

Jeremiah's Prophecy to Judah—The Broken Covenant (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

Jeremiah 11–12

The Broken Covenant

11:1 The LORD said to Jeremiah:

2 “Hear the terms of the covenant I made with Israel and pass them on to the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem.

3 Tell them that the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘Anyone who does not keep the terms of the covenant will be under a curse.

4 Those are the terms that I charged your ancestors to keep when I brought them out of Egypt, that place which was like an iron-smelting furnace. I said at that time, “Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement exactly as I commanded you. If you do, you will be my people and I will be your God.

5 Then I will keep the promise I swore on oath to your ancestors to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.” That is the very land that you still live in today.” And I responded, “Amen! Let it be so, LORD!”

6 The LORD said to me, “Announce all the following words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: ‘Listen to the terms of my covenant with you and carry them out!

7 For I solemnly warned your ancestors to obey me. I warned them again and again, ever since I delivered them out of Egypt until this very day.

8 But they did not listen to me or pay any attention to me! Each one of them followed the stubborn inclinations of his own wicked heart. So I brought on them all the punishments threatened in the covenant because they did not carry out its terms as I commanded them to do.”

Inescapable Punishment of the Covenant Breakers

9 The LORD said to me, “The people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem have plotted rebellion against me!

10 They have gone back to the evil ways of their ancestors of old who refused to obey what I told them. They, too, have paid allegiance to other gods and worshiped them. Both the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah have violated the covenant I made with their ancestors.

11 So I, the LORD, say this: ‘I will soon bring disaster on them which they will not be able to escape! When they cry out to me for help, I will not listen to them.

12 Then those living in the towns of Judah and in Jerusalem will go and cry out for help to the gods to whom they have been sacrificing. However, those gods will by no means be able to save them when disaster strikes them.

13 This is in spite of the fact that the people of Judah have as many gods as they have towns and the citizens of Jerusalem have set up as many altars to sacrifice to that disgusting god, Baal, as they have streets in the city!’

Jeremiah Forbidden to Pray for the People

14 So, Jeremiah, do not pray for these people. Do not cry out to me or petition me on their behalf. Do not plead with me to save them. For I will not listen to them when they call out to me for help when disaster strikes them.”

15 The LORD says to the people of Judah,

“What right do you have to be in my temple, my beloved people?

Many of you have done wicked things.

Can your acts of treachery be so easily canceled by sacred offerings that you take joy in doing evil even while you make them?

16 I, the LORD, once called you a thriving olive tree, one that produced beautiful fruit.

But I will set you on fire,

fire that will blaze with a mighty roar.

Then all your branches will be good for nothing.

17 For though I, the LORD who rules over all, planted you in the land, I now decree that disaster will come on you

because the nations of Israel and Judah have done evil

and have made me angry by offering sacrifices to the god Baal.”

A Plot against Jeremiah's Life

18 The LORD gave me knowledge, that I might have understanding.

Then he showed me what the people were doing.

19 Before this I had been like a docile lamb ready to be led to the slaughter.

I did not know they were making plans to kill me.

I did not know they were saying,

“Let's destroy the tree along with its fruit!

Let's remove Jeremiah from the world of the living

so people will not even be reminded of him any more.”

- 20 So I said to the LORD,
 “O LORD who rules over all, you are a just judge!
 You examine people’s hearts and minds.
 I want to see you pay them back for what they have done
 because I trust you to vindicate my cause.”

God’s Assurance of Punishment of the Conspirators

21 Then the LORD told me about some men from Anathoth who were threatening to kill me. They had threatened, “Stop prophesying in the name of the LORD or we will kill you!”

22 So the LORD who rules over all said, “I will surely punish them! Their young men will be killed in battle. Their sons and daughters will die of starvation.

23 Not one of them will survive. I will bring disaster on those men from Anathoth who threatened you. A day of reckoning is coming for them.”

Jeremiah’s Question about the Prosperity of the Wicked

- 12:1 LORD, you have always been fair
 whenever I have complained to you.
 However, I would like to speak with you about the disposition of justice.
 Why are wicked people successful?
 Why do all dishonest people have such easy lives?
- 2 You plant them like trees and they put down their roots.
 They grow prosperous and are very fruitful.
 They always talk about you,
 but they really care nothing about you.
- 3 But you, LORD, know all about me.
 You watch me and test my devotion to you.
 Drag these wicked men away like sheep to be slaughtered!
 Appoint a time when they will be killed!
- 4 How long must the land be parched
 and the grass in every field be withered?
 How long must the animals and the birds die
 because of the wickedness of the people who live in this land?
 For these people boast,
 “God will not see what happens to us.”

God’s Answer

- 5 The LORD answered,
- “If you have raced on foot against men and they have worn you out,
 how will you be able to compete with horses?
 And if you feel secure only in safe and open country,
 how will you manage in the thick undergrowth along the Jordan River?
- 6 As a matter of fact, even your own brothers
 and the members of your own family have betrayed you too.
 Even they have plotted to do away with you.
 So do not trust them even when they say kind things to you.

God’s Rejection of His Inheritance

- 7 “I will abandon my nation.
 I will forsake the people I call my own.
 I will turn my beloved people
 over to the power of their enemies.
- 8 The people I call my own have turned on me
 like a lion in the forest.
 They have roared defiantly at me.
 So I will treat them as though I hate them.
- 9 The people I call my own attack me like birds of prey or like hyenas.

- But other birds of prey are all around them.
 Let all the nations gather together like wild beasts.
 Let them come and destroy these people I call my own.
- 10 Many foreign rulers will ruin the land where I planted my people.
 They will trample all over my chosen land.
 They will turn my beautiful land
 into a desolate wasteland.
- 11 They will lay it waste.
 It will lie parched and empty before me.
 The whole land will be laid waste.
 But no one living in it will pay any heed.
- 12 A destructive army will come marching
 over the hilltops in the desert.
 For the LORD will use them as his destructive weapon
 against everyone from one end of the land to the other.
 No one will be safe.
- 13 My people will sow wheat, but will harvest weeds.
 They will work until they are exhausted, but will get nothing from it.
 They will be disappointed in their harvests
 because the LORD will take them away in his fierce anger.

A Conditional Promise for Israel's Neighbors

- 14 "I, the LORD, also have something to say concerning the wicked nations who surround my land and have attacked and plundered the land that I gave to my people as a permanent possession. I say: 'I will uproot the people of those nations from their lands and I will free the people of Judah who have been taken there.'
- 15 But after I have uprooted the people of those nations, I will relent and have pity on them. I will restore the people of each of those nations to their own lands and to their own country.
- 16 But they must make sure you learn to follow the religious practices of my people. Once they taught my people to swear their oaths using the name of the god Baal. But then, they must swear oaths using my name, saying, "As surely as the LORD lives, I swear." If they do these things, then they will be included among the people I call my own.
- 17 But I will completely uproot and destroy any of those nations that will not pay heed,'" says the LORD.

Josiah Renews the Covenant (c. Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:1–3

1 The king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem.
 2 The king went up to the LORD's temple, accompanied by all the people of Judah, all the residents of Jerusalem, the priests, and the prophets. All the people were there, from the youngest to the oldest. He read aloud all the words of the scroll of the covenant that had been discovered in the LORD's temple.
 3 The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant before the LORD, agreeing to follow the LORD and to obey his commandments, laws, and rules with all his heart and being, by carrying out the terms of this covenant recorded on this scroll.
 All the people agreed to keep the covenant.

2 Chronicles 34:29–32

29 The king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem.
 30 The king went up to the LORD's temple, accompanied by all the people of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, the priests, and the Levites. All the people were there, from the oldest to the youngest. He read aloud all the words of the scroll of the covenant that had been discovered in the LORD's temple.
 31 The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant before the LORD, agreeing to follow the LORD and to obey his commandments, laws, and rules with all his heart and being, by carrying out the terms of this covenant recorded on this scroll.
 32 He made all who were in Jerusalem and Benjamin agree to it. The residents of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover (14–21 Nisan [April] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:21–23

21 The king ordered all the people,
 "Observe the Passover of the LORD your God,
 as prescribed in this scroll of the covenant."

2 Chronicles 35:1–19

1 Josiah
 observed a Passover festival for the LORD in Jerusalem.
 They slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.
 2 He appointed the priests to fulfill their duties and encouraged

them to carry out their service in the LORD's temple.

3 He told the Levites, who instructed all Israel about things consecrated to the LORD, "Place the holy ark in the temple which King Solomon son of David of Israel built. Don't carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel!

4 Prepare yourselves by your families according to your divisions, as instructed by King David of Israel and his son Solomon.

5 Stand in the sanctuary and, together with the Levites, represent the family divisions of your countrymen.

6 Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves, and make preparations for your countrymen to do what the LORD commanded through Moses."

7 From his own royal flocks and herds, Josiah supplied the people with 30,000 lambs and goats for the Passover sacrifice, as well as 3,000 cattle.

8 His officials also willingly contributed to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the leaders of God's temple, supplied 2,600 Passover sacrifices and 300 cattle.

9 Konaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, along with Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the officials of the Levites, supplied the Levites with 5,000 Passover sacrifices and 500 cattle.

10 Preparations were made, and the priests stood at their posts and the Levites in their divisions as prescribed by the king.

11 They slaughtered the Passover lambs and the priests splashed the blood, while the Levites skinned the animals.

12 They reserved the burnt offerings and the cattle for the family divisions of the people to present to the LORD, as prescribed in the scroll of Moses.

13 They cooked the Passover sacrifices over the open fire as prescribed and cooked the consecrated offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. They quickly served them to all the people.

14 Afterward they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were offering burnt sacrifices and fat portions until evening. The Levites made preparations for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

15 The musicians, the descendants of Asaph, manned their posts, as prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The guards at the various gates did not need to leave their posts, for their fellow Levites made preparations for them.

16 So all the preparations for the LORD's service were made that day, as the Passover was observed and the burnt sacrifices were offered on the altar of the LORD, as prescribed by King Josiah.

17 So the Israelites who were present observed the Passover at that time, as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

18 A Passover like this had not been observed in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had observed a Passover like the one celebrated by Josiah, the priests, the Levites, all the people of Judah and Israel who were there, and the residents of Jerusalem.

19 This Passover was observed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

22 He issued this edict because a Passover like this had not been observed since the days of the judges; it was neglected for the entire period of the kings of Israel and Judah.

23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, such a Passover of the LORD was observed in Jerusalem.

Josiah Removes Idolatry That Had Appeared Since His Twelfth Year (c. Iyyar [May] 622 BC)

2 Kings 23:24–27	2 Chronicles 34:33
<p>24 Josiah also got rid of the ritual pits used to conjure up spirits, the magicians, personal idols, disgusting images, and all the detestable idols that had appeared in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem.</p> <p>In this way he carried out the terms of the law recorded on the scroll that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the LORD’s temple.</p> <p>25 No king before or after repented before the LORD as he did, with his whole heart, soul, and being in accordance with the whole law of Moses.</p> <p>26 Yet the LORD’s great anger against Judah did not subside; he was still infuriated by all the things Manasseh had done.</p> <p>27 The LORD announced, “I will also spurn Judah, just as I spurned Israel. I will reject this city that I chose—both Jerusalem and the temple, about which I said, “I will live there.”</p>	<p>33 Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the areas belonging to the Israelites and encouraged all who were in Israel to worship the LORD their God.</p> <p>Throughout the rest of his reign they did not turn aside from following the LORD God of their ancestors.</p>

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