

THE NEW COVENANT

"How odd of God
to choose the Jews"

Text: Jeremiah 31:27-40

INTRODUCTION: This is one of the great passages of the Old Testament. It is easily the most significant in the book of Jeremiah. This prophecy of the new covenant is what Jesus had reference to when at the last supper He said, "This is my blood of the new testament..." (Matthew 26:28) "New testament" literally means, "new covenant."

*It is same with us -
X has already died - &
now invites us -*

The meaning of a covenant: a contract between equals imposing certain obligations on both. But the covenant between God and His people is different. It is not a bargain; it is not God saying, "I will do this for you, if you will do, etc." God had already done something for Israel which obligated her to Him. It is a covenant based on grace: God is above Israel--they are not equals. This was not a legalistic arrangement, even in the Old Testament---but grace! He chose Israel because He loved her--and to use her to bless the other nations. "How odd of God who could choose the Jews." God chose her and she suffered more because of it.

The mystery of election is lost in the Sovego

Jeremiah is prophesying of a new covenant. This covenant was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. It went into effect when Jesus died on the cross. It is a prophecy of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. *we are living in the days of the new Covenant.*

The passage naturally divides itself into three sections; each section beginning with the words, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord;" at verse 27; verse 31; and verse 38. Three times God speaks of the better days to come; three times we have the promise of God; these are words of hope. *In the midst of Captivity*

I. THE BASIS OF THE NEW COVENANT. (Verses 27-30)

These verses are basic for understanding the new covenant and for understanding the cross of Christ.

1. God's desire to bless. (verse 27,28)

*God is
only good to
Israel*

This entire section of the book of Jeremiah (30-33) is called the book of consolation, the book of comfort. God has been telling of the utter destruction of the city because of their sins. But this judgment has a redemptive purpose. He is going to bless the land again.

*"like"
in same
manner*

He is not only a God of wrath, but also a God of love and grace. With the same intensity that God judges, He blesses...and vice versa. He is both a God of wrath and a God of love.

As the Lord had been alert to uproot, so He will be eager to build, to plant, to bless with spiritual and material gifts. This salvation began in the heart of God.

watch over, build, plant = complete restoration
care needs life

2. Individual responsibility to God for sin. (verses 29,30)

Every man is guilty of his own sin. Each person is held responsible for his own sins. He will not be able to blame his eventual fate upon anyone except himself.

The people had been blaming their fathers for their own sin and for the results of the sin; they were accusing God of being unjust for punishing them for their father's sin. But God said that if any punishment fell upon them, it was the result of their own sin. In every age there are those who try to blame other people, circumstances, environment, etc., for their sinfulness. Every man is directly responsible to God.

Romans 14:12-"So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God."

II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT. (Verses 31-37)

It is new and different. It provides the conditions necessary to establish fellowship with God.

1. It is effected by God; it is a work of God.

The New Covenant is pictured as lying in the future; thus it is shown to be unattainable by the people of that day. Man of himself is unable to fulfill the Divine commandment. This brings out the spiritual impotence of man.

Its success is guaranteed by God. Compare the Ten Commandments of the old covenant with the words of the New Covenant. In the old one we see, "THOU shalt....THOU shalt not." Here we see, "I will put....I will forgive." It is clear that the success of the old covenant was dependent upon Israel's ability to keep it. This she could not do? Why, then, did God make such a covenant with her? To lead her to see the necessity of the new covenant. Man would never accept grace if he thought he could deserve the favor of God. And he thinks that he deserves it until he comes to see his own sinfulness.

(as long as he thinks he can keep the law, he won't accept grace.)

2. It is the ultimate in grace. (verse 32)

The first covenant forgave the sin of Israel, but the second even pardoned the breaking of the first covenant itself.

(1) This is seen in the figure of God as the husband of His people.

It is one thing for a man to overlook the sins of his wife before he marries her and quite another to forgive her when she sins against her own marriage vows. Sin after we come to Christ is greater than sin before we came to Christ.

(2) It is seen in the reference to the deliverance from Egypt.

This covenant brings a greater deliverance than the Exodus--the deliverance of man from sin and death. The deliverance was effected at a greater cost to God; it was the ultimate in the gifts of God. God's greatest gift to man was the cross.

(3) It is seen in the wider scope of the covenant. (vs 34)

The first was with Israel alone. This is with every man. "All" shall know the Lord.

END OF FIRST DIVISION OF SERMON.

Beginning with verse 33 through 34, ^{on 37} we have a description of the relationship between God and the people of the new covenant. There are ~~three~~ mentioned: (1) inwardness of the law of God; (2) personal knowledge of God; (3) forgiveness of sin. (4) Permanent

The important word in the passage is "for." By noticing this we see that the statement of the prophet concerning the covenant proceeds from effect to cause. [The final covenant relationship will be the writing of God's law in our hearts. 2 This will be possible through direct and personal knowledge of God on the part of all men without human mediation. 3 This knowledge will be the result of the forgiveness of sins. Now turn it around--cause to effect: (1) Forgiveness of sin; cleansing of the moral nature; (2) as a result there will be personal knowledge of God; (3) as a result there will be the accurate apprehension of God's will. These are indispensable conditions are fellowship with God. We will follow the prophet's order.

Our relationship to God in salvation is:

3. Inward apprehension of the will of God.

★ The emphasis in this passage lies on this--as the last effect. This is the spiritual illumination of the individual mind and conscience, and the doing of the will of God from a spontaneous impulse of the renewed heart.

★ Man's way is to work inward from the outside; but this always fails. God's way is to work from the inward--that changes the outward life.

★ The "law" here does not refer to the Mosaic law, but rather to the law of God as the will of God concerning the individual life.

(1) I will put---in heart. The heart is the seat and fountain-head of life and all action. This law, the will of God, will permeate our entire being, will influence all of life.

★ It is written in his heart--part of him, a vital part of his nature.

(2) The doing of the will of God will come from spontaneous impulse of the renewed heart. The old covenant emphasized a forced submission to an external authority.

(3) The heart is renewed--a new nature. Before there was no desire to do the will of God--the new heart desires this. Obedience under the new covenant issues from personal desire rather than a sense of duty. Man will serve God because it is what he wants to do rather than just because he ought to do it.

(4) "I will put...I will write." There is a difference in these two phrases.

a. "I will put," designates this placing as an accomplished fact--once for all. At salvation a new life principle is implanted in man's heart--not the self-will but God's will is the motivating influence in the life.

b. "I will write" denotes progressive duration. It never ceases, but throughout the duration of this covenant God is continually writing it afresh into the heart so that it will not be forgotten--a fresh growth and apprehension of the will of God. Salvation does not become old or stale.

(5) Results in an inward response to God. "Their God--My people." We will maintain the attitudes and activities of a people of God. We will respond to the will of God.

4. Personal Knowledge of God.

(1) The apprehension of the will of God is the outcome of the personal knowledge of God.

*Some do
fear it.*

(2) The word "know" here indicates immediate understanding--know personally, first hand. We fear the will of God because we do not know God, understand Him and His ways.

(3) We shall know for ourself--a personal experience. "No man shall teach..." No one can teach faith. This experience cannot be transmitted or passed on. Each person must have his own encounter with God.

5. Forgiveness of sins. The entire covenant is based on this. Everything else is dependent upon this.

(1) Everlasting forgiveness--"I will forgive (imperfect) and keep on forgiving." This is daily forgiveness--ever-repeated forgiveness. It means to keep sending away our sins.

(2) Everlasting forgetfulness--"I will remember no more; keep on forgetting (imperfect)." This is the daily blotting out of God's memory of the sins we commit.

God sends our sins away on a long trip and they do not come back.

6. It is permanent. (verses 35-37)

God Himself guarantees the permanence of this covenant. God's faithfulness in keeping His ordinances in the realm of nature is here made the visible pledge of like faithfulness in keeping His covenant promises. Every time the sun comes up, it is God saying He has not cast off.

Only when men are able to measure the heavens, will He reject us because of our sins.

(1) The members of this covenant are permanently saved.

(2) The covenant itself is permanent. God has no other means of bringing men into fellowship with Himself.

III. THE RESULT OF THE COVENANT. (Verses 38-40)

1. Holiness--"Holy unto the Lord." The "dead bodies" were the most vile thing existing to a Jew. But even the vilest are made clean under the new covenant.

2. Dedication--meaning of "holy" is "set apart" for service.