

Unit II: Jeremiah and the Promise of Renewal

The Heart Wants What the Heart Wants

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 103:17-22

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Jeremiah 31:1-40; John 1:17; Hebrews 8:7-13

PRINT PASSAGES: Jeremiah 31:29-34; John 1:17

KEY VERSE

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. (Jeremiah 31:33b, KJV)

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“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33b, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Interpret the promise and implications of the renewed covenant.
- Cherish the transformation that comes from having a heart relationship with God.
- Adopt and practice a rule for life that comes from the heart.

*Key Terms

Children (Jeremiah 31:29)—Hebrew: *ben* (bane): offspring; sons; descendants.

Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31)—Hebrew: *berith* (ber-eeth'): a divine promise through a series of prophets to establish a new constitution; a compact; treaty.

God (Jeremiah 31:33)—Hebrew: *elohim* (el-o-heem'): a divine being; the supreme God.

Iniquity (Jeremiah 31:30)—Hebrew: *avon* (aw-vone'): guilt; perversity; evil; “sin” (NIV).

Lead (Jeremiah 31:32)—Hebrew: *yatsa* (yaw-tsaw'): to go or come out (of); to bring out (of); to bring forth; direct; “bring” (KJV).

Teach (Jeremiah 31:34)—Hebrew: *lamad* (law-mad'): to exercise in, instruct; train.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

These passages (Jeremiah 31:29-34; John 1:17) connect two pivotal moments in the history of salvation. Jeremiah prophesied during Judah's darkest days, just before the Babylonian Exile, when the people faced the dire consequences of generations of unfaithfulness to God. In this context of fear and despair, Jeremiah offered hope, declaring that God would establish a new covenant with His people, one that would restore their broken relationship with Him.

Centuries later, this promise finds fulfillment in the gospel of John, which addresses a community experiencing the transformative implications of Christ's incarnation. John 1:17 highlights the contrast between Moses, who represents the law, and Christ, who embodies grace and truth. This distinction marks a critical turning point in God's revelation, signifying the shift from the old covenant's preparation to the new covenant's fulfillment through Jesus.

While Jeremiah's prophecy reflects a people struggling with their national identity and divine punishment, John's account emerges from a community witnessing the realization of ancient promises through Jesus Christ. Together, these texts illustrate the continuity of God's redemptive plan and the profound impact of the new covenant.

Introduction

The African American community deeply understands the weight of generational experiences—blessings and burdens passed down through families. Many have heard the elders speak of “paying for the sins of those who came before,” whether referring to systemic injustices or family struggles that seem to echo through generations. Just as the ancestors fought for freedom and justice, bearing burdens not of their own making, some may feel that they are harvesting bitter fruit from trees they did not plant. This resonates powerfully with Jeremiah's prophecy about generational accountability and God's promise of a new covenant. Today's lesson speaks to God's transformative power to break cycles, reshape destinies, and write new stories of hope and redemption. These passages show God's promise to move from external law to internal transformation, from inherited burden to personal responsibility, and from limited access to intimate relationship with the Divine.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Breaking Generational Cycles (*Jeremiah 31:29-30*)

KJV

29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the chil-

dren's teeth are set on edge.

30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

NIV

29 “In those days people will no longer say, ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.’

30 “Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.”

In Jeremiah 31:29-30, the prophet Jeremiah boldly confronts the proverb that suggests children suffer for their parents' actions, captured in the saying about "children's teeth being set on edge by their parents' sour grapes" (see verse 29). This reflects a fatalistic view of generational curses, implying that individuals inherit wrongdoing and punishment due to their lineage.

In verse 29, Jeremiah challenges this belief, encouraging personal responsibility and accountability. He teaches that each individual will be held accountable for their own actions, marking a profound shift toward the significance of personal choice (verse 30). This powerful declaration underscores the importance of individual responsibility while acknowledging family influences. Jeremiah reassures us that although generational patterns exist, they have no predictive or defining power over the relationship with God. Instead, the prophet announces a transformative way for God to engage with His people, and empower their embrace of spiritual inheritance. Jeremiah's message inspires taking ownership of one's life and breaking free from past limitations. It prompts rising above the tendency to blame previous generations, and invites people of faith to harness their ability to shape the present and build for the future. Through this understanding, believers will not only transform their our own lives but also positively impact the lives of generations to come. Embrace this opportunity for change and renewal.

Q WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How does your understanding personal spiritual responsibility change your perspective on family patterns and generational influences? How might this truth empower you to make different choices?

The New Covenant's Internal Transformation *(Jeremiah 31:31-33)*

KJV

31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 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 brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

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.

NIV

31 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

32 “It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

33 “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

In Jeremiah 31:31-33, God reveals His plan to establish a new covenant that is fundamentally different from the one made at Sinai (verse 31). This is not merely a renewal; it represents a groundbreaking transformation in our relationship with God. The acknowledgment of the old covenant’s brokenness in verse 32 highlights Israel’s struggles to remain faithful despite God’s steadfast love. Verse 33 unveils the revolutionary aspect of this new covenant: God will inscribe His law directly on our hearts. This profound internal change means that our actions will stem from renewed desires, igniting a genuine thirst for righteousness rather than mere compliance. When God promises, “I will be their God, and they will be my people” (verse 33c, NIV), He is inviting His people into a personal and transformative relationship.

This covenant ensures that knowledge of God is accessible to all believers, democratizing the spiritual experience. God calls everyone to engage with Him intimately, fostering a community where every heart can seek and reflect His love and purpose. This new covenant empowers the embrace of a transformative journey of faith in our living out the depths of our connection with God. Through this invitation to relationship, God offers a path filled with purpose and hope, allowing lives to be infused with true love and understanding.

Q WHAT DO YOU THINK?

In what specific ways have you experienced God’s law written on your heart rather than just following external rules? How has this internal transformation changed your relationship with God?

Grace and Truth through Jesus Christ

(Jeremiah 31:34; John 1:17)

KJV

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, 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.

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17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

NIV

34 “No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

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17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah’s prophecy reaches a powerful climax in verse 34, offering the beautiful promise that everyone—from the least to the greatest—will come to know the Lord personally. This profound shift represents a democratization of divine knowledge, freeing each individual to engage directly with God without the need for intermediaries. In the gospel of John, this prophetic vision finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who reveals a striking contrast: while the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth are fully realized in Him (John 1:17). This progression does not negate the Law; instead, it fulfills it in a richer, deeper way. The grace embodied by Jesus does not lower God’s standards; it provides believers with the inner strength to live in alignment with God’s will. This grace empowers individuals to embody His principles through a heartfelt relationship founded on love and faith. This new covenant represents an extraordinary evolution in humanity’s relationship with God, blending divine enablement with an authentic connection. It makes possible what the Law alone could not—true righteousness nurtured by a transformative grace.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How has experiencing God’s grace through Christ changed your approach to spiritual growth and obedience? How does this understanding of grace and truth affect your daily walk with God?

A Closing Thought

The progression from Jeremiah’s prophecy to its fulfillment in Christ reveals God’s masterful plan for human transformation. This new covenant reality eliminates the burdens of generational determinism and the impossibility of mere external compliance with the Law. Through Christ, we experience the miracle of internal transformation, where God’s will becomes our hearts’ desire. This intimate, personal relationship with God empowers us to break negative cycles, embrace responsibility, and live in the freedom of grace and truth. Believers living under this new covenant can fully embrace both the privilege and responsibility of having God’s law written on their hearts, experience His transformative power, and share this reality with others.

Your Life

These passages call for embracing personal responsibility while relying on God’s transformative power. Believers must move beyond blame and excuses in their daily walk, accepting accountability for their own spiritual growth. This means actively engaging with God’s Word

not as a mere rulebook but as a means of heart transformation. It involves cultivating intimate fellowship with God through prayer, meditation, and obedience. As you experience this internal work of grace, you will become naturally aligned with God's will, not through striving but through surrender to His transformative presence.

Your World!

Your journey from Law to grace, from external conformity to internal transformation is a powerful testimony. Share how God has broken negative patterns in your life and replaced them with His truth and grace. Testify about the freedom found in personal responsibility and the power of God's grace to change hearts. Your story of experiencing God's new covenant work can encourage others struggling with generational issues or legalistic religion to embrace the transformative power of Christ.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, write Your law on our hearts as we embrace the transformative power of Your new covenant through Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Please be prepared for next week's lesson. The lesson topic for Sunday, November 2, 2025, is "Well . . . That's a Deep Subject!" The Devotional Reading is Romans 13:1-10, the Background Scriptures are Jeremiah 20:1-6; 37:1-38:28; 43:1-7, and the Print Passage is Jeremiah 38:7-13.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, October 27	"Speak as the Spirit Leads"	(Matthew 10:16-27)
TUESDAY, October 28	"Do Not Fear Mortal Powers"	(Matthew 10:28-42)
WEDNESDAY, October 29	"Wait Patiently for the Lord"	(Psalm 37:1-13)
THURSDAY, October 30	"God Never Forsakes the Righteous"	(Psalm 37:25-28, 35-40)
FRIDAY, October 31	"Overcome Evil with Good"	(Romans 12:12-21)
SATURDAY, November 1	"Speak Even when the Message Stings"	(Jeremiah 38:1-6)
SUNDAY, November 2	"An Advocate Pleads for Justice"	(Jeremiah 38:7-13)

NOTES