of heart God was expecting from His people.
  3. This would identify them as His (verse 4). It was not that they would become His people by doing these things, but that being His people they would do them.
- C. Their covenant relationship was founded upon God’s oath to their forefathers to give them a land flowing with milk and honey (verse 5).
  1. The promise that God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was the consideration.
  2. Gen. 15:7: “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.”
  3. Gen. 15:18: “To your descendants I have given this land.”
  4. Gen. 17:1-8.
  5. Reiterated to Isaac. Gen. 26:3: “I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I

swore to your father Abraham.”

6. Jacob had a dream of a ladder reaching to heaven. The Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants” (Gen. 28:13).
- D. God had done just as He had promised.

II. “Hear the words of this covenant and do them” (11:6-8).

- A. God had warned their fathers, but they did not listen, but each walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart (vs. 7-8).
- B. God’s message to those of Jeremiah’s day was “hear the words of this covenant and do them.” But implied in the message was that they were doing just as their fathers had done. They were walking in the stubbornness of their evil hearts.
- C. Is this the same condemnation that Jesus is bringing against those of His day?  
Lk. 11:47-51: “Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them . . . so the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you it will be charged against this generation.”
- D. Is this the same condemnation that Stephen is bringing against those who ultimately put him to death?  
Acts 7:51-53: “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (Having denied the covenant?) are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

III. Judah and Israel conspired to turn back to other gods—they have broken covenant (11:9-13).

- A. The word (“qeser”) translated “conspired” in NASB is interesting.
  1. It is variously translated: “mutiny,” “revolt.” Cf. Jer. 5:23, 11:8; Isa. 59:13.
  2. The term is a metaphor. There was no deep-laid plot, no secrecy behind the apostasy that Jeremiah witnessed, although religiously Judah displayed all that a carefully organized plot would achieve. The metaphor is a pointed one. The net result of the apostasy was the renunciation of Yahweh’s lordship and of the nation’s covenant obligations (J. A. Thompson, *New International Commentary, The - The New International Commentary on the Old Testament – The Book of Jeremiah*).
- B. They have refused to hear (v. 10). They have broken “My covenant,” said the Lord (v. 10). This is no mere failure brought on in error. This is revolt! Reminds me of the language of Isaiah 1: “Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me.” “They have abandoned the Lord; they have despised the Holy one of Israel. They have turned from Him” (2, 4).
- C. God will bring disaster on them (11:11ff).
  1. This is not because He is unkind (cf. Jer. 7:5-7). It is not because He is not gracious, but because they reject His graciousness.
  2. They refuse Him and instead choose Baal.

3. "I have forsaken My house. I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies" (Jer. 12:7). "Like a lion in the forest; she has roared against Me; Therefore I have come to hate her" (Jer. 12:8).

IV. She has no right in God's house (11:14-17).

- A. God says, "Do not pray for this people." "That sounds harsh," you say. "I thought God always wanted us to pray for people." Prayer is useless for these people because they have rejected God. Cf. Jer. 14:11; 1 Jn. 5:16.
- B. The Lord blessed the olive tree, but she has rejected Him and now she will be burned (v. 16).

V. What does all this mean to us???

- A. Have we failed to distinguish between breaking the covenant and occasional inadvertent sin?
- B. Sin is a violation of the terms of the covenant agreement.
  1. Although immaturity is expected, it is provided for through covenant forgiveness (1 Jn. 1:8).
  2. This is not to minimize the severity of sin ignorantly committed. It is sin. Christ died for it.
- C. However, one is not put out of the covenant by a simple breach of it.
  1. Israel was not put out of covenant relationship with God by occasional sin. This is what the sacrifices were for.
  2. The church at Corinth, as messed up as they were, were not put out of covenant relationship with God. They needed to repent!
  3. The churches of Asia needed to repent or their lampstand would be removed (Rev. 2-3).
- D. Repudiation of covenant relationship is variously described in Scripture.
  1. "Sin unto death" (1 Jn. 5:16). Do not pray for this.
  2. "Fallen away, crucify the Son of God and put Him to open shame" (Heb. 6:6).
  3. "Severed from Christ" (Gal. 5:4).
  4. "Fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).
  5. "Deliberately keep on sinning, trampling under foot the Son of God, regarding as unclean the blood of the covenant, insulted the spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:24-31).
  6. "Carried away—fall from secure position" (2 Pet. 3:17).
  7. "Remove lampstand" (Rev. 2:5).
  8. "Denied My name" (Rev. 3:8).
- E. This involves an abandonment of the commitment to covenant loyalty. See 1 Cor. 15:2; 2 Pet. 1:10; 2:20; Jude 4, Rev. 2:10; 20:4; Heb. 2:1ff; 3:12ff; 10:32ff; James 2:14ff; Matt. 25:31ff.
- F. Perseverance is a condition to one's salvation (Heb. 10:32-12:3). Abandoning the covenant is death.
- G. 2 Tim. 2:11-13 is a powerful statement about covenant relationship.

"If we died with him, we will also live with him." In baptism we have committed to the

covenant with an oath of allegiance. Cf. Rom. 6:1ff; 1 Pet. 3:21.

“If we endure, we shall also reign with him.” Notice the kingly associations and the need for perseverance/endurance.

“If we disown him, he will disown us.” “Depart from me I never knew you.” If we confess him before men . . . if we deny him . . .

“If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” We may deny our covenant commitment, but he will not.

#### Conclusion:

1. God is faithful to His promises.
2. Have you made a commitment to be faithful to God.
3. Even though you may sin from time to time seek out His forgiveness. Maintain your commitment. You have not lost your covenant relationship with Him by occasional sin.
4. BUT do not disown Him! Do not be faithless! Do not betray His covenant loyalty! Although you are the beloved of God He will give you into the hand of your enemies (Jer. 12:7).