

Week 4: The word of fire against covenant rejection – Jeremiah 11-17

Pray for our mission partners and your time in the Word

Context

1. What do you remember from the sermon on Sunday?

This week's passage Jeremiah brings up the covenant of the law, which is found in deuteronomy, and can be summarised from Duet 11

Read Deuteronomy 11:26-29

- From this passage how would you summarise the Covenant?

***Note:** this study we will be reading large sections of poetry rather than investigating a specific passage. So it is helpful to treat this study like a reflection (like a reflection on a sermon at church).*

Baal: Pagan god, often storm god or fertility god.

Notice

Read Jeremiah 11:1-14

2. Re-read the passage on your own

Prompts for reading on own

- Images/metaphors
- Keywords or ideas
- Questions you have

3. Share with a partner, what images had an impact on you?
4. Discuss all together,
 - a. What are you unsure about?
 - b. What do you think the passage is about?

Guided study

What do you think was God's intention with the covenant?

What are the covenant promises Judah keeps breaking?

- Why did they repeatedly fail?

What is the result of their failure?

In groups each read one of the following passages Group 1: Read Jeremiah 13:1-11 Group 2: Read Jeremiah 16:1-13 Group 3: Read Jeremiah 17:1-10 Note: Ch 13 Perath = another name for the euphrates river.	Prompts for further discussion What do the images represent? What's the reason for their refusal to obey God's word?
Reflect	
5. As a group, - What are some life lessons? - What do these chapters teach about God? - Resolve what you think the main message	Guided study <i>if needed</i> What does it reveal about the nature of the human heart? What does God consider when judging humans? What is the problem with human law keeping as a way to be right with God?
Respond	
6. What kind of impact should it have? On - What you believe - What you want in life - What you do this week	Galatians 3:14-15 (Or Rom 8:1-4) What is the basis for receiving God's blessing?
Pray in response to the passage, then in pairs	

MP: Judah has rejected God's covenant because of their corrupted hearts that refuse to obey the Lords Commands

App: If we rely on law keeping as a basis for relationship with God we will be cursed because of our hearts, Christ freed us from this curse by the cross.

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Listen to the terms of **this covenant** and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. ³ Tell them that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘**Cursed** is the one who **does not obey** the terms of this covenant— ⁴the terms I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.’ I said, ‘**Obey me** and do everything I command you, and **you will be my people, and I will be your God.**’ ⁵Then I will fulfill the oath I swore to your ancestors, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey’—the land you possess today.”

I answered, “Amen, LORD.”

⁶The LORD said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: ‘Listen to the terms of this covenant and follow them. ⁷From the time I brought your ancestors up from Egypt until today, I warned them again and again, saying, “Obey me.” ⁸But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts. So I brought on them all the curses of the covenant I had commanded them to follow but that they did not keep.”

⁹Then the LORD said to me, “There is a conspiracy among the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. ¹⁰They have returned to the sins of their ancestors, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. **Both Israel and Judah have broken the covenant I made with their ancestors.** ¹¹Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them. ¹²The towns of Judah and the people of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they will not help them at all when disaster strikes. ¹³You, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns; and the altars you have set up to burn incense to that shameful god Baal are as many as the streets of Jerusalem.’

¹⁴“Do not pray for this people or offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress.

A wastless belt

13 This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water.” ² So I bought a belt, as the LORD directed, and put it around my waist.

³ Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: ⁴ “Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks.” ⁵ So I went and hid it at Perath, as the LORD told me.

⁶ Many days later the LORD said to me, “Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there.” ⁷ So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless.

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹ “This is what the LORD says: ‘In the same way **I will ruin the pride of Judah** and the **great pride of Jerusalem**.’ ¹⁰ These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt—completely useless!’ ¹¹ For as a belt is bound around the waist, so I bound all the people of Israel and all the people of Judah to me,’ declares the LORD, ‘to be my people for my renown and praise and honor. But they have not listened.’

An end to Joy

16 Then the word of the LORD came to me: ²“You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place.” ³For this is what the LORD says about the sons and daughters born in this land and about the women who are their mothers and the men who are their fathers: ⁴“They will die of deadly diseases. They will not be mourned or buried but will be like dung lying on the ground. They will perish by sword and famine, and their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals.”

⁵For this is what the LORD says: “Do not enter a house where there is a funeral meal; do not go to mourn or show sympathy, because I have withdrawn my blessing, my love and my pity from this people,” declares the LORD. ⁶“Both high and low will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned, and no one will cut themselves or shave their head for the dead. ⁷No one will offer food to comfort those who mourn for the dead—not even for a father or a mother—nor will anyone give them a drink to console them.

⁸“And do not enter a house where there is feasting and sit down to eat and drink. ⁹For this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Before your eyes and in your days I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride and bridegroom in this place.

¹⁰“When you tell these people all this and they ask you, ‘Why has the LORD decreed such a great disaster against us? What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the LORD our God?’ ¹¹then say to them, ‘It is because your ancestors forsook me,’ declares the LORD, ‘and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. ¹²But you have behaved more wickedly than your ancestors. **See how all of you are following the stubbornness of your evil hearts** instead of obeying me. ¹³So I will throw you out of this land into a land neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.’

Hearts stubborn with sin

17

“Judah’s sin is engraved with an iron tool,
inscribed with a flint point,
on the tablets of their hearts
and on the horns of their altars.

2

Even their children remember
their altars and Asherah poles^[a]
beside the spreading trees
and on the high hills.

3

My mountain in the land
and your^[b] wealth and all your treasures
I will give away as plunder,
together with your high places,
because of sin throughout your country.

4

Through your own fault you will lose
the inheritance I gave you.
I will enslave you to your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for you have kindled my anger,
and it will burn forever.”

⁵ This is what the LORD says:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who draws strength from mere flesh
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

6

That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
they will not see prosperity when it comes.
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.

7

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,

whose confidence is in him.

⁸ They will be like a tree planted by the water -> *psalm 1*

that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes;

its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought

and never fails to bear fruit."

⁹ **The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.**

Who can understand it?

¹⁰ "I the LORD search the heart

and examine the mind,

to reward each person according to their conduct,

according to what their deeds deserve."