***Jeremiah 11:1-11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2“Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant 4which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,’ 5that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them ‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ as it is this day.” And I answered and said, “So be it, Lord.” 6Then the Lord said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them. 7For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, “Obey My voice.” 8Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.’ 9And the Lord said to me, “A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have 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.” 11Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.***

We’re with Jeremiah tonight, as God reminds him of the covenant that He made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David. God made a covenant with the people, but it is contingent on obedience. Of course, we recall that Deuteronomy 28 clearly lays out the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. The people would be very familiar with these teachings. Every young man was required, as part of his education, to study these teachings and know the law. It’s not that the people don’t know or have never been told. It’s that the people have chosen to disobey, turn from God, and serve false idols, as we studied last time. Into this situation, we step this week.

Verse 1 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,* The general agreement among the theologians that I studied for this message is that this prophecy came to Jeremiah sometime toward the end of the reign of King Josiah. Recall with me that the Book of the Law had been found in the 18th year of the reign of the king. 2 Kings 22:11 tells us that he tore his robes in lament when he realized how far Judah was from God. In 2 Kings 23, he had the Law read in the hearing of all the people and they made an oath to obey. Jeremiah is about to remind the people of this oath, which they have so soon forgotten.

Verses 2-3*“Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant.* God is speaking to Jeremiah, but He is also speaking to the few people still following Him. The words are spoken in the hearing of both the wicked and the righteous. The righteous will be reproved and cut to the heart, being aware of their sin. The wicked will not hear. It is the Holy Spirit within us that identifies and convicts us of sin. Without the Holy Spirit, our desperately wicked heart would think anything we did was just fine. Conviction is a gift straight from God. The covenant in view here is the covenant spoken by Moses. God tells Jeremiah to say to them. In other words, lay out the covenant spoken by Moses to all the people of Judah. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 lay out the curses that come with disobedience. Recall again that the people have reaffirmed their commitment to the covenant many times through history, even as recently as the King currently reigning.

Verses 4-5*Which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,’ 5that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them ‘a land flowing with milk and honey,’ as it is this day.” And I answered and said, “So be it, Lord.”* Which the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign Maker commanded. God owns it all. He has the power to make the laws that govern His creation and creatures. God reminds the people that this is no new law, but the same agreed to by the forefathers even back to the Exodus from Egypt. He delivered them from the iron furnace. In return, they pledged obedience. The iron furnace represents the affliction that the Jews found themselves suffering while in Egypt. They cried out and God heard. In return for this deliverance, God promised to always be with them, protect them, and lead them. He promised them abundance and a land of their own. He promised that He would prosper them in all ways. For all these magnificent blessings, God asked only one thing – Obedient service. Obey My voice. When you obey, you shall be My people and I will be your God. When the people are obedient, they are blessed with relationship with God. It is to their benefit that God performs this oath, this covenant to provide a land flowing with blessings. Now Jeremiah answers God as God has finished speaking. He answers Amen. So be it Lord. All that God has said is perfectly just and reasonable and Jeremiah acknowledges it as such.

Verse 6 *Then the Lord said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them.* Proclaim these words in the cities of Judah that all may hear, because these words impact everyone. Proclaim all the words in Jerusalem, because everyone is concerned here. Hear the words and do them. Don’t be hearers only, but doers. Be obedient.

Verse 7-8 *For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, “Obey My voice.” 8Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.’* I earnestly exhorted or protested. This has the idea of communicating urgently and continually to the people, through prophets and kings. God charged the people solemnly, charging them, enjoining them to be obedient to His covenant and keep the promises that the people have made to Him. He has been patient and diligent, starting in the days of the Exodus from Egypt and continuing to the days of Jeremiah. God says, “Obey My voice.” But in verse 8 we see Yet they did not obey or incline their ear. The people wouldn’t even listen. Instead, they followed the evil of their own hearts, wherever their wicked desires led them. Therefore, God will bring the curses upon the people. From the time of Moses, the people knew that blessings flowed from obedience and curses flowed from disobedience. God has been patient, but He will not be patient forever. And so it is today. God will not withhold His hand forever. There will be a judgement for the evil – curses flow from disobedience.

Verses 9-11 *And the Lord said to me, “A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have 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.” 11Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.* God said to Jeremiah – a conspiracy against God has been found. Those that love darkness conspire to subvert that will is good, to overthrow that which is of God. True then. True now. In the time of Josiah, they turned back toward God, but now have abandoned the reforms and are once again following after false idols. They have broken God’s covenant and abandoned God’s Law. Therefore, I will bring evil upon them. Punishment is on the way. There will be no escape. Those that will not submit will in no way escape. Sin always entangles and, without Jesus, completely consumes. Though they cry out, God will not hear. We must seek God in times of prosperity and peace as diligently as we seek Him in times of adversity and chaos.

And so we will leave Jeremiah tonight. The covenant has been broken and the punishment is at hand. God has been patient, but His patience has come to an end. As Judah and Jerusalem will soon see, God promised blessings in obedience and curses in disobedience. God keeps His promises. He has promised that those that believe, confess, and repent will be saved. Those who won’t will be cursed. We praise God for His promises and for the Eternal Life we will one day spend with Jesus.