

# Abiding Fruit

*Informing the Mind & Inflaming the Heart*

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## **I Will Make A New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31**

Not only do we enjoy the blessings of God by His providence but also by His promise. In this way we recognize a sweetness and security associated with what God says here in Jeremiah 31. The writer to the Hebrews understands the promise of this new covenant as referring to the Gospel times (Heb. 8:8, 9). He contrasts the old covenant with the new covenant. This contrast is seen in the difference between the promises made in the old covenant and the new covenant, and in the mediatorship of those covenants. The New Covenant is in effect because Jesus has obtained a far better ministry of which He is the Mediator. This excellent ministry of our Lord is based on better promises; namely those we find in the New Covenant.

This New Covenant is not limited to believing Jews in the Old Testament, but is extended to all believers (see 2 Cor. 6; Heb. 8; 10). Under the old covenant administered by Moses which had issued from Mount Sinai, sinners were saved under that covenant upon their repentance and faith in the Messiah who was to come, whose very blood, was typified by those old covenant sacrifices.

Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant, and as such He ensures the fulfillment of the promises made (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). These promises are so clear in the New Covenant – they flow as from heaven itself with clarity and force. We can believe them because God has promised them, and our Lord Jesus secures their accomplishment on our behalf.

It was God who made a covenant with Israel in the Old Testament, when He took them by the hand to lead them (they were blind, stubborn and rebellious), which covenant they broke. It was not God who broke the covenant. It was Israel. Our salvation is always of God, but our sins and ruin are always of ourselves. God was a husband to Israel, but they spurned His love and covenant (which was as a marriage covenant to God). They broke this covenant by their spiritual adultery called idolatry. Their departure from faith in Yahweh was a treacherous betrayal of what God desired of them. All such departures from the Lord are such. They promises that are made in the New Covenant say nothing about physical blessings. There is no promise of Canaan. There is no promise of physical descendents. The promises are spiritual and speak of peace, pardon and forgiveness. God also speaks of a new relationship, not in terms of a marriage relationship, but in terms of a father and sons and daughters. Such a relationship can never be destroyed.

God promises that He will incline our hearts towards Him. God does not say that He will give us a new law, but rather that He will put His law within us, and will write it on our hearts. It will not be written outside of us as on a stone tablet (Ex. 19; 20). The law of God shall be internal and not merely external. Our Lord did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. It is the Holy Spirit who writes God's law on our hearts. He gives us desires to keep His law. He gives us an inclination and disposition to obey His law.

Not only does God speak to our responsibility or duty before Him – obeying this internal law, but He speaks of a new relationship. He uses the covenant formula of *"I will be their God and they shall be my people."* God will be everything we need – He shall suffice His people. In return, we shall be loyal, loving and obedient people. God is not ashamed to be called the God of His people, because He has prepared for us a city and a country that we will desire (Heb. 11:16).

Thirdly, there shall be a revelation of God (Jer. 31:34). There will be an abundance of knowledge. We will not need to teach anyone this knowledge. God will give it to us and we will know Him. The extent of this knowledge is from the least to the greatest (all shall know me). Believing Gentiles shall know Him. Believing Jews shall know Him.

In the Gospel age, the things of God are much clearer and plainer than in the Old Testament age. The Gentiles used to be in ignorance and darkness, but no longer. Why will these things be? It is because God has forgiven us our iniquities and does not remember our sins anymore. How is this possible? It is possible only through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel makes no appeal to people who do not feel the burden of sin. It is for this reason that the church must reject the sentimental appeal of Abraham Lincoln that the simple requirements of love for God and love for a neighbor constitutes a reasonable foundation for a church and its membership. The moment a church took such a position it has ceased to be a Christian Church because the core of Christianity is expressed in the uncomfortable doctrine that Christ provides salvation from personal sins. The offense of the Cross still stands. The power of Christianity does not merely exist in a program of conduct, but in the power of new life infused by God the Holy Spirit. Such are the promises of the New Covenant.

The New Covenant gets to the heart of the matter between us and God. It is simply this: man can do nothing apart from God. God, on the other hand, can do and does do everything for us. We cannot forgive our own sins. Only God can forgive us our sins. We have no ability to obey the Law unless God gives us that ability. Certainly such people who are dealt with by God can exclaim that they know God.

God promises to satisfy the weary soul and replenish every languishing soul (Jer. 31:25). God rejoices in doing good to His people (Jer. 32:41). The promises of God are guaranteed in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20). God has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them we may become partakers of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

We live in a world where promises are made and broken. The sanctity of a promise does not mean anything, and neither does the promise itself. Broken promises lead to ruined lives. The promises of God can never be broken. They are as inviolate as the Person of God is. The promises of God are backed by God who cannot lie. Therefore, every promise is true.

Six times in Jeremiah 31:31 – 34, God says “I will.” There are no reasons to doubt the veracity of God’s promises because not one of them has ever failed. This is reinforced by the conditional clauses found in the verses following the New Covenant (see Jer. 31:35 – 37; also 33:14 - 22). God’s word cannot be broken. The assurance of our salvation rests in the faithfulness of God. This is the promise of God in the New Covenant.

It is our Lord Jesus Christ who mediates this covenant. He will ensure its fulfillment, and will bring it to completion and fruition. All the promises of God are yes in Jesus. They will happen and they must happen. In the house of God we find these lesser houses of Israel and Judah. Their very existence and promised restoration is directly linked to the New Covenant ratified by our Lord Jesus. In the eternal covenant of redemption then, we find that the New Covenant is the fullest expression of the saving work of God. The benefits of this covenant are ours and we must enter into them fully in order to lead joyful adoring lives before God.

Let us be grateful that God has engraven His law on our hearts. Let us be grateful that He is our God and we are His people. Let us be grateful for the knowledge of God. Let us be grateful for the forgiveness of all our sins and iniquities. Let us live as New Covenant people, as the Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom we are tied by covenant love.