

Jeremiah 31:32-39 (31-40) + 32:40-41

As a companion to the giving of the Law and the second set of tablets in **Exodus 34-35**, Jeremiah sets out a picture of the New Covenant, in which God says, "I will put my law in their inward parts."

Jeremiah 31:31-32 - "Behold, the days come, said the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was an husband to them, said the LORD:

- **Matthew 26:28** - "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

This passage is quoted in full in Hebrews:

- **Hebrews 8:7-13** - "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, 'A new covenant,' he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

The Gentiles and Jews who enter this new covenant are referred to as the "Israel of God."

- **Galatians 6:16** - "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

- **Romans 2:29** - "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

- **1 Peter 2:9-10** - "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

This was foretold as far back as Deuteronomy:

- **Deuteronomy 30:6** - "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

See also **Jeremiah 24:7** - "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

"although I was a husband to them" - The Septuagint and Syriac versions have, "I regarded them not," which **Hebrews 8:9** follows.

Why? The Massoretic Text has *ba'alti* = from *baal* (lord) husband; The LXX apparently reads it as *bahalti* = "I abhorred, loathed them" - see **Zechariah 11:8**) i.e. one letter is different in their source Hebrew manuscripts.

Jeremiah 31:33 - "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

This is similar to the covenant with Abraham - he is put to sleep and God cuts the covenant, taking on both parts of the covenant himself. Here God puts the Law in our hearts, our sins are forgiven, and we become his people - all without any reciprocal promises or effort on our part.

Jeremiah 31:34 - "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Of course there is teaching in the New Testament church (**Hebrews 5:12**). But everyone has equal access to the Truth because the Truth is a Person. We are engrafted into the Vine, and the anointing, the life of the Vine, is available to all. The "knowing of Him" comes through our oneness with Christ, not through someone trying to explain a concept. Teachers can only confirm what we know innately in Christ.

- **1 John 2:27** - "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

"from the least of them unto the greatest" - neither intelligence nor class standing nor any other personal attributes can hinder knowing God.

The growth from "babes in Christ" to full maturity is accomplished by the Spirit, not by a curriculum of teaching.

Compare:

- **Ezekiel 36:25-27** - "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

The Targum of this reads: "I will forgive your sins, as one is cleansed by the water of sprinkling, and the ashes of a heifer, which is for a sin offering."

Jewish sages referred all this to the Days of Messiah (Debarim Rabba fol. 242.2 and Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3.2, Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 1. & 24. 3. and on Numb. fol. 54. 4. Vid. Chizuk Emunah, p. 51.)

In fact, any true believer in ages past was saved by this New Covenant, looking to the Messiah, like Abraham, "who saw my day and was glad."

- **Isaiah 51:7** - "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings."

- **James 1:21** - "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

i.e. Put off the old man and put on the new! The Law of Love becomes an inner force, shaping our character from within.

The Surety of the New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:35-37 - "Thus said the LORD, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, said the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus said the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, said the LORD."

Targum - which "stilleth", or "maketh the sea quiet" (rather than "divides" the sea)

Targum: "as it is impossible that man should know the measure of the heavens above..."

Jeremiah 31:38-39 - "Behold, the days come, said the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel to the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it on the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields to the brook of Kidron, to the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy to the

LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever."

Golgotha and Gehenna

Gibeat Goath or the Hill of Death (of roaring, groaning, or execution), possibly the Golgotha of the Gospels, (which in Hebrew signifies the "heap of Gotha" and in Aramaic, "place of the skull") was situated outside the walls of Jerusalem. After the crucifixion, it was incorporated within the new city walls by Herod Agrippa. By being enclosed within the holy city, this unclean place of executions became sanctified, constituting a literal fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy.

"The valley of the dead bodies" = the Valley of Hinnom. The Valley of Hinnom is the modern name for the valley surrounding Jerusalem's Old City, including Mount Zion, from the west and south. It meets and merges with the Kidron Valley, the other principal valley around the Old City, near the southeastern corner of the city. Also called Tophet and Gehenna. The garbage and refuse of the city was always burning there, ashes from burnt offerings were placed there. And it was a place not only for burials, but Tophet / Gehenna was initially where some of the kings of Judah sacrificed their children by fire to Moloch. Thereafter, it was deemed to be cursed (2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 7:31, 19:2-6)

It became known as a type of the place of punishment or the wicked in the afterlife.

- **Mark 9:43** - "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell (*gehenna*), into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The amazing thing here is that in the New Jerusalem that will not be plucked up or cast down forever (it's eternal), Jeremiah declares even the most unclean place - Gehenna - will be holy unto the Lord.

For individual believers, this means that the places where we have worshipped idols within our own hearts, will be cleansed,, transformed and made useful for God.

Jeremiah 32:40 - "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul."

Finally, the eternal (*olam*) covenant will put the fear of God within our hearts so that "they shall not depart from me." Although we can refuse, and choose to depart, it's His power that keeps us faithful to Him.

Targum: "my Word shall rejoice over them" - the Logos/Word = Christ

"and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole

soul."

In the same way Jesus said the greatest commandment was to "love the Lord thy God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength" so He loves us with His whole heart, and promises to "plant us" in the Promised Land / the New Jerusalem.