

Jeremiah 11-13: The Scrapbook
11:1-17, The Covenant
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A. Overview

1. Chiastic again. Once again we hear of sin and judgment, and the call to mourning.
 - a) Outer layer: emphasizes their responsibilities to God, and how they have **failed** in them.
 - 1) 11:1-15 The Covenant --> ch. 14-17 (cf. Deut. 28; Lev. 26)
 - 2) 13:15-27 Call to Repent --> royal emphasis, ch.21-23
 - b) Second layer: Object lessons describing the coming **judgment**.
 - 1) 11:16-17, Object Lesson: The Olive Tree
 - 2) 13:1-12a Object Lessons: Loincloth--ok --> ch.24? effect of going to Mesopotamia
 - 3) 13:12b-14 Object lesson: Bottle--ok --> ch.18-19, potter's
 - c) Third layer: God will **preserve** through suffering.
 - 1) 11:18-12:6 Danger to Jeremiah: interchange p --> ch. 20 and *passim*
 - 2) 12:7-17 God's Heritage--ok --> ch. 25
2. Development through the book:
 - a) 2 establishes the **sin** of Judah, through the *rib*.
 - b) 3-6 emphasizes the **judgment** that must result.
 - c) 7-10 brings in the theme of **mourning**.
 - d) Now 11-13 adds the promise of **restoration**.
3. Inner structure of the Covenant section: Note the IF's at vv.6,9. We have three sections here:
 - a) 1-5, Description of the covenant, and a curse on those who do not hear it.
 - b) 6-8, You should obey, because your fathers forsook this covenant, and I judged them.
 - c) 9-15, I will similarly judge this generation

B. 11:1-5, Historical Description of the Covenant

Like the other two paragraphs in this section, this is a quotation paragraph: a description of the circumstances of the speaking, followed by the speech itself. In most cases we quickly skip over the introductory formula, but here we have something important to learn from it.

1. 1-3a, the quote formula

This formula has three verbs describing what the prophet is to do: "hear," "speak," and "say." Although the whole is addressed to Jeremiah, the first two verbs are plural while the third is singular.

You can see this in the AV: "hear ye" (plural) vs. "say *thou* unto

them (singular).

Meaning: the charge to hear the words of God's covenant and speak them to the people is the general prophetic charter. Every prophet is responsible for this; Jeremiah hears this instruction as one of many prophets. But the others are lax in their duty. The singular in v.3 emphasizes that Jeremiah as an individual must carry out this charter. The last clause in v.5 shows his faithful response.

Application: A prophet, according to 1 Cor. 14:3, "speaks to men unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort." These terms describe the *effect* of what is spoken. To be a true prophet, the *content* must be correct, resulting from first hearing and then speaking the words of God's covenant with his people. Nice effects alone do not justify teaching. It must be rooted in an attentiveness to God's word and faithfulness in transmitting it to the people.

2. 3b-5, the quote itself.

To remind them of the covenant under which they live, he generates a pastiche of quotations and allusions from the Pentateuch.

a) The main clause is a summary of Deut. 27:15-26, a curse on those who do not obey all that God has commanded his people.

Application: This curse continues. God's law is absolute. If we do not obey it, we are under his judgment.

b) The rest of the section modifies "this covenant," telling us the *circumstances* in which the covenant was given and the *purpose* for which it was intended.

1) Circumstances: the time of the exodus. The "iron furnace" language is an allusion to Deut. 4:20, cf. 1 Kings 8:51. "Furnace" is a refiner's crucible; it was in the furnace of Egypt that Israel was forged out of the ore of Jacob. Having brought forth his pure metal, the Lord then wished to cast it to his purposes; the covenant was the mold.

2) Purpose: actually, two of them, cascaded.

a> The first pair, "Obey my voice, so that I will be your God," is from Lev. 26:3,12 (leaving out the other consequences of obedience that come in between). This in turn goes back to Exod. 19:5,6. The law marks God's people as distinct. The mode of behavior that he requires of them is like a soldier's uniform or a nation's flag.

b> The purpose clause in v.5 modifies "you shall be my people, and I will be your God." God made promises to the patriarchs and to their descendants. Being a

physical descendant alone is not enough to guarantee one access to these promises, as Rom. 9:8 shows: "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." One must follow in the faith of the patriarchs, and obedience is the surest sign of that.

NB: The notion of keeping the oath made to the fathers (Deut. 7:8; 8:18) and promises of milk and honey (Exod. 3:8,17; 13:5; Deut. 26:8-9; 31:20) are further citations from the time of the Exodus, calling the people back to their original covenant with God.

c> Overall argument:

- 1> Keep my commandments.
- 2> This will show that you are my people,
- 3> and thus put you in line for the promises that I made to your fathers.

C. 11:6-8, The sin and judgment of earlier generations

Judah should obey this covenant when they consider the terrible penalties that previous generations experienced for disregarding it.

1. v.6 commands Judah to obey it. It is not just a covenant for the past, but is binding on them as well. The motive is a look in to their past, to see the effect that ignoring it had on previous generations.
2. v.7, God gave the covenant to the fathers. This is a clear echo of v.4, but extends it through time. v.4 deals just with the people at the exodus ("brought out"). v.7 looks as well at the wandering and conquest ("brought up"), and carries the admonition down to the present day ("unto this day").

Note the urgency with which God has presented the message: "Rising early and protesting." He gets up early to bring his warning.

3. 8a, the people did not obey. For "imagination," read rather "stubbornness."
4. 8b, "I brought upon them the words of this covenant." (not "will bring" as KJV)
The language is drawn from the prophetess Huldah. When Josiah's workmen found the Book of the Law in the temple, and Hilkiah (Jeremiah's father?) brought it to the king, the king recognized how far the nation had departed from its standards, and sent to inquire of the Lord by way of Huldah. She responded, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath

read.'" God's word is living and active. To bring his word upon someone is to bring upon that person the curses that it promises. Deut. 28 and Lev. 26 are full of these specific curses.

The claim is that previous generations of the nation have already suffered some of the judgment for their sin: cf. military defeats under Syria in the time of Ahab; the Assyrian Captivity of the northern ten tribes; periodic famines. In the next section (ch. 14ff) we will consider more closely some of these judgments that were already beginning to fall on Judah.

D. 11:9-15, The sin and judgment of this generation

Thus far, we have learned that God gave a covenant to the fathers, and that disobedience of this covenant has led to judgment throughout the nation's history. Now Jeremiah extends the argument in the logical way: this generation has disobeyed, and they cannot escape the resulting judgment.

The paragraph is chiasmic, ABCBA. In the outer members we have a description of their sin, then in B the futility of turning to the Lord for help. C notes that they can find no help in their pagan gods either, thus reemphasizing the sin of A (Lund's Third Law).

1. 9-10, The nation has disobeyed. We have here two general statements surrounding two more specific ones, in chiasmic fashion.

- a) General 1: Conspiracy. The word usually refers to a group of people who work together to overthrow a king. In this case, the people of Judah and Jerusalem have rebelled together against their heavenly king, the Lord. Cf. the attitude of the nations in Ps. 2.
- b) Specific 1: Disobedience. Like their ancestors, they refuse to obey God's word.
- c) Specific 2: Serving other gods. They will not obey the true God, but they will serve gods of wood and stone.
- d) General 2: Covenant breaking. They have violated the terms of the covenant that God made with their fathers.

2. 11-14, There is no escape from impending judgment. 11a sets the theme of "no escape," which is amplified by three possible routes they might take. The Lord blocks off each route, and leaves them to suffer in their sin.

- a) 11b, They will cry to God for help, but he will not hear their prayers. It's amazing how profane people will turn to

God in time of trouble. Here, he promises NOT to hear.

b) 12-13, Then they will turn to their pagan deities. In spite of the many altars they have built to idols, the false gods will not help them.

c) 14, Finding their own prayers unanswered, they may turn to someone of recognized piety, such as Jeremiah. But God will not hear the prayers of Jeremiah or anyone else for them. (cf. 7:16)

3. 15, Recap of her sin. The text is very difficult, but the first line seems clear. Because of her sin, Judah, though beloved of God, has no place in God's house.

E. Summary

God expects his people to obey him. The Scriptures give us many examples of his judgment on those who do not keep his covenant. We should be especially diligent to live in obedience to him, and not to fall into the lure of idols who cannot save us when the day of judgment comes.

Ps. 25, note third stanza.

F. Analysis of 11:1-17

1. Quote p: History of the covenant, and a curse on those who do not hear it.

a) quote f

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11:1 HA/D.FBFR ):AŞER HFYFH )EL-YIR:M:YFHW. M"/)"T Y:HWFH
L"/)MOR
2 $.M:(W. )ET-D.IB:R"Y HA/B.:RIYT HA/Z.O)T W:/DIB.AR/:T.EM
)EL-)IY$ Y:HW.DFH W:/(AL-YO$:B"Y Y:RW.$FLFIM
3 W:/)FMAR:T.F ):AL"Y/HEM K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH ):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L
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b) quote

1) comment p (Deut. 27:15-26)

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a> topic: )FRW.R HF/)IY$ ):AŞER LO) YI$:MA( )ET-D.IB:R"Y
HA/B.:RIYT HA/Z.O)T
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b> comment: purpose p "I commanded your fathers this
covenant in order that I might fulfill my oath ..."
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1> text: quote p
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a: quote f: summary p
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1: text: temporal p
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A. text: 4 ):AŞER CIW.IYTIY )ET- ):ABOWT"Y/KEM
```

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B. time: circumstance p
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```
1. text: (Deut. 4:20) B.:/YOWM
```

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HOWCIY)IY-)OWT/FM M"/)EREC-MIC:RAYIM
```

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MI/K.W.R HA/B.AR:ZEL
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2: summary: L"/)MOR
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b: quote: cascaded purpose p (Lev. 26:3,12)
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1: text: sequence p
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```
A. $IM(W. B:/QOWL/IY
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B. WA/(:A&IYTEM)OWT/FM K.:/KOL
):AŞER-):ACAW.EH)ET/:KEM
2: result: purpose p
A. text: simul
1. WI/H:YIYTEM L/IY L:/(FM
2. W:/)FNOKIY)EH:YEH L/FKEM L"/)LOHIYM
B. purpose: cf. 1 Kings 2:4; Gen. 22:16-18;
26:3-5, on the fulfillment of God's promises
depending on man's obedience. (Deut. 7:8;
8:18) 5 L:/MA(AN HF/QIYM)ET-HA/\$.:BW.(FH
):AŞER- NIŞ:B.A(:T.IY LA/):ABOWT"Y/KEM
(Exod. 3:8,17; 13:5; Deut. 26:8-9; 31:20)
LF/T" T L/FHEM)EREC ZFBAT XFLFB W./D:BAŞ
K.A/Y.OWM HA/Z.EH

c) response WF/)A(AN WF/)OMAR)FM"N Y:HWFH S

2. quote p: You should obey, because your fathers forsook this covenant, and I judged them.

a) quote f: 6 WA/Y.O)MER Y:HWFH)"L/AY Q:RF))ET-K.FL-
HA/D.:BFRIYM HF/)"L.EH B.:/(FR"Y Y:HW.DFH W./B:/XUCOWT
Y:RW.\$FLAIM L"/)MOR

b) quote: reason p

1) text: seq. You obey.

a> \$IM:(W.)ET- D.IB:R"Y HA/B.:RIYT HA/Z.O)T

b> WA/(:A&IYTEM)OWT/FM

2) reason: interchange p 7 K.IY : I judged your fathers for not obeying.

a> iu: quote p

1> quote f: HF("D HA(IDOTIY B.A/):ABOWT"Y/KEM B.:/YOWM
HA(:ALOWT/IY)OWT/FM M"/)EREC MIC:RAYIM W:/(AD-HA/Y.OWM
HA/Z.EH HA/\$:K."M W:/HF/("D L"/)MOR

2> quote: \$IM:(W. B.:/QOWL/IY

b> cu: negated antonym paraphrase

1> paraphrase:

a: 8 W:/LO) \$FM:(W.

b: W:/LO)-HI+.W.)ET-)FZ:N/FM

2> text: WA/Y."L:KW.)IY\$ B.I/\$:RIYRW.T LIB./FM HF/RF(

c> ru: WF/)FBIY) (:AL"Y/HEM)ET-K.FL-D.IB:R"Y

HA/B.:RIYT-HAZ.O)T):AŞER-CIW.IYTIY LA/(:A&OWT W:/LO) (F&W

S

3. quote p: I will similarly judge this generation

a) quote f: 9 WA/Y.O)MER Y:HWFH)"L/FY

b) quote:

1) result p: I will judge the breaches of this generation as I did those of their fathers, and no one will hear their cry.

a> text: chiastic amplification p

1> text: NIM:CF)- QEŞER B.:/)IY\$ Y:HW.DFH W./B:/YOŞ:B"Y
Y:RW.\$FLFIM

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2> ampl:
  a: 10 $FBW. (AL-( :AWONOT ):ABOWT/FM HF/RI)$SONIYM ):A$ER
      M"):ANW. LI/$:MOW(A )ET-D.:BFR/AY
  b: W:/H"M.FH HFL:KW. )AX:AR"Y ):ELOHIYM ):AX"RIYM
      L:/(FB:D/FM
3> text: H"P"RW. B"YT-YI&:RF)"L W./B"YT Y:HW.DFH
      )ET-B.:RIYT/IY ):A$ER K.FRAT.IY )ET-):ABOWT/FM S
b> result: quote p 11 LFK"N
  1> quote f: K.OH )FMAR Y:HWFH
  2> quote: reason p
    a: text: seq p, Disaster followed by futile cries for
      help
      1: HIN:N/IY M"BIY) ):AL"Y/HEM RF(FH ):A$ER
          LO)-YW.K:LW. LF/C")T MI/M.EN.FH
      2: W:/ZF(:AQW. )"L/AY
      3: W:/LO) )E$:MA( ):AL"Y/HEM
      4: 12 W:/HFL:KW. (FR"Y Y:HW.DFH W:/YO$:B"Y
          Y:RW.$FLAIM W:/ZF(:AQW. )EL-HF/):ELOHIYM ):A$ER
          H"M M:QA+.:RIYM L/FHEM
      5: W:/HOW$(A LO)-YOW$YI(W. L/FHEM B.:/("T
          RF(FT/FM
    b: reason (cf. 2:28)
      1: 13 K.IY MIS:P.AR (FREY/KF HFYW. ):ELOHEY/KF
          Y:HW.DFH
      2: W./MIS:P.AR XUCOWT Y:RW.$FLAIM &AM:T.EM
          MIZ:B.:XOWT LA/B.O$ET MIZ:B.:XOWT L:/QA+."R
          LA/B.F(AL S
2) reason p: I will not entertain prayers for them. (cf. 7:16)
  a> text
    1> 14 W:/)AT.FH )AL-T.IT:P.AL."L B.:/(AD- HF/(FM HA/Z.EH
    2> W:/)AL-T.I&.F) BA/(:AD/FM RIN.FH W./T:PIL.FH
  b> reason: K.IY )"YN/EN.IY $OM"(A B.:/("T QFR:)FM )"L/AY
      B.:/(AD RF(FT/FM S
3) Because of her sin, she has no place in God's house. (text
  hopelessly corrupt)
  a> 15 MEH LI/YDIYDIY B.:/B"YT/IY
  b> (:A&OWT/FH. HA/M:ZIM.FTFH HF/RAB.IYM
  c> W./B:&AR-QODE$ YA(AB:RW. M"/(FLFY/IK:
  d> K.IY RF(FT"KIY )FZ T.A(:ALOZIY

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