

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 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. 32 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. 33 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. 34 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 (NRSV).

God's law was originally written on stone tablets and imposed on the people. All parts of the law were in written form to remind the people of the requirements of the covenant. Following the law and being in covenant has the reward of the blessings that come with the relationship providing hope for a glorious future. The prophesy promises that the day will come when God's law will not be imposed on the people. It will reform the covenant from an outside influence to the inner being of humanity. The covenant will be internalized by being written in the hearts of mankind. Internalized law, written in our hearts, is a very important concept. Internalized law is understood and followed automatically. Obedience is not forced and does not need to be forced when it is internalized. It is a guiding principle of life. This is what the Lord wants, a joyful response to the law. It is not just a matter of obedience but the opportunity to be one with the creator. Once internalized, the principles of the Lord become automatic. We instinctively live by the caring and sharing principles of the love of the Lord. The problem is a repeat universal failure of humanity. The law written externally failed to produce the desired effect. The emphasis was on action, activities that people were to do. The motivation to observe the law is the fear of punishment.

During the time of Jeremiah, the kingdom was divided. The north was defeated and the south was threatened. The prophesy of Jeremiah occurs during the reign of five kings of Judea. Prophesy includes the theological understanding and interpretation of world events; Israel's fall is due to punishment for rejection of the covenant. The prophesy of Jeremiah tells the nation that they will be carried off and serve a foreign nation for seventy years. Then another kingdom will free them and they will return to the Promised Land as their rightful place as God's chosen people. The Lord promises a new covenant with the people. The day is coming, sometime in future, instead of writing the law on tables of stone; it will be inscribed directly into the hearts of humanity. This new covenant can't be broken. It is internal not external. It is ingrained inside the person. It will not be about what they do. It will be about who they are. It will not be necessary to teach people to know the Lord because they will know the Lord because the covenant is written in the heart. Right now, at this stage in your life, you do not need to be taught how to read and write. You know how because it is ingrained within you; it is instinctive. When you know the Lord, you don't have to think about it, you don't have to be forced to obey the law. You don't have to be reminded of the law because you know the law and its obedience is automatic. This comes from love and from love comes forgiveness.

We see in the Old Testament prophecy, restoration is coming. We see in the New Testament those promises are fulfilled by Jesus. He did not just forgive iniquity but permanently forgives us through the love sacrifice. We learn the love of God and the will of God through Jesus and the fulfillment of this covenant. We get the love of God, a second chance, and a New Covenant based on love. Jesus is not just about salvation, he is about the revelation of God's loving nature. It was revealed through the Old Testament. Now, God's nature is realized and personified. Internalized commandments are followed willingly, automatically, and joyfully. The Holy Spirit is not an external entity to reach for; it is within you, automatically leading you to the loving nature of God.

The Lord promises great things for the people. The requirements of the people are not something for nothing. God is not going to spoil you. If you want to eat, you have to work. The requirements are in the realm of devotion. Be obedient, call upon the Lord, and pray to the Lord. That's it, an easy covenant to keep. You have to know and trust the Lord. You have to believe and have an appropriate response to the belief. Turn to the Lord, seek, and search completely, with all your heart. Then the Lord will reestablish a covenant, protect, and free the nation to return to the Promised Land. For restoration you have to put in the effort, return thanks, have faith, devotion, and return to the Lord.

This promise is fulfilled in and through Jesus. It is a restoration of the ancient covenant. God gave us God's own testimony through Jesus. Those who seek, pray, search, and call upon God in good faith have the divine truth in their hearts. We don't have to question what is right and what is wrong. It is known instinctively by the rule of love and grace.