

THE BROKEN COVENANT

TEXT: JEREMIAH 11:1-23

INTRODUCTION:

1. The key word in Jeremiah chapter 11 is "covenant" (cf. 11:2, 3, 6, 8, 10).
2. The word "covenant" is an important Bible word. God's relationship with men are based on His covenants with them.
3. We see the first mention of a covenant in Genesis 6:18, before the flood, when God said to Noah, "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee."
4. Here we see an important principle: When God establishes a covenant, He expects complete obedience (Genesis 6:18, 22; cf. Jer. 11:4, 6, 7, 8; 12:17).
5. After the flood, God again established a covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:9-17).
6. In Genesis 15:18 we read, "The LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land." There are certain Jews (especially in Israel) that may not know much about the Bible, but they are familiar with this verse.
7. We read in Genesis 12:2 and 3 that the LORD said to Abraham, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
8. This covenant promise ("The Abrahamic Covenant") was repeated many times throughout the Bible, and it was also established with Abraham's son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob, and Jacob's descendents.
9. We saw that the first covenant, the one God established with Noah, was based on obedience (Gen. 6:22). The original Abrahamic covenant was also based upon obedience.
10. Abraham was told by the LORD to leave his homeland and go to the promised land. Abraham obeyed the LORD, and upon entering Canaan, the LORD enlarged and reiterated the original promises.
11. John Walvoord says, "The one condition, having been met, no further conditions are laid upon Abraham; the covenant having been solemnly established is now dependent upon divine veracity for its fulfillment."
12. This is why the Abrahamic Covenant is referred to as an unconditional covenant. Subsequently, all of Israel's covenants are unconditional except the Mosaic Covenant.
13. Israel and Judah were punished for breaking the covenant, but nevertheless their covenant with the LORD is everlasting (cf. Ezek 16:59, 60).

I. THEY BROKE THE COVENANT

1. The LORD told Jeremiah to, "Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 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. 11:1-3).
2. There is a curse attached to the law (Jer. 11:3; cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 28:15ff).
3. Those who claim to be obeying the law (e.g., Orthodox Jews, Seventh-Day Adventists) overlook the fact that they are cursed.
4. Deuteronomy 27:26 says, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."
5. Galatians 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."
6. James 2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
7. The people in Jeremiah's day were cursed. They were so wicked, God told Jeremiah to stop praying for them (Jer. 11:14; cf. 7:16; 14:11).
8. God delivered their forefathers from "the iron furnace" of Egypt (Jer.11:4), but these wicked, idol-worshipping backsliders were heading toward the fiery furnace of hell.

II. THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST THE LORD (11:9).

1. In Jeremiah 1:2 we read that the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign."
2. In II Kings 23:1-3, we read that King Josiah "sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."
3. However, while all the people claimed to obey the covenant, some conspirators were quietly working against King Josiah and against the prophet Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 11:9-14).
4. These conspirators did not like King Josiah's reformation, and they resented Jeremiah's preaching.

5. God was gracious in raising up a godly king like Josiah, and a bold prophet like Jeremiah, but the people deliberately turned their back on God and returned to devilish Baal worship (11:13, 17).
6. Therefore, nothing remained but judgment (11:11, 12).
7. The people were shameless hypocrites (11:15). "Holy flesh" means meat set apart for holy worship in the temple. The Scofield margin says, "Its efficacy is 'passed from thee' who rejoicest in evil."
8. It wasn't supposed to turn out this way. God raised up Israel and Judah like "a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit" (11:16), but they provoked Him to anger by worshipping Baal (11:17, 18).

III. THEY TRIED TO KILL JEREMIAH (11:19-23).

1. Jesus said in Matthew 5:11 and 12, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
2. Our Lord said to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:31, 34 "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets... Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city."
3. And He said in Matthew 23:37 and 38, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."
4. Jeremiah himself was a type of Christ, and many people thought our Lord was Jeremiah. His disciples told Him, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14).
5. The plot to kill Jeremiah was hatched in his hometown of Anathoth (Jer. 11:21-23).
6. The LORD revealed the plot to Jeremiah (11:18, 19), and Jeremiah prayed to God for help (11:20).

CONCLUSION:

1. Jeremiah was misunderstood, falsely accused, and hated by his countrymen. Even the people from his hometown tried to kill him (11:21).
2. But Jeremiah found joy and comfort in the Word of God (cf. 15:15, 16).
3. And so must we.

