



Study 5 : "The New Covenant" (Jer31:31-35)

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BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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Introducing the Study

Study 3 took up the theme "Why Do You Persist In Rebellion?" (Isaiah 1:5) The prophet had already answered the question in v4. The people of Israel were "children given to corruption." King David, after committing adultery and murder, declared :

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. **Psalm 51:5**

The problem is our fallen human NATURE:

... we stand, defiant, in a permanent state of REBELLION against God. (Rom5:10, Eph2:1-3)

The prophet Hosea sums up God's despair at our condition:

I long to redeem them but ... they do not cry out to me from their hearts. **Hosea 7:13-14**

I led them with cords of compassion, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them ... My people are determined to turn from me. **Hosea 11:4, 7**

Jeremiah concludes that while God may have commanded him to call people to return to Him, not only was no one listening, no one was actually able to hear:

To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them ... **Jeremiah 6:10**

WHAT MORE CAN GOD DO?

God's PURPOSE is clear ("I long to redeem them")

His COMPASSION and LOVE is displayed ("cords of compassion ... ties of love")

Lines of COMMUNICATION are open ("speak and give warning")

HE CAN DO A WORK OF GRACE AND RENEW OUR FALLEN NATURE!

The prophets PROMISED a change...

No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts **Jeremiah 3:17**

... from an EXTERNAL requirement ...

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. **Deuteronomy 30:6**

... to an INTERNAL motivation (and renovation!) ...

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. **Ezekiel 36:26**

... with God himself taking up RESIDENCE and working EFFECTIVELY in us.

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees
and be careful to keep my laws. **Ezekiel 36:26-27**

The prophet Jeremiah gave all this a name :

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant ... **Jer 31:31**

A. REVISITING THE OLD COVENANT

(from Study 2)

You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him.

And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised ... that he will set you in praise, fame and honour high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God ... **Deut26:17-19**

THE FEATURES OF THE OLD COVENANT. There were:

1. Two **PARTIES** involved - God and Israel
2. Two **DECLARATIONS** made - That Yahweh would be their God and they would be his people.
3. Two **PROMISES** - That God would honour & bless them in a unique relationship. and the people would be **OBEDIENT**

For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

But if... you are not obedient ... I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

Deut30:15-18

B. THE NEW COVENANT ... Jeremiah 31:31-35

1. THE FEATURES OF THE NEW COVENANT

a. A Complete BREAK with the past

... I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,

b. A TRANSFORMATION of our Natures

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

c. A UNILATERAL Declaration

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

d. A PERSONAL Relationship UNITY

No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,"

e. Free FORGIVENESS... an act of sheer GRACE (No strings attached!)

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

2. NOTICE WHAT'S MISSING?

Unlike the Old Covenant, there is no mention of anything that we must do!

Ephesians 2:1-10 is a commentary at this point :

a. We are UNABLE to do anything ourselves:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin ... we were by nature objects of wrath.

b. It is God, and God ALONE, who acts:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ ... And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

c. Grace: UNEARNED and UNDESERVED Favour

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -

d. Our "works" are our RESPONSE to God's Grace not the Grounds For It.

not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

C. NEW TESTAMENT (COVENANT) REALISATION

1. The FACT ... in us.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2. The BASIS ... in Christ

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ ... not counting men's sins against them. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**