

The Broken Covenant

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[0 : 00] As members of a society, people are bound to each other by legal contracts and personal relationships. A contract prevents a tenant from breaking a lease, right?

And it gives the power to the owner the option of pursuing legal action if the tenant were to break the lease, right? A contract protects a company, right, that provides services that ensures that it gets paid by its clients.

And a contract likewise binds the citizens to their government so that breaking certain laws can get them jailed. A contract is legal but not necessarily personal, right?

You can be a legal citizen of the United States, for example, but be highly unpatriotic and feel no relationship to it. So on the one hand, our lives are governed by contracts.

On the other hand, our lives are governed by relationships. A relationship is what keeps you going back to the same barber over and over again for a bad haircut, right?

[0 : 59] A relationship makes you call a group of friends to go out to movies together, right? A relationship makes you go out on dates with someone. A relationship is personal but not necessarily legal.

Relationships are not legally enforced like contracts. Then there's the third category, the divinely instituted covenants. A covenant is something that God ordains and sanctions, and it is enduring and legally binding like a contract, but it's also intimately personal and affectionate like a relationship.

A marriage, for example, is a covenant. It's entered into before God and is binding for life, yet it is also voluntary and relational. It's characterized by love and affection.

Similarly, the church is formed around the covenant. Throughout Scripture, God describes his relationship with his people as a covenant. And because a covenant is both legal and personal, breaking it is all the more wicked and wrong.

It makes you a lawbreaker and a promisebreaker. It makes you a rebel and a renegade. So Judah had repeatedly violated their covenant with God.

[2 : 14] And so in Jeremiah 11 through 13, which is our passage for today, we see both the legal and personal consequences of their sins. And through it, we learn that God is righteous to punish sinners, yet gracious to restore them through Jesus Christ.

That's the main point of this passage. That God is righteous to punish sinners, yet gracious to restore them through Jesus Christ. First, we're going to see the disregarded promise in chapter 11, verses 1 to 17.

And then we'll see a disillusioned prophet in chapter 11, verse 18 to chapter 12, verse 17. And then lastly, we'll see the damaged pride of Judah in chapter 13. God first recounts the covenant that he had entered into with Judah in verses 2 to 5 of chapter 11.

Follow along with me in your Bibles. It says in chapter 11, verses 2 to 5, Hear the words of this covenant and speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel.

Cursed be the man who does not hear the words of this covenant that I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt from the iron furnace, saying, Listen to my voice and do all that I command you.

[3 : 23] So shall you be my people, and I will be your God, that I may confirm the oath that I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey as at this day. Then I answered, So be it, Lord.

There is a threefold repetition of the word hear and listen in these verses. First, in verse 2, God commands the people of Judah to hear the words of this covenant now. And then in verse 3, God

confirms the oath that their forefathers had made by saying, Cursed be the man who does not hear the words of this covenant that I command your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

And then he says, Listen to my voice and do all that I command you. So God's reminding them of the covenant that they made with him after being rescued out of Egypt. It's a covenant that God's people made through Moses on Mount Sinai.

And that the heart of that covenant, the main obligation and command was to listen to the Lord, to hear him, because Judah was his special exclusive possession. But they did not hear the words of this covenant or do them.

God says in verses 7 to 8, I solemnly warned your fathers when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, warning them persistently even to this day, saying, Obey my voice.

[4 : 37] As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, obey is the same Hebrew word as hear or listen. So you did not obey or incline their ear. Yet they did not obey or incline their ear. But everyone walked in the stubbornness of his evil heart.

Therefore, I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do. But they did not. You can see kind of how the punishment fits the offense. Because they did not hear the commands of the covenant.

Now they will bear the curses of the covenant. The covenant that did not keep will come upon them and punish them. And their stubbornness in doing evil is described in verse 9, metaphorically as a conspiracy, right?

It's a form of mutiny, a treason. They conspired against their gracious master who had given them every blessing that they enjoy. They rebelled against their benevolent king who had taken care of them and has been unwaveringly and steadfastly committed to them.

Yet instead of following him, they turned against God. And it says in verse 10 that they turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers. Refused to hear my words.

[5 : 44] And this is how they broke the covenant that I made with their fathers. That's what God says here in verse 10. Therefore, he says in verses 11 to 14, he pronounces disaster on them.

And he tells them that he will not listen to them. Just as they have not listened to him or obeyed him, he will no longer listen to them. In addition to that, he tells Jeremiah, his prophet and representative, to not pray for them because if he prays for them, he will not listen when they call to him in time of trouble.

So again, their punishment fits the crime. Those who refuse to listen to God will not be listened to by the Lord. Then as God continues his verdict in verses 16 to 17, he interestingly refers to himself in the third person as the Lord.

So look at the verses 16 to 17. That's a literary device called eleism where the speaker refers to himself in the third person in order to create a sense of distance from the hearers or the readers and a sense of dignity.

So that's kind of to convey the fact that this is a personage that's not supposed to be dealt with lightly, that he is grand, that he is of dignity. That's, for example, how in the Gallic Wars written by Julius Caesar, he refers to himself consistently in the third person.

[7 : 00] The he, the Julius Caesar, right? William Shakespeare also uses this device to refer to multiple characters and he makes them refer to themselves in the third person. Of course, when a man does this, he's being conceited and self-important, right?

But God is justified when he does this because he's the one being in the universe who is glorious and deserves to be glorified. And so he says this, Do you feel that kind of distance and dignity, right, from that third person usage, right?

Because by using the third person, there's a sense of finality about what God is doing. The Lord has decided this and there's nothing you can do about it. And then at the end of verse 7, when describing their specific against the Lord, God returns to the first person to convey just how personal their sins are toward him.

He says, They provoked me to anger by making offerings to Baal, right? When a wife catches her husband committing adultery or looking at pornography, it doesn't matter how much he insists, saying, This is nothing personal.

This is just my lust, my addiction. It's me. Don't worry about it. It doesn't have anything to do with you. It doesn't reflect on how beautiful you are or how desirable you are. It doesn't matter how much the husband says that.

[8 : 43] The offense is personal. And in a real way, it affects the wife. In the same way, every sin committed against God is deeply personal.

Judah can't say, Oh God, it's nothing personal. We brought you offerings in the temple too. We just need to make sure that we bring offerings to Baal also to make sure that our lands are fruitful and that our families are fertile.

Nonsense. Idolatry is always personal. And God says, You provoked me to anger by making offerings to Baal. And God's punishment is just and fair.

And that's conveyed by the repetition of the Hebrew word that means evil. You see the words, the words consumed, disaster, evil in verses 16 to 17. They're all actually variations, the same Hebrew word that means evil.

So if you were to translate that to show that, it will be like, You will be consumed by evil, for the Lord has decreed evil against you because of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done.

[9 : 47] As they have done, it will be done to them, not more, not less. Evil will befall evildoers. Divine justice is exact and exacting.

God is righteous to punish sinners. And that's the first point, the broken covenant. And because of Judah's disregarded promise, right, they disregarded the promise that they made to the Lord, we see a portrait of a disillusioned prophet in the following verses who has to announce God's judgment.

As God's representative, Jeremiah, whether he likes it or not, he encounters the same refusal and rejection that God faces and experiences from his own people.

And so Jeremiah says in verses 18 to 20 of chapter 11, The Lord made it known to me, and I knew. Then you showed me their deeds, but I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, Let us destroy the tree with its fruit. Let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more. But O Lord of hosts who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

[10 : 59] So some people had apparently devised schemes against Jeremiah. They didn't want to hear any more of Jeremiah's message of doom and judgment, and they decided that the best way to silence him is to kill him by destroying the tree with its fruit.

And especially since Jeremiah was unmarried and childless, this would ensure that he is cut off from the land of the living and his name be remembered no more. It would put an end to Jeremiah and his prophetic ministry once and for all.

But as they were scheming this, God alerted Jeremiah of this, and we could see how surprised Jeremiah was, because he says in verse 19, but I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

I did not know it was against me they devised schemes. Jeremiah, as a prophet for the people, he loved the people of Judah. He sincerely believed that he was serving them by announcing God's impending judgment and calling them to repentance.

And yet, unbeknownst to him, these very people for whom Jeremiah labored tirelessly were plotting to kill him. Jeremiah was like a gentle lamb, which, though it's being led to the slaughter, neither protests nor resists, because it is completely unaware of what is happening.

[12 : 16] Then, in verses 21 to 23, Jeremiah gives us more details about this scheme. And it's surprising. Verse 21, Therefore, thus says the Lord, concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand.

Shockingly, the people who plotted to kill Jeremiah were the men of Anathoth, Jeremiah's hometown, the village he came from. They had apparently threatened him, If you prophesy in the name of the Lord, you will die by our hand.

But the Lord hears of this, and it's not Jeremiah that will die, but they, because God intervenes on behalf of his servants. He says, Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword. Their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the ear of their punishment. The men who told Jeremiah that he would die by their hands will instead die by the Lord's hand.

This may seem shocking to us, but in the ancient Near East, much like the modern Middle East, and much of Asia really, has a shame culture.

[13 : 28] And bringing shame upon one's own family or tribe is considered a capital offense. And sometimes members of the same family in the ancient Near East would send members of their own household out to avenge the honor of the family by killing off the offending member.

And that seems to be what is happening here is that Jeremiah was notorious throughout all the land for his message of judgment, his prophetic ministry. And this unpopular message brought great shame on his own hometown of Anathoth.

And these men decided that they better kill him and make do good on the threat that they had made to him. And can you imagine how Jeremiah was feeling? I mean, obviously, this is the very foundation of ancient society, that village, that community, that family.

And he's basically being cut out from that very fabric society that was holding that community together. He's losing everything. He has no support, no community, no fallback plan.

And Jeremiah is so disillusioned by this, he complains to God in chapter 12, verses 1 to 4. Righteous are you, O Lord, when I complain to you. Yet I would plead my case before you.

[14 : 41] Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? You plant them, and they take root. They grow and produce fruit.

You are near in their mouth and far from their heart. But you, you, O Lord, know me. You see me and test my heart toward you. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter and set them apart for the day of slaughter.

How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field wither? For the evil of those who dwell in it, the beasts and the birds are swept away because they said, he will not see our latter end.

If you recall what I read earlier, chapter 11, verses 18 to 23, and then kind of put that side by side with chapter 12, verses 1 to 4, they mirror each other. There's a lot of parallels between those passages.

And they together reveal the mixed emotions that Jeremiah is feeling. Because in 11, 19, Jeremiah said, I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

[15 : 41] But then in chapter 12, verse 3, he says, pull them out like sheep for the slaughter. Right? He's being led to the slaughter like a gentle lamb, but he said, they're the ones who should be slaughtered, not me.

And then in chapter 11, verse 20, Jeremiah said to God, I commit my cause to you. But to the Lord who tests the heart and the mind. But then in chapter 12, verses 1 to 3, he cries out, yet I would plead my case before you.

O Lord, you know me, you see me, and test my heart toward you. Right? So you, Lord, see my heart, test my heart, so now I ask you to test my heart and come to my aid. And then again, in chapter 11, verse 19, Jeremiah said that these men of Anathoth schemed among themselves, saying, let us destroy the tree with its fruit.

But then in chapter 12, verse 2, Jeremiah complains, you plant them and they take root and they grow and produce fruit. These evil men who plot to cut me off and destroy all my fruit, they're the ones who should be cut off and without fruit.

But you, Lord, plant them. You make them take root and they grow and bear fruit. What in the world, God? These perils highlight the paradox that Jeremiah is experiencing and dealing with.

[17 : 01] Lord, look at what's happening here. Do you realize that I am the one that's on your team? I am the one that's faithful to you and I'm the one that's here languishing while these men with murderous intents are thriving.

Here am I about to be killed for your sake while these killers live on. Are you even seeing this, Lord? That's the classic problem of evil, isn't it?

If you really are good, God, why is there evil in this world? If you really are just, God, why is there injustice in the world? It's okay to wrestle with that kind of question as long as you're wrestling sincerely and in faith in the same way Jeremiah is.

Notice how he wrestles with this. He does not ask this question to God from a place of presumption and pride, but he asks this question to God from a place of faith-seeking understanding.

Look at chapter 12, verse 1. Righteous are you, O Lord, when I complain to you, yet I would plead my case before you. Jeremiah is not saying, God, you are wrong and I am right, so you are either a wicked God or you do not exist at all.

[18 : 23] Right? That's the attitude of many people who use the problem of evil as an objection against God. But Jeremiah doesn't do that. He says, I know you are righteous, O Lord. I know you

are in the right.

I don't question or challenge that you are in the right, but Lord, I don't understand it. I believe you, Lord, but now help me to see. It's faith seeking understanding.

That's the place upon which we are to wrestle with God and ask the sincere questions we have.

And God's response in verses 5 to 6 is surprising and fascinating. He says, If you have raced with men on foot and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses?

And if in a safe land you are so trusting, what will you do in the thicket of the Jordan? For even your brothers and the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you.

They are in full cry after you. Do not believe them, do they speak friendly words to you? The word trusting, there's a second less common definition of that Hebrew word and it means falling or stumbling.

[19 : 28] That's probably the better translation of that. That's in fact how the New International Version translates it. Verse 5, it says, If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?

So basically, God's making an argument from the lesser to the greater. God's saying, If you can't even compete with men, how will you race horses? If you can't even manage in your safe homeland, how will you manage in the thickets in the Jordan?

The thickets of the Jordan were known to be treacherous, difficult to navigate, and lions were known to dwell there. And so basically, God's saying that things are going to get even harder, Jeremiah. God doesn't backpedal and try to justify himself to Jeremiah because he doesn't need to. He is God and he's in the right and it is his sovereign prerogative to do what he wishes. But so instead, he tries to enlarge Jeremiah's perspective. You think the persecution that you're facing now is evil?

You think that your current suffering is intense? There's more in store. You are ruffled by the little plot of your own villagers. What will you do when the entire Babylonian empire invades Judah and threatens you?

[20 : 40] What will you do when you are exiled out of Judah among the pagan nations? What will you do when you are dealing not with treacherous villagers but with a hostile foreign army?

Seems a little bit harsh, right? But it's actually a very helpful perspective to have because often when we are suffering, we get tunnel vision, don't we? We fixate on our own sufferings and we let them, our own sufferings, dominate our thoughts and feelings.

We become self-focused and lose perspective so that our relatively small problems loom large in our minds and feel like the biggest problems in the whole wide world. And when that happens, we wallow in self-pity and lose the ability to be concerned for others.

So by answering Jeremiah in this manner, God jolts Jeremiah out of his self-focus and self-pity. And then, in verses 7 to 13, God reminds Jeremiah that he will be wicked in the land.

When it comes to God, justice delayed is not justice denied because his judgments and his timing are perfect. God says this in verses 7 to 13, I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my heritage, I have given the beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies.

[22 : 03] My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest. She has lifted up her voice against me, therefore I hate her. Is my heritage to me like a hyena's lair?

Are the birds of prey against her all around? Go, assemble all the wild beasts, bring them to devour. Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trampled down my portion, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

They have made a desolation, desolate it mourns to me. The whole land is made desolate but no man lays it to heart. The nouns that God uses here to describe Judah are intimate and personal, right?

He calls them my house, my dwelling place, my family, my home. Then three times he calls them my heritage, meaning that Judah is his inheritance and special possession.

twice he calls them my portion and once he calls it my vineyard. But then when you take these affectionate nouns, terms, and you pair them with the verbs that are used, there is this stark contrast because God says he has forsaken them, abandoned them, given them over to their enemies and hated them.

[23 : 21] These jarring images, these pairings, convey the fact that it pains God to punish his people. Much like a father who hates having to discipline his son but does so out of love in order to

correct and teach him, God cherishes his people yet he must forsake them.

He is for them yet he must oppose them. God loves them yet he must treat them with hatred. Judah has become a hyena's lair and the birds of prey are circling above them all around.

The hyenas already have a reputation for being scavengers, especially the type of hyenas that live in the Middle East, the striped hyenas. But then on top of that, the birds of prey, vultures, are also hovering over them to consume whatever is left.

So this really is an image, a very grim image of complete death and devastation. And it's so bad. Four times in verses 10 to 11 alone, Judah is described as desolate, desolate, desolate, desolation. The shepherds who represent the rulers have destroyed Judah, have reduced it to a wasteland. But God will not discipline his people forever.

[24 : 40] And verses 14 to 17 offer a glimmer of hope and I'll expand on this later but for now I'll just read it and go by it. Read verses 14 to 17 of chapter 12 with me. Thus says the Lord concerning all my evil neighbors who touched the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit.

Behold, I will pluck them up from their land. I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them. And after I pluck them up, I will again have compassion on them. And I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land.

And it shall come to pass if they will diligently learn the ways of my people to swear by my name as the Lord lives, even as they taught my people to swear by Baal. Then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.

But if any nation will not listen, then I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it, declares the Lord. All those neighboring nations who have violated God's heritage too will be punished by God for their wickedness.

And God will eventually pluck out his people from their lands, from their exile and restore them to their heritage. And even though God's punishment of Judah is severe, his intention we see here is not to destroy them completely but to discipline them and restore them.

[25 : 52] So God promises I will again have compassion on them and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his own land. But not only, this is not limited to God's people because he will, not only will he save his own people at that point in time in the future, he will also offer salvation to those from the foreign nations who forsake their idols and diligently learn the ways of God's people.

But nations that refuse to listen will be utterly plucked up and destroyed. So we saw here the picture, the profile of a broken, a disillusioned prophet.

And now finally in the last chapter we see the damaged pride of Judah. Why is God doing this? In chapter 13 verses 1 to 12, God commands Jeremiah to perform a symbolic act, a prophetic act that will represent the damaged pride of Judah.

He says to Jeremiah in verse 1, chapter 13, go and buy a linen loincloth and put it around your waist and do not dip it in water. Linen loincloth that is never dipped in water means that it's never been washed.

It's clean and it's dry, it's brand new. And even if, because even if it's just one wash, when you wash linen you could tell right away, right, it's not brand new. And so he wants, God wants to make sure that Jeremiah purchases and wear something that is brand new.

[27 : 13] And the Old Testament prophets traditionally wore these kind of coarse cloths and a coarse tunic and they wore kind of a cloak made of hair over it, kind of a rough, kind of wild looking really attire.

And because of that, and because the linen loincloth was a priestly garment, for example, it says in Leviticus 16, that priests are supposed to put on a linen coat, a linen undergarment, a linen sash, and a linen turban.

Everything was linen. So they're like, they look rich and they look like they're part of the nobility, right, unlike the prophets. So for a prominent and recognizable prophet like Jeremiah to put on a priestly garment made of linen would have stuck out like a sore thumb among the people in their community.

So they would have recognized him, it would have been kind of a spectacle to behold. Man, what is this guy doing? He's in his right mind. He's wearing a priestly tunic. And then verse 3, at a later time, it says the word of God came to him again.

The word of God came to Jeremiah a second time. And this time, God says in verse 4, take the lowing cloth that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock.

[28 : 24] The Euphrates River was about 350 miles northeast of Anathos, Jeremiah's hometown. So a round trip in those days would have taken about three months. So Jeremiah's extended disappearance certainly would have attracted the attention of the men of Anathoth, especially because they were already annoyed by his constant preaching about judgment.

And because the linen lowing cloth had been an object of community gossip, and he was so out of place, when he returned after three months of disappearance without the lowing cloth, that would have also been a talking point, and people would have been aware of it.

Then in verses 6-7 says, After many days the Lord said to me, Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the lowing cloth that I commanded you to hide there. Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the lowing cloth from the place where I had hidden it.

And behold, the lowing cloth was spoiled. It was good for nothing. And then God explains what all this was about in verses 9-11.

Thus says the Lord, Even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, they shall be like this lowing cloth which is good for nothing.

[29 : 44] For as the lowing cloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.

When God first made his covenant with his people in Exodus 19-6, he told them that you shall be a kingdom of priests and the priesthood and the temple were the points of pride for Judah and Israel and so the priestly linen garment, the loincloth that Jeremiah placed around his waist represent God's people.

They were supposed to cling to him, to belong to him, and to represent his name, a people, and for his praise and glory, but they refused to listen to him. And also, both the Assyrian Empire and the Babylonian Empire are in the direction of the Euphrates River.

So the Euphrates represents the corrupting influence and idolatry of these nations. Having spent too much time with the nations, Judah, the new, fresh, and clean linen loincloth, bought specially for God himself, has been ruined, spoiled, good for nothing.

Then, in verses 12 to 14, God repurposes a popular saying that was probably thrown about in parties. Every jar shall be filled with wine.

[31 : 13] It sounds like something that the host of a party would say, right? Or a guest that loves to drink would say, let's party it up, fill all the glass, let no glass be empty. Let every jar be filled with wine.

But, God twisted around, he tells Jeremiah to say, when people respond, do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine? Of course.

But then God says, in verses 13 to 14, then you shall say to them, thus says the Lord, behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land.

The kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will dash them one against another, fathers and sons together, declares the Lord.

I will not pity or spare or have compassion that I should not destroy them. It's a shocking twist of the image of merriment and partying. Instead of being full of cheers, these people of Judah will be filled with drunkenness.

[32 : 12] Instead of the clinking and toasting of wine glasses, they will be shattering and dashing. God says, I will not pity or spare or have compassion that I should not destroy them.

So having proclaimed God's judgment with these vivid images, Jeremiah finally pleads with his fellow countrymen in verses 15 to 17. Hear and give ear.

Be not proud for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord, your God, before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains. And while you look for light, he turns it into gloom.

And makes it deep darkness. But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride. My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.

The command to hear or listen again is repeated twice in this passage. And each time, it's used in conjunction with the word pride, which is repeated side by side. Verse 15 says, Hear and give ear. [33 : 16] Be not proud. And verse 17 says, But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride. If the people do not listen, then Jeremiah will weep because of their stubborn pride.

This repetition reveals the fact that it is pride that prevents people from listening to God. It's not because they can't hear him. It's because of their pride.

They are like travelers on the mountains who are lighthearted and lightfooted until suddenly the light begins to fade and they lose their way. Proudful people think that they know best so they don't solicit others' opinions and they don't listen.

Proudful people think they can do no wrong so they do not listen when they are corrected or challenged. In this manner, the people of Judah were proud and refused to listen to God.

Judah was proud of its identity, proud of its heritage, proud of its knowledge and this is precisely why God said earlier in verse 9, even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

[34 : 24] Why is this judgment happening? Why are these nations coming to invade Judah? Because their pride must be broken down so that they can finally hear the Lord and be the people that He intended them to be.

God's judgment will leave Judah with the damaged pride like the ruined loincloth. And then He mentions the exile, how they'll be captive and then in verse 23, He mentions how incorrigible they are.

They're so stubborn, they cannot be changed. Verse 23, He says, Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also, you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.

The answer to the rhetorical question is no. Right? A black man cannot become a white man nor vice versa. A leopard cannot erase its spotted skin.

If this were possible, then Judah could change and do good too. But as it is, it's not possible. So Judah, which is accustomed to do evil, cannot change.

[35 : 31] They are beyond correction. So God Himself, He says, will expose their shameful sins. He says in verses 26 to 27, I myself will lift up your skirts over your face and your shame will be seen.

I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and names, your lewd whorings on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?

God describes their idolatry as adultery and whoring. Judah had so thoroughly and repeatedly broken their covenant with God. God had to enforce the terms of the covenant by bringing the stipulated punishments that were there.

And it's important that we recognize this heinous nature of sin and that's how we have all sinned against God too. We are all adulterers. God has been a kind, devoted husband to us.

All His thoughts and actions toward us have been full of love and good will. He has never once let us down or cheated on us.

[36 : 37] Yet He found us sleeping with other lovers brazenly and repeatedly like the people of Judah and like the people of Judah who presumed that just because they had the temple in their midst that, oh no, God can't leave us.

His temple is here with us. In a similar way, we're like this adulterous wife. I have this wedding ring. My husband can never leave me.

And brazenly and repeatedly, we cheat again and again and we ignore God's heartfelt call to return to Him. That's the true picture of sin of which we are all guilty.

We have all broken this covenant. covenant. So then how can we be restored to right relationship with God? How can we mend this broken covenant? Actually, technically speaking, our situation is even worse than that because most of us weren't even part of the initial covenant with God because we're not ethnic descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Instead, we were part of the evil nations mentioned in chapter 12 verses 14 to 7 that taught Israel and Judah all their idolatries. We deserve far worse judgment than Israel and Judah.

[37 : 56] Yet in chapter 12 verse 16, God extends a lifeline even to us. He says, and He shall come to pass if they will diligently learn the ways of My people to swear by My name as the Lord lives, even as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of My people.

God promised that that day will come when even the people who were not included as a part of His covenant will be invited in to be included among God's people.

And that day came to pass when the Son of God became a man to live among us, to save us.

When Jesus Christ came and He lived a life of perfect obedience and covenant faithfulness to God His Father, and then He died on the cross not for His own sins, but for our sins, for the sins of those people He came to save.

And then, when He did not stay dead in defeat, but rose victoriously to give new life to all those who would trust in Him, that's when we have given this opportunity to be brought into the covenant.

Christ is the one who makes a way for those who have broken the covenant as well as those who were excluded from the covenant. And I'll close by reading this from Hebrews 9, 15 to 26.

[39 : 13] This is how Christ fulfilled this. Therefore, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites.

But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world but as it is he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

[40 : 40] The Old Testament temple was merely a copy of heaven and the sacrifices of the old covenant were mere copies of the ultimate sacrifice that Christ would make on the cross.

And so Jesus accomplishes for us what Jeremiah could not accomplish for Judah. Jeremiah said what God said in chapter 11 verse 15 even sacrificial flesh can't avert their doom.

What the sacrifice of animals could not accomplish Christ's once and for all sacrifice on the cross accomplishes for us. Jeremiah was only threatened with death to be led like a lamb to the slaughter but that same description is applied to Jesus in Acts 8 32 because he is the ultimate slaughtered lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

we cannot change ourselves we cannot save ourselves but Christ has saved us has died for us and he's opened up this new covenant to all those who would cling to him.

unfulfilled to the end