

Jer. 11:1 ¶ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
Jer. 11:2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
Jer. 11:3 And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,
Jer. 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:
Jer. 11:5 That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

This chapter begins with announcement of yet another message that God wants Jeremiah to proclaim to the people of the Southern Kingdom. This message is identified as directly related to the covenant that the LORD made with His people after miraculously delivering them from slavery in Egypt. Jeremiah is to remind the people that this covenant was conditional upon their obedience to God's commands. The LORD also directly relates their possession of the "promised land" to the unconditional covenant that He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I thought it was important to note that the LORD references His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as something yet to be done. When He chooses to fulfill that oath is dependent upon their descendants keeping covenant with the LORD as detailed by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy. The oath to "the fathers" specifies that the children of Israel will remain in the land forever under God's protection and provision. This cannot happen until the Jewish people determine to keep covenant with the LORD as established by His covenant with Moses.

*Genesis 17:7–8 "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations **for an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession**; and I will be their God."*

*Deuteronomy 28:1–2 "And it shall come to pass, **if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments** which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God."*

*Deuteronomy 28:58–64 "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law **that are written in this book**, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon*

*thee, until thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so **the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.** And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone."*

*Deuteronomy 30:1–6 "And it shall come to pass, **when all these things are come upon thee**, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, **And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee** this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: **And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.** And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."*

I have probably used these quotes already in this study, but I think they are well worth repeating since so many in the "church" today seem to be confused about God's continuing plan for the nation of Israel.

Jer. 11:6 Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.

Jer. 11:7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.

Jer. 11:8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do; but they did *them* not.

Jeremiah was obedient to God's command. He spread the word throughout the land that the LORD wanted His people to keep the covenant that had been established with them through Moses. It is important to note that to *know* the covenant was not good enough; God expects obedience—actions that prove their commitment to and faith in Him. This truth is echoed by James; when one chooses

not to obey God's word, he can deceive himself into thinking he is pleasing God just by knowing His word.

James 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Jeremiah reminded the people that their forefathers refused to obey God. They chose instead to live according to the desires of their sinful nature. The people had misinterpreted God's patience to mean that He would not follow through on His promise, but they were sadly mistaken. You would have thought that the capture of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria would have opened their eyes. I guess they felt they had special protection because of the presence of the temple in their midst.

People today also misinterpret God's longsuffering. They seem to think that His mercy and grace will prevent Him from judging our sin, but Peter tells us differently.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Jer. 11:9 And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jer. 11:10 They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

"conspiracy" = Hebrew: an (unlawful) alliance...conspiracy, treason

The LORD is basically declaring to Jeremiah that the people of the Southern Kingdom are following in the footsteps of their forefathers. They are deliberately rejecting the LORD to serve false gods. They have committed treason against the God of Israel.

This is really a perplexing truth about humanity. We will go to the nth degree to keep from recognizing YHWH, the self-existent, eternal, almighty God as LORD. However, we will readily use our energy to serve false gods in accordance with the desires of the flesh and to our ultimate detriment, while rejecting our Creator who so wants to deliver us from bondage to sin and bless us for eternity.

The LORD is emphasizing that both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had broken covenant with Him. The Northern Kingdom had already experienced His hand of judgment. Though He has been longsuffering, that same hand of judgment is about to fall on Judah.

Jer. 11:11 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

This verse is a declaration that YHWH's judgment is certain. This judgment will bring evil upon his people—evil that cannot be escaped. Prayers of repentance will fall on deaf ears once judgment starts. God is going to push the

mute button on Judah so to speak.

Jer. 11:12 Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

Jer. 11:13 For *according to* the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and *according to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to *that* shameful thing, *even* altars to burn incense unto Baal.

It is really a sad commentary that the people of God who have a history full of miracles giving evidence of His power and desire to protect and provide for them will respond to His judgment by praying to false gods. Those petitions will die as soon as they are expressed; it will be as if they were never uttered. The evil spirits that deceive the people through their pagan worship are nothing before the power of Almighty God. What He purposes will always be accomplished.

Isaiah 14:24 "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:"

The LORD observes that to their shame there are as many altars to honor Baal as there are streets in the city of Jerusalem.

Jer. 11:14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

God's patience with His people has reached its limit. At this point He tells the prophet that He is not to utter one prayer on behalf of the people. He also emphasizes that His ears will be closed to any cries for help that they may address to Him during their judgment.

I don't think that is a truth that we focus on very much. God's patience is not without limit. We like to focus on God's grace, mercy and love; but those characteristics are balanced by his righteousness and judgment.

Psalms 9:7-8 "But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness."

Psalms 33:4-5 "For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD."

Jer. 11:15 What hath my beloved to do in mine house, *seeing* she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.

"my beloved" = the people of Israel; in context of Jeremiah's message—the people of Judah

“mine house” = the temple

“she hath wrought lewdness with many” = worship rituals performed by the Jewish people in honor of the false gods of the nations

I liked the CJB translation of the last part of the verse: *“Offerings of consecrated meat can no longer help, because it is when you are doing evil that you are happy.”* In other words, though they continue to go through the motions of worship at the temple that were established to honor YHWH, there was no heart involvement. They were just performing a ritual. They preferred instead to participate in the worship rituals in honor of the false gods that fed the desires of their flesh.

Jer. 11:16 The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

Jer. 11:17 For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

My paraphrase: The LORD had created Israel to be a beautiful and prosperous nation. They had chosen to reject His covenant and its associated blessings and bring down His hand of judgment. The result would be great destruction. The reason for this judgment—their worship of Baal (representative of all false gods).

I liked the phrasing that JFB used in commenting on verse 17: “The sinner’s sin is to his own hurt.”

Jer. 11:18 ¶ And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it: then thou shewedst me their doings.

Jer. 11:19 But I *was* like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

At this point Jeremiah seems to begin speaking for himself. He is acknowledging that the LORD had revealed to him how his own people were plotting to kill him. Evidently they had concluded that if you don’t like the message, get rid of the messenger.

As we continue to read, these enemies are identified as the “men of Anathoth,” (v21—his hometown) most likely in reference to the priests there that did not like him speaking against them.

Jeremiah 1:1 “The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:”

Jer. 11:20 But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

After receiving the LORD's revelation, Jeremiah prays for God's vengeance upon his enemies in much the same way that David often prayed. Both were of the mindset that their enemies were God's enemies.....And if we are living our lives so as to truly honor the Lord, that should be true of us as well.

Psalms 5:8-10 "Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee."

Jer. 11:21 Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

Jer. 11:22 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine:

Jer. 11:23 And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, *even* the year of their visitation.

In these verses the LORD answers Jeremiah's prayer. He tells Jeremiah that the men of Anathoth that are seeking to murder him for declaring God's word will be punished. When He chooses to exact that punishment many will be killed and their sons and daughters will die from hunger. None of the guilty will survive.