

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalms 51

Hebrews 5:7-9

John 12:20-33

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

*But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts;** and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts

Jeremiah was only 12 or 13 when he was called by God to be a prophet.

Just like Moses he was reluctant to serve,
and told God his reason.

He said,

*"Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak,
for I am only a boy."*

But God gave Jeremiah the strength he needed to do what he had to do.

He is viewed by Biblical scholars as being like Moses,
because he also focused his writings on
the Exodus from Egypt,
the wandering in the wilderness,
and the covenant received at Sinai.

The original Covenant with Moses had failed.
God's people had turned their backs on God,
and refused to obey their creator.

Choosing instead to be their own God, they sinned.
And they were miserable.

In their small-minded, self centred state they rejected his love.

This new covenant that Jeremiah speaks of, will be different.
It will be God alone who will put into the hearts of the people
the power to respond with love.

We call this power... "Grace"

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.

His prophecy is echoed by the great prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel (36:26-27) says,

*"A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you;
and I will remove from your body the heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.
I will put my spirit within you,
and make you follow my statutes
and be careful to observe my ordinances."*

The heart of flesh that he speaks of
is our original, natural hearts.

This was the heart that all humankind had before sin entered the world
through the Original Sin of Adam and Eve.

For the new covenant to be successful within us,
we have to confess our sins and allow God's Grace
to change our stony hearts and renew our natural heart of flesh that God
had given us.

"Lip service" to the laws of God,
instead of a humble contrite heart will not work.

It didn't work for the Israelites, and it won't work for us today.

Nikolai Berdyaev, a Christian philosopher,
prophetically said almost 100 years ago.

“There is no longer any room in the world
for a merely external form of Christianity based upon custom...
The world is entering upon a period of catastrophe and crisis
when we are being forced to take sides
and in which a higher and more intense kind of spiritual life
will be demanded from Christians.”