

11:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,
2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
3 and say thou unto them, Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man that heareth not the words of this covenant,
4 which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God;
5 that I may establish the oath which I swear unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day. Then answered I, and said, Amen, O Yahweh.
6 And Yahweh said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.
7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.
8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the stubbornness of their evil heart: therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did them not.

Having set forth the curse to which transgressors of the law are exposed, God commands the prophet to proclaim the words of the covenant to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, and to call upon them to do these.

9 And Yahweh said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
10 They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words; and they are gone after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.
11 Therefore thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and they shall cry unto me, but I will not hearken unto them.
12 Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods unto which they offer incense: but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble.
13 For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.

Jeremiah is once more to enforce the words of the covenant upon the people, because they have broken the covenant, returned to the idolatry of the fathers.

14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me because of their trouble.

15 What hath my beloved to do in my house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness [with] many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.

16 Yahweh called thy name, A green olive-tree, fair with goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

17 For Yahweh of hosts, who planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, because of the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have wrought for themselves in provoking me to anger by offering incense unto Baal.

In Jer 11:15-17 we have the reason why the Lord will hear neither the prophet's supplication nor the people's cry in their time of need.

18 And Yahweh gave me knowledge of it, and I knew it: then thou showedst me their doings.

19 But I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, [saying], Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

20 But, O Yahweh of hosts, who judgest righteously, who triest the heart and the mind, I shall see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

21 Therefore thus saith Yahweh concerning the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Thou shalt not prophesy in the name of Yahweh, that thou die not by our hand;

22 therefore thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine;

23 and there shall be no remnant unto them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.

As a practical proof of the people's determination not to reform, we have in Jer 11:18-23 an account *of the designs of the inhabitants of Anathoth against the prophet's life*, inasmuch as it was their ill-will towards his prophecies that led them to this crime. They are determined not to hear the word of God, chiding and punishing them for their sins, and so to put the preacher of this word out of the way.

12:1 Righteous art thou, O Yahweh, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?

2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their heart.

3 But thou, O Yahweh, knowest me; thou seest me, and triest my heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of the whole country wither? for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our latter end.

5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and though in a land of peace thou art secure, yet how wilt thou do in the pride of the Jordan?

6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; even they have cried aloud after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

The enmity experienced by Jeremiah at the hands of his countrymen at Anathoth excites his displeasure at the prosperity of the wicked, who thrive and live with immunity. He therefore begins to expostulate with God, and demands from God's righteousness that they be cut off out of the land (Jer 12:1-4); whereupon the Lord reproves him for this outburst of ill-nature and impatience by telling him that he must patiently endure still worse. - This section, the connection of which with the preceding is unmistakable, shows by a concrete instance the utter corruptness of the people; and it has been included in the prophecies because it sets before us the greatness of God's long-suffering towards a people ripe for destruction.

7 I have forsaken my house, I have cast off my heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.

8 My heritage is become unto me as a lion in the forest: she hath uttered her voice against me; therefore I have hated her.

The people are enraged against me; they roar like a furious lion against their God. They have proceeded to the most open acts of the most flagrant iniquity.

9 Is my heritage unto me as a speckled bird of prey? are the birds of prey against her round about? go ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, bring them to devour.

10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

My people have had many kinds of enemies which have fed upon their richest pastures; the Philistines, the Moabites, Ammonites, Assyrians, Egyptians. and now the Chaldeans.

11 They have made it a desolation; it mourneth unto me, being desolate; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

Notwithstanding all these desolations, from which the land every where mourns, and which are so plainly the consequences of the people's crimes, no man takes it to heart.

12 Destroyers are come upon all the bare heights in the wilderness; for the sword of Yahweh devoureth from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh hath peace.

13 They have sown wheat, and have reaped thorns; they have put themselves to pain, and profit nothing: and ye shall be ashamed of your fruits, because of the fierce anger of Yahweh.

All their projects shall fail: none of their enterprises shall succeed.

14 Thus saith Yahweh against all mine evil neighbors, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit: behold, I will pluck them up from off their land, and will pluck up the house of Judah from among them.

15 And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them up, I will return and have compassion on them; and I will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

This is a promise of restoration from the captivity.

16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, As Yahweh liveth; even as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built up in the midst of my people.

17 But if they will not hear, then will I pluck up that nation, plucking up and destroying it, saith Yahweh.

As to this passage, which falls into two strophes, Jer 12:7-13 and Jer 12:14-17, stands in no kind of connection with what immediately precedes. These two oracles (sermons) are quite independent.

13:1 Thus saith Yahweh unto me, Go, and buy thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

After having worn it, let it not be washed, that it may more properly represent the uncleanness of the Israelites; for they were represented by the girdle; for “as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah.” And as a girdle is as well for ornament as use; God took them for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.

2 So I bought a girdle according to the word of Yahweh, and put it upon my loins.

3 And the word of Yahweh came unto me the second time, saying,

4 Take the girdle that thou hast bought, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock.

Intending to point out, by this distant place, the country into which they were to be carried away captive.

5 So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as Yahweh commanded me.

6 And it came to pass after many days, that Yahweh said unto me, Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.

7 Then I went to the Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

This symbolically represented the state of the Jews: they were corrupt and abominable; and God, by sending them into captivity, “marred the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

8 Then the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying,

9 Thus saith Yahweh, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

10 This evil people, that refuse to hear my words, that walk in the stubbornness of their heart, and are gone after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is profitable for nothing.

11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith Yahweh; that they may be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

12 Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word: Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?

There was a great likelihood of a copious vintage; and this made them say, "Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? Have we not every prospect that it will be so? Do we need a revelation to inform us of this?"

13 Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.

The wine is God's wrath against you, which shall first be shown by confounding your deliberations, filling you with foolish plans of defense, causing you from your divided counsels to fall out among yourselves, so that like so many drunken men you shall reel about and jostle each other. *Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*

14 And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith Yahweh: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have compassion, that I should not destroy them.

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for Yahweh hath spoken.

16 Give glory to Yahweh your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for [your] pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Yahweh's flock is taken captive.

If you will not hearken to the Lord, there is no remedy: destruction must come; and there is nothing left for me, but to go in secret, and mourn and bewail your wretched lot.

18 Say thou unto the king and to the queen-mother, Humble yourselves, sit down; for your crowns have come down, even the crown of your glory.

Probably Jehoiachin and his mother.

Excursus- Jehoiachin

Je-hoi'a-kin (יהויכין, *y^ehōyākhīn*, “Yahweh will uphold”; called also “Jeconiah” in 1Ch_3:16; Jer_24:1; יכניה, *y^ekhonyāh*, “Yahweh will be steadfast,” and “Coniah” in Jer_22:24, Jer_22:28; כנייהו, *konyāhū*, “Yahweh has upheld him”; Ιωακείμ, *Iōakeīm*): A king of Judah; son and successor of Jehoiakim; reigned three months and surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar; was carried to Babylon, where, after being there 37 years a prisoner, he died.

19 The cities of the South are shut up, and there is none to open them: Judah is carried away captive, all of it; it is wholly carried away captive.

20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

Jerusalem is addressed. Where are the prosperous multitudes of men, women, and children? Alas! are they not driven before the Babylonians, who have taken them captive?

21 What wilt thou say, when he shall set over thee as head those whom thou hast thyself taught to be friends to thee? shall not sorrows take hold of thee, as of a woman in travail?

22 And if thou say in thy heart, Wherefore are these things come upon me? for the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts uncovered, and thy heels suffer violence.

It is thy scandal to be in so depressed a condition.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Can a black, at his own pleasure, change the color of his skin? Can the leopard at will change the variety of his spots? These things are natural to them, and they cannot be altered; so sin, and especially your attachment to idolatry, is become a second nature; and we may as well expect the Ethiopian to change his skin, and the leopard his spots, as you to do good, who have been accustomed to do evil. It is a matter of the utmost difficulty to get a sinner, deeply rooted in vicious habits, brought to the knowledge of himself and God. But the expression does not imply that the thing is as impossible in a moral as it is in a natural sense: it only shows that it is extremely difficult, and not to be often expected.

24 Therefore will I scatter them, as the stubble that passeth away, by the wind of the wilderness.

25 This is thy lot, the portion measured unto thee from me, saith Yahweh; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

26 Therefore will I also uncover thy skirts upon thy face, and thy shame shall appear.

It was the custom to punish lewd women by stripping them naked, and exposing them to public view; or by throwing their clothes over their heads, as here intimated.

27 I have seen thine abominations, even thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, on the hills in the field. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! thou wilt not be made clean; how long shall it yet be?