

UNDERSTANDING JEREMIAH

CHAPTER 11
VERSION 1.00

The people of Judah are cursed for breaking the covenant of obedience—The Lord will not hear their prayers.

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, 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 the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,

Footnote (c) covenant

Exodus 20

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

18 ¶ And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

22 ¶ And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 ¶ An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Prosecutor of Israel: In Jeremiah 11:1–3, the Lord commands Jeremiah to proclaim the words of the covenant to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, reminding them of the sacred agreement made between God and their fathers at Mount Sinai. This covenant, first given through Moses, was built upon obedience — promising blessings for faithfulness and curses for rebellion. When the Lord declares, “Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,” He is recalling the warnings of Deuteronomy 27–28, where Israel was told that turning from God’s law would bring destruction and desolation. Jeremiah stands as a covenant prosecutor, calling the people to account for their broken promises and spiritual adultery. Spiritually, this passage reflects the Lord’s unchanging law of covenant responsibility: blessings flow through obedience, but rejection of divine commandments invites judgment. In a latter-day application, this principle extends to all who have entered into sacred covenants with God — baptismal, priesthood, or temple — reminding that such commitments bind the soul to both privilege and accountability before Him.

(F-9) Worship of the True God Must Be Complete and Wholehearted

A person’s god is the thing or being in which he trusts and which he believes has the greatest power. It is the thing to which he looks for whatever salvation he believes is available. All other

beliefs and actions are affected by that belief or object of his worship. When this idea is fully grasped one can understand why the Lord would issue an edict to destroy all the people and their possessions in an idolatrous city. Not to destroy their goods would be to demonstrate a lack of faith that the Lord would provide. Similarly, if a Latter-day Saint will not tithe, is it not because he centers his trust in worldly things and the system that produces them instead of in the providence of the Lord? In that sense, then, the things of the world become a god to him, for he trusts more in them than in God's power. Paul said, "Covetousness ... is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5) and a "covetous man ... is an idolater" (Ephesians 5:5). Is not the failure to pay tithing a form of covetousness? Those who do not pay tithing would likely be shocked to think they were guilty of idolatry just as the ancient Israelites were guilty of idolatry. The form differs, but the sin is the same.

Often modern prophets have warned against making idols of money, automobiles, houses, and other material objects (see Reading 11-4 for President Spencer W. Kimball's statement on modern idolatry). The worship of these things, of course, is symptomatic of the trust some have in natural law instead of God and His laws. They see the world as a place where the creature fares according to his genius (see Alma 30:17). Hence, they look upon all they gain as their own, not as the Lord's. They forget that they are only stewards of the Lord's goods.

A Zion people can come into being only through obedience to the gospel, commencing with a true knowledge of the true God. There cannot be any compromise. You cannot serve God and mammon (see Luke 16:13). True worship, like liberty, is not divisible. You cannot get away with a little idolatry; once started, the destruction follows unless sincere repentance occurs (see Exodus 34:10-17; Deuteronomy 7; Joshua 23:6-16; 1 Kings 9:9; 2 Kings 17:7-23; Psalm 106:34-43; Jeremiah 16:11-21; John 2:11-23).

When the Lord put a blessing and a cursing upon the children of Israel and their land, the conditions were very strict (see Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26). The Israelites failed because they would not put their complete trust in their one true God. So they were delivered up to the consequences of trying to love both the world and the Lord at the same time.

(Old Testament Institute Student Manual Genesis-2 Samuel, Enrichment F, Idolatry: Ancient and Modern)

Brigham Young

"There is one principle I would like to have the Latter-day Saints perfectly understand-that is, of blessings and cursings. For instance, we read that war, pestilence, plagues, famine, etc., will be visited upon the inhabitants of the earth; but if distress through the judgments of God comes

upon this people, it will be because the majority have turned away from the Lord. Let the majority of the people turn away from the Holy Commandments which the Lord has delivered to us, and cease to hold the balance of power in the Church, and we may expect the judgments of God to come upon us; but while six-tenths or three-fourths of this people will keep the commandments of God, the curse and judgments of the Almighty will never come upon them... (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 10, p. 335, June 26, 1864*)

True Worship: *true worship of God must be whole, undivided, and absolute.* The Old Testament makes clear that idolatry is not limited to bowing before images—it includes trusting in anything other than God for security, provision, or salvation. The *Old Testament Institute Manual* explains that when a person refuses to obey divine law, such as the commandment to tithe, he demonstrates that his trust lies not in the Lord’s providence but in worldly systems and possessions. Thus, modern covetousness becomes a subtle yet very real form of idolatry. This mirrors ancient Israel’s failure to fully trust Jehovah and their subsequent destruction under covenantal law. A Zion people can only exist when they give their whole hearts to God; there can be no partial loyalty or “small” degree of idolatry, for to try and “serve God and mammon” is to serve only mammon. The Lord’s blessings and cursings, as outlined in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, were never arbitrary—they revealed the strict justice and consistency of divine law: obedience brings protection and prosperity, disobedience brings destruction.

This idea is reflected in *Exodus 20:19–20*, when the Israelites, overwhelmed by the presence of God on Sinai, plead with Moses to speak to them instead of themselves, saying, “let not God speak with us, lest we die.” Their fear of God was real and literal—they believed that contact with divine holiness would consume them. Yet Moses taught that this fear was intended and must be “before your faces”, not to destroy outright, but to *prove* them- “that ye sin not.” Over time, as Israel and later generations drifted towards apostasy and the end of the priestcraft cycle, this holy fear—the reverent awareness that disobedience truly brings divine literal judgment—was lost. When a people cease to believe that God *will* curse or destroy the disobedient, they begin to see His commandments as optional- one obeys for real and tangible blessings in mammon while the cursings are simply symbolic and transitory at best. This loss of the fear of God marks the final stage of the priestcraft cycle, when the doctrine of blessings remains, but the reality of cursings is denied- purely by the precepts of men who obtain gain to preach soft nothings to the damned. As Brigham Young warned, only when the majority of Saints turn away from the Lord will the judgments of God come upon them; as long as they collectively fear God and keep His commandments, His hand of protection remains. But when that fear fades—when men no longer believe that the Lord *means* what He says—the cycle reaches its end, and destruction follows.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from 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:

Footnote (b) I

Alma 5

37 O ye workers of iniquity; ye that are puffed up in the vain things of the world, ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep having no shepherd, notwithstanding a shepherd hath called after you and is still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice!

38 Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; and if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd.

39 And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye? Behold, I say unto you, that the devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold; and now, who can deny this? Behold, I say unto you, whosoever denieth this is a liar and a child of the devil.

40 For I say unto you that whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil.

41 Therefore, if a man bringeth forth good works he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd, and he doth follow him; but whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil, for he hearkeneth unto his voice, and doth follow him.

Children of the Devil Deny: In Alma 5:37–41, Alma warns that those who once knew the ways of righteousness but turned to worldly pride have separated themselves from the “Good Shepherd.” Christ continually calls after His sheep, but those who refuse to hearken are not of His fold; they have, by their works, aligned themselves with another master—the devil. The distinction is absolute: those who bring forth good works follow the voice of Christ, while those who bring forth evil works follow Satan. This teaching perfectly complements the earlier pattern from Jeremiah and Exodus—the covenant relationship is built on obedience and discernment between good and evil, blessing and cursing. When a people reach the end of the priestcraft or apostasy cycle, they not only reject divine commandments but also lose the ability—or willingness—to make righteous judgments. They begin to teach only of God’s blessings while silencing any mention of His cursings, refusing to “judge righteous judgment” as Christ commanded (John 7:24). This moral blindness erases the spiritual distinction between the Good Shepherd’s fold and the devil’s, as all judgment of good and evil, fruit and corruption, becomes forbidden or “unchristian.” Thus, the loss of holy fear and righteous discernment marks the final decay of a covenant people: when men can no longer call sin “sin,” nor curse “curse,” they stand exposed as sheep who have chosen another shepherd.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

5 That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

Footnotes (a) oath

Deuteronomy 7

12 ¶ Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:

13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

Doctrine and Covenants 38: 20

16 And for your salvation I give unto you a commandment, for I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons.

17 And I have made the earth rich, and behold it is my footstool, wherefore, again I will stand upon it.

18 And I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh;

19 And I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts.

20 And this shall be my covenant with you, ye shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away.

21 But, verily I say unto you that in time ye shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be your king and watch over you.

22 Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your lawgiver, and what can stay my hand?

23 But, verily I say unto you, teach one another according to the office wherewith I have appointed you;

24 And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

25 And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.

Our Land of Milk and Honey: In Jeremiah 11:5, the Lord reminds His people of the *oath* sworn to their fathers—to give them “a land flowing with milk and honey”—the same covenant reaffirmed in Deuteronomy 7 and renewed in the latter days through Doctrine and Covenants 38. This promise of a *land inheritance* is not merely theoretical; it is the crowning symbol of the covenant relationship between God and His people—a relationship that binds heaven, earth, and community together under divine law. Without the land, there is no true consecration, let alone divine stewardship: a people who worship the true God, live His laws, and are unified under His kingship. Yet as history and prophecy show, when men lose the *fear of the Lord*—when they cease to believe He both blesses and curses according to obedience—they soon stop discerning between righteousness and wickedness. Judgment, both moral and spiritual, becomes taboo, and the gospel is reduced to a message of comfort rather than covenant. In this condition, people trade their inheritance for bondage, exchanging Zion for Babylon, consecration for consumption, and the law of Christ for the laws of men. The covenant promise of the land, with Christ as King and Lawgiver, cannot coexist with divided loyalties. Thus, the loss of divine fear and righteous judgment culminates in the loss of Zion itself—the forfeiture of the promised land and the rejection of the very kingdom God desires to establish upon it.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

6 Then the LORD 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 [HEB witnessed], saying, Obey my voice.

8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring [OR brought] upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.

9 And the LORD 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, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve [OR worship] them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

Say it Loud: In these verses, the Lord commands Jeremiah to *proclaim the covenant aloud* throughout Judah and Jerusalem, emphasizing both its requirements and its consequences. Despite the Lord’s continual efforts—His “rising early and protesting,” meaning He persistently bore witness through His prophets—the people refused to obey, choosing instead to “walk in the imagination of their evil heart.” Their rebellion was not passive; it became a *conspiracy*, a collective resistance against the Lord’s commandments and covenant. They had turned back to

the sins of their forefathers, rejecting the voice of God and following after other gods, thereby breaking the very covenant that once secured their protection and prosperity.

This passage continues the prophetic theme we have traced: that the covenant relationship between God and His people is sustained only through obedience and fear of the Lord. When that fear is lost, disobedience no longer appears dangerous, and the people justify their rebellion under the guise of religion, comfort, or cultural unity. The “conspiracy” of Judah symbolizes the end of the apostasy cycle—a time when priestcraft, idolatry, and national pride merge to silence prophetic warnings. At this stage, men no longer discern between good and evil, nor do they believe God will actually curse them for disobedience. As a result, they break covenant not only with God but with the very land and nation He established, choosing instead the gods of the world—power, wealth, and self—thus aligning themselves with Babylon rather than Zion.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

11 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them [TG Punish], which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them [TG God, Access to].

Footnotes (b) cry

Psalm 18

40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

41 They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.

Mosiah 21

15 And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to ease their burdens; yet the Lord did not see fit to deliver them out of bondage.

Doctrine and Covenants 101

7 They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

But I shall not answer: In Jeremiah 11:11, the Lord declares that because Judah has broken His covenant and hardened their hearts, He will now “bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape,” and though they cry unto Him, “I will not hearken unto them.” This marks the *point of no return*—the moment when divine justice replaces mercy, and the day of judgment supplants the day of repentance. The principle is echoed throughout scripture. In Psalm 18:40–41, David rejoices that his enemies “cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.” Similarly, in Mosiah 21:15, the Nephites under bondage found that “the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities,” hearing only after prolonged

suffering. The Lord Himself explains this law in Doctrine and Covenants 101:7—“They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.”

This progression reveals the solemn reality of covenant accountability: when a people continually reject the Lord’s voice and postpone repentance, they eventually reach a spiritual threshold beyond which deliverance is withheld. Because they did not “seek Him early” (Proverbs 8:17; Hosea 5:15), they now cry too late, and their pleas fall upon closed heavens. This moment of divine silence—when God no longer answers—is not cruelty but consequence, the inevitable fruit of sustained rebellion. As with ancient Israel, so with every covenant people: when they lose the fear of the Lord and refuse to judge between righteousness and wickedness, they also lose access to His mercy in the day of distress. Thus, Jeremiah 11:11 stands as a solemn witness that the long-suffering of God has limits. There comes a time when the day of grace expires and the judgments once prophesied are no longer warnings, but realities—the harvest of a nation that delayed repentance until it was everlastingly too late.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

12 Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

13 For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods [TG Idolatry], O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal [TG Apostasy of Israel].

14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

Footnotes (a) pray

Jeremiah 7

16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

Jeremiah 14

11 Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

(23-23) Jeremiah 11:1–14. None Shall Escape

Jeremiah 11:1–14 refers to the covenant the Lord made with the house of Israel at the time of the Exodus. “I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God” (Exodus 6:7). Even as the Jews’ forefathers broke the covenant, so had their children in Judah (see Jeremiah 11:10).

Therefore, none would escape the punishment decreed, nor would the prayers of Jeremiah or those of the people help (see vv. 11–14).

Sperry wrote: “Jeremiah’s warning was in vain. The Lord pointed out to him that there was a conspiracy among the Jews and that they had turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers. Their gods were as numerous as their cities, and the number of altars set up to Baal was according to the number of streets in Jerusalem. But, warned the Lord, their gods would not save them in the time of their trouble. In view of their spiritual condition *the prophet was commanded not to pray* for the people. Nor would the Lord hear their cries unto Him. (11:9–14).” (*Voice of Israel’s Prophets*, pp. 165–66; emphasis added.)

(Old Testament Student Manual 1 Kings–Malachi, Religion 302, Chapter 23: As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap)

As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap: In Jeremiah 11:12–14, the Lord declares that the people of Judah will, in their distress, cry out not to Him but to the false gods to whom they have been offering incense—yet those gods “shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.” Their idolatry had become so pervasive that there were as many gods as there were cities, and altars to Baal lined the very streets of Jerusalem. The Lord then gives Jeremiah a chilling command: “Pray not thou for this people... for I will not hear them.” This same instruction appears in Jeremiah 7:16 and Jeremiah 14:11, signaling that Judah has crossed a spiritual boundary beyond which intercession is futile. Their repeated rejection of divine warning has sealed their fate.

This passage represents the culmination of the covenant’s broken condition—the moment when apostasy becomes terminal. Having replaced the living God with the idols of their own making, the people must now rely on those powerless substitutes for deliverance. Because they have rendered their prayers meaningless through hypocrisy and divided worship, the Lord refuses even to hear the prophet’s pleas on their behalf. This connects directly to the principle already traced: when a covenant people lose the fear of the Lord and refuse to discern between good and evil, blessing and cursing, they create their own gods—modern idols of wealth, politics, comfort, and culture—and trust in them instead of in divine law. Eventually, the Lord withdraws His prophets’ protection and forbids further intercession; the time of pleading has ended, and judgment must proceed. In that day, as Jeremiah testifies, their self-made gods will not save them, their prayers will not be heard, and their cries will echo unanswered in the silence of divine justice.

In modern times, the warning of Jeremiah 11:12–14 applies directly to covenant people today. Just as ancient Judah filled her streets with altars to false gods, many now erect spiritual idols—wealth, comfort, political power, or social approval—that displace trust in the living God. The Lord reminds us that judgment begins with His covenant people: “*upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth*” (Doctrine and Covenants 112:23–26). Those who ignore the Lord’s voice and the words of His servants, refusing to repent and forsaking His ordinances, are warned that they will be “*cut off from among the people*” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:14). As the

Lord explains, such people “*seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god... even Babylon the great, which shall fall*” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:16). When Saints lose the fear of the Lord and the ability to discern between holiness and worldliness, focusing only on blessings while ignoring the reality of cursings, they follow the same path as Judah, substituting Babylon for Zion. True covenant living requires forsaking idols, heeding prophetic counsel, and embracing Christ as King and Lawgiver; only then can Zion stand and the promised inheritance endure.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

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

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

17 For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

18 ¶ And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it: then thou shewedst me their doings.

(34-4) Malachi 1:6–14. Of What Sins Was Ancient Judah Also Guilty and Why?

The priests and Levites of Malachi’s day were mocking God by offering sacrifices to the Lord with sick, blind, and lame animals and calling them acceptable (v. 8). They had no reverence for what they were doing. The Lord told them: “I have no pleasure in you, ... neither will I accept an offering at your hand” (v. 10). They were selfish and worldly, and not one of them would kindle a fire on the hearth of the altar unless he were paid for it. The Lord had been insulted. The table on which the offering was made was polluted. The offering itself was “contemptible” (v. 12). Such action, Malachi promised, would result in cursing rather than blessing.

(Old Testament Student Manual: Chapter 34: “Behold, I Will Send You Elijah the Prophet” Malachi)

Whore with Many: In Jeremiah 11:15–18, God exposes the brutal reality of priestcraft: Israel has become spiritually adulterous—“a whore with many”—turning sacred worship into a business of sin. Just as a whore sells her body for coin, the priests of Malachi’s day performed their sacred duties only for pay, offering lame, sick, and blind sacrifices and calling them acceptable (Malachi 1:6–14). Their greed and self-interest made the holy offerings a mockery; the people’s devotion was corrupted, and God’s altar became defiled. Priestcraft transforms worship into lewdness, substituting profit and pride for reverence and obedience. The result is

unmistakable: “the holy flesh is passed from thee,” the green olive tree is broken, and the Lord will no longer accept their offerings. God will not be mocked. Spiritual prostitution—serving Babylon for gain while claiming to represent God—utterly destroys the covenant, pollutes consecration, and silences blessings, leaving only judgment and cursing for those who turn sacred ordinances into tools of worldly ambition. The end of the priestcraft cycle.

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

19 But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought 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.

Footnotes (a) lamb

Isaiah 53

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Mosiah 14

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth.

Doctrine and Covenants 135

4 When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: “I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I shall die innocent, and it shall yet be said of me—he was murdered in cold blood.”—The same morning, after Hyrum had made ready to go—shall it be said to the slaughter? yes, for so it was—he read the following paragraph, near the close of the **twelfth chapter of Ether**, in the Book of Mormon, and turned down the leaf upon it

“twelfth chapter of Ether” hyperlink:

Ether 12

36 And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.

37 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.

Footnote (e) cut him off

1 Nephi 1

20 And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away.

This Lamb's Garments are Spotless: In Jeremiah 11:19, we see the grim reality faced by prophets and truth-tellers at the end of priestcraft cycles: they “walk as lambs to the slaughter.” Jeremiah describes being unaware of the plots devised against him, as the people sought to destroy both him and the “tree with the fruit thereof,” erasing his name from the living (Jeremiah 11:19). This echoes the suffering of Christ, who “was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7; Mosiah 14:7), and of Joseph Smith, who went to Carthage “like a lamb to the slaughter... with a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:4). At the end of priestcraft cycles, the people have rejected the fear of the Lord, lost the ability to judge righteous judgment, and silenced the voice of truth, even seeking to kill the messengers. Jeremiah wasn't alone in his day, as we've covered in the past, the Jews also sought to take Lehi's life (“and all the holy prophets”). Yet the offense and violence of the people do not stain the prophets; their “garments are clean” (Ether 12:36–38), for they have faithfully borne witness of God, even in the face of mortal danger- they've “borne the heat of the day”. The pattern is clear: those who uphold covenant truth and expose spiritual corruption will more than likely stand alone in peril when the people have turned fully to Babylon and priestcraft, but their righteousness remains unblemished, and God ultimately honors their obedience, even if the righteous must suffer with the unrighteous.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

HOW ZION MAY ESCAPE THE LORD'S SCOURGE.

"Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her. But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire." (Doctrine and Covenants 97: 25-26)

This way of escape, insuring the protection of the Lord, is a very simple one. Unfortunately, many of the people of Zion have refused to take advantage of this promise. As I observe

conditions among the people I cannot see how we are going to escape when the judgments are to pass over the nations, which are promised in this revelation and in others which I cannot take time to read. Because of our disobedience and our failure to keep the commandments of the Lord, the righteous, as in times past, may be called upon to suffer with the unrighteous among us.” (*Doctrines of Salvation, Volume 3, p.31-32*)

Jeremiah 11 (cont.)

20 But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

Footnote (b) heart

Doctrine and Covenants 64: 34

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

35 And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land.

36 For, verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, wherefore they shall be plucked out.

37 Behold, I, the Lord, have made my church in these last days like unto a judge sitting on a hill, or in a high place, to judge the nations.

38 For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion.

39 And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.

40 And even the bishop, who is a judge, and his counselors, if they are not faithful in their stewardships shall be condemned, and others shall be planted in their stead.

41 For, behold, I say unto you that Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her;

42 And she shall be an ensign unto the people, and there shall come unto her out of every nation under heaven.

43 And the day shall come when the nations of the earth shall tremble because of her, and shall fear because of her terrible ones. The Lord hath spoken it. Amen.

Judge, Judge, Judge: In Jeremiah 11:20, the prophet appeals to the Lord of hosts as the righteous judge, acknowledging that God “triest the reins and the heart” and asking to witness His vengeance upon the covenant-breakers. This highlights the central role of righteous judgment in the Lord’s work: the faithful prophet brings evidence of disobedience to God, trusting Him to distinguish between the hearts of men. The principle extends to the latter-day establishment of Zion, where judgment remains essential. As Doctrine and Covenants 64:34–43 teaches, the Lord requires a willing heart and obedience to inherit the good of Zion, while the

rebellious are cut off. In Zion, faithful leaders *and* members will exercise righteous judgment, discerning truth from error, liars from prophets, and hypocrites from the faithful. This judgement isn't punitive focused; it is a foundational building mechanism for a holy, unified community under God's law. Zion flourishes only when its people and leaders are willing to judge righteously, separate the good from the evil, and uphold the covenant in both principle and practice, ensuring that God's glory rests upon the people and His purposes are fulfilled among all nations.

The Lord commands His followers to "judge all things" because righteous discernment is essential to walking in truth and avoiding deception. The Apostle Paul declared, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Corinthians 2:15). This principle establishes that the Saints are not to live in moral blindness but to perceive and distinguish between truth and error, good and evil. Similarly, the Savior Himself taught, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). The Lord's injunction was never a commandment to abandon judgment, but rather to perform it with the Spirit and standard of divine law, not with hypocrisy or malice. The Book of Mormon reinforces this principle clearly. Moroni taught, "It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night" (Moroni 7:15). The prophet continued, explaining that "a man being the servant of the devil cannot follow Christ; and if he follow Christ he cannot be a servant of the devil" (v. 11). This doctrine eliminates moral neutrality—righteous judgment allows us to discern the influence behind words, actions, and spirits. Thus, righteous judgment protects the Saints from deception and aligns them with God's will.

Satan, by contrast, preaches a counterfeit gospel of tolerance that confuses love with acceptance of sin. Nephi prophesied that in the last days the devil would "pacify, and lull them away into carnal security" and whisper, "All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well" (2 Nephi 28:21). This false peace arises when people refuse to judge sin as sin, fearing the disapproval of the world more than the disfavor of God. The adversary's goal is to make men "call evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20), erasing moral clarity under the pretense of compassion. When judgment ceases, repentance follows suit, and righteousness disappears.

Joseph Smith taught that "a man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge" (*TPJS*, p. 217), and that knowledge requires discernment. The Prophet also warned that "the devil flatters us that we are very righteous, while we are feeding on husks" (*TPJS*, p. 118). Those who refuse to judge according to God's law deceive themselves and become spiritually blind. In contrast, those who judge by the light of revelation "judge not as man judgeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). The Spirit enables true judgment that uplifts and protects rather than condemns or destroys.

In the end, righteous judgment is an act of love and obedience. As Alma taught, “By their works ye shall know them; for if their works be good, then they are good also” (Moroni 7:5). Christ’s followers must therefore discern works, spirits, and doctrines, not to condemn individuals but to uphold truth, avoid deception, and invite repentance. To reject all judgment is to reject the divine pattern of discernment. Satan’s doctrine says, “do not judge”—but the Lord’s doctrine commands, “judge righteous judgment.” In doing so, we stand as guardians of light in a world that seeks to blur the line between holiness and sin.

Jeremiah 11 (fin)

21 Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

22 Therefore thus saith the LORD 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 of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.

The End, Never Again: Jeremiah 11:21–23 illustrates the deadly consequences for those who reject God’s prophets and covenants at the end of a priestcraft cycle. The men of Anathoth sought to kill Jeremiah to silence his warnings, saying, “Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand” (Jeremiah 11:21). In response, the Lord pronounces judgment: the young men shall die by the sword, their children by famine, and no remnant shall remain (Jeremiah 11:22–23). Similarly, Isaiah 3:13–26 depicts the judgment of the proud and oppressive in Judah, describing the fall of the mighty, the destruction of the arrogant, and the desolation of the city, emphasizing that rebellion, vanity, and oppression incur certain punishment. In the past, the nations of Israel repeatedly failed in this cycle; their priestcraft, idolatry, and covenant-breaking led to scattering, conquest, and destruction. The people’s rejection of righteous judgment silenced prophets and sealed their fate, leaving no remnant in the land.

The future, however, holds a starkly different outcome for God’s faithful. Doctrine and Covenants 101:11–20 teaches that when the cup of iniquity is full, God’s indignation will be poured out on the wicked, but all who remain faithful and pure in heart will be gathered and preserved. The scattered of Israel will return to their inheritances, Zion shall not be moved from her place, and those who have suffered and mourned for righteousness will be comforted and crowned (D&C 101:12–18). Joseph Smith Jr. similarly warned that in the last days the wicked would be swept from the land through war, pestilence, famine, and natural disasters, preparing the way for the gathering of the righteous to Zion in Missouri (*TPJS*, p.17). In 3 Nephi 24, the Lord emphasizes that these faithful remnants—the “few” who hearken to His voice and keep His covenant and “fear Him”—shall become jewels in His crown, a holy, purified people standing

under His law in the New Jerusalem. The contrast is clear: in the past, rebellion led to total scattering and destruction; in the latter days, obedience and covenant fidelity guarantee gathering, preservation, and exalted inheritance. The cycles of priestcraft and apostasy persist, but the final gathering underscores God's mercy and the centrality of righteous judgment in establishing Zion and His eternal covenant people.