

# Jeremiah Prophecies a New Covenant

## Summary and Goal

The heart of humanity is desperately wicked and in need of replacement. Because no one is able to perfectly obey the law, God promised a new covenant, one not written on stone or parchment but written instead on the hearts of His people. This is a promise concerning the coming day of Jesus, fulfilled in the gospel. In the gospel, God not only writes His law on our hearts but also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer.

### ***Main Passages***

Jeremiah 17:1-10

Jeremiah 31:31-34

### ***Session Outline***

1. The Problem of a Heart Engraved with Sin (Jer. 17:1-10)
2. The Promise of a Heart Indwelled by God (Jer. 31:31-33)
3. The Privilege of a Heart That Knows God (Jer. 31:34)

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### ***Theological Theme***

In the new covenant, we are indwelled by the Holy Spirit, who enables us to obey God's law.

### ***Christ Connection***

The problem in Jeremiah's day was the people had God's law but were unable to obey Him due to the sinfulness of their hearts. Jeremiah prophesied about a coming day when God would forgive sin and write His law on the hearts of His people. This prophecy is fulfilled in the gospel. Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness. Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to obey His commands.

### ***Missional Application***

God calls us to rely on the Holy Spirit as we obey God's commands and live on mission for His kingdom.

## Session Plan

# Jeremiah Prophecies a New Covenant

### Introduction Option

Show the video clip “How Your Taste Buds Change Over Time.” Use this to show how transformation must take place before we can begin to love something that we previously did not.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLLr\\_5ML\\_Ms](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLLr_5ML_Ms)

\*\*Please clarify that the reference to “evolutionary psychology” in the video does not accord with Scripture, in which God says He created everything.

This evolutionary rationale for “conditioned taste aversion (CTA)” can serve as an example in point 1 of the deceitful human heart placing its trust in man rather than in the Lord (Jer. 17:5-10).

### ? For Further Discussion

After saying something regretful, have you ever made the statement “I don’t know where that come from”?

How does Jeremiah 17:9 make sense of this kind of experience (see also Matt. 15:19)?

### Introduction

Begin this session with the writer’s story about hating vegetables. Note the significance and impossibility of changing the command from *eating* vegetables to *loving* vegetables (leader p. 130; PSG p. 101).

- ? What is the difference between commanding someone to obey outwardly and commanding someone to obey inwardly?
- ? Why does the attitude and desire for obedience matter to God?

Summarize the session (leader p. 131; PSG p. 102).

### 1. The Problem of a Heart Engraved with Sin (Jer. 17:1-10)

Read Jeremiah 17:1-4. Note that the greatest problem we all face is the sin “engraved on the tablet” of our hearts. Explain that sin involves actions but is much more a condition of our nature (leader pp. 131-132; PSG pp. 102-103).

- ? Why is it important to understand that we don’t only commit sins but that we are also sinful?
- ? How does knowing this impact the way you understand the effect of the gospel?


Next, read Jeremiah 17:5-10. Highlight, first, the self-deception we are capable of because of our sinful hearts. Second, our sinful hearts make salvation impossible if focused primarily on our behavior. Thankfully, the gospel addresses both issues within our hearts (leader pp. 132-133; PSG pp. 103-104).

- ? The wisdom of the world tells people to “trust your heart” and “believe in yourself.” How does Jeremiah 17:1-10 confront this way of thinking?
- ? When have your feelings led you astray? What did you learn from the experience?

## 2. The Promise of a Heart Indwelled by God (Jer. 31:31-33)

Comment on the significance and severity of our problem with sin in our hearts (leader p. 134). Then ask a volunteer to read Jeremiah 31:31-33. Point out, *making reference to Pack Item 7: The New Covenant*, the two things we must understand of the new covenant (leader pp. 134-135; PSG pp. 104-105):

- This covenant is **new**. (This was not a Plan B from God.)


 Why is it important to know that the new covenant was new to the people but not new to God?

- This new covenant would also be **within** His people. (This would involve a new heart indwelled by the Holy Spirit.)

 How does knowing that you have a new heart change the way you approach obedience?


## 3. The Privilege of a Heart That Knows God (Jer. 31:34)

Read Jeremiah 31:34. Recall that sin separates us from God, but in His great love for us, He has provided a way for us to return to our true purpose—to know God and to make Him known throughout the world (leader p. 136; PSG p. 106).

 How important would you say knowing God is to you right now?

 What are some ways you could cultivate a greater desire to know God in your life?

Show how Jesus equated eternal life with knowing God and knowing the One He sent—Himself. Our knowledge of God in heaven will be full, but we can and must know Him now through the gospel—the new covenant—which solves our heart problem with sin (leader pp. 136-137; PSG p. 107).

 In what ways should our knowledge of God motivate us to make God known in the world?

## Conclusion

Sum up this session with knowing God through the gospel of Jesus as a two-sided coin: our personal relationship with God and our desire to make Him known—a return to our original purpose on earth (leader p. 137; PSG p. 108).

*Apply the truths of this session with “His Mission, Your Mission” (PSG p. 109).*

*Pass out bookmarks from Pack Item 9: God Is the Reward to help group members recall the focus of our new hearts according to the new covenant in Christ.*

### Point 2 Option

Ask: What in Jeremiah 31:31-34 makes you think of the work of the Holy Spirit?

Read the “Essential Christian Doctrine” *Work of the Holy Spirit in Life of the Christian* (leader p. 135; PSG p. 105), and ask the following questions:

- How do we typically see the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Testament?
- How does the Spirit’s role in the new covenant differ from how He normally operated in the Old Testament?

**Christ Connection:** The problem in Jeremiah’s day was the people had God’s law but were unable to obey Him due to the sinfulness of their hearts. Jeremiah prophesied about a coming day when God would forgive sin and write His law on the hearts of His people. This prophecy is fulfilled in the gospel. Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness. Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to obey His commands.

**Missional Application:** God calls us to rely on the Holy Spirit as we obey God’s commands and live on mission for His kingdom.

## Expanded Session Content

# Jeremiah Prophesies a New Covenant

### Voices from the Church

“Jesus does not offer to make bad people good but to make dead people alive.”<sup>1</sup>

—Ravi Zacharias



## Introduction

When I was a kid, I indiscriminately hated to eat vegetables. Green beans, carrots, broccoli—you name it, I refused it. My poor parents, knowing the importance of eating vegetables, tried all kinds of ways to get them into my diet. But I couldn’t get past the fact that these green and yellow and orange things tasted so much worse than meat and potatoes (potatoes being the one exception to my vegetable rule).

As usually happens, vegetable eating became a test of the wills, a contest to see who would break first. Most of the time, my parents would command me to eat the vegetables, and I would obey them and choke a few down. Now imagine that one night at the dinner table, my parents didn’t say to me, “Eat the vegetables”; imagine instead that they told me to “Love the vegetables.”

That changes the conversation, doesn’t it? Yes, because my parents would have given me a command that I was incapable of obeying. In order to obey, it wouldn’t be enough for me to force myself to swallow a few bites; I would need something much deeper to change in me. I would need a new set of taste buds.

In a similar way, this is what happens in the gospel. God not only commands that we love Him with all our heart, mind, and strength, but He actually gives us a new heart capable of doing so. Jeremiah prophesied about the day when this would become a reality.

-  What is the difference between commanding someone to obey outwardly and commanding someone to obey inwardly?
-  Why does the attitude and desire for obedience matter to God?



## Session Summary

In this session, we see that the heart of humanity is desperately wicked and in need of replacement. Because no one is able to perfectly obey the law, God promised a new covenant, one not written on stone or parchment but written instead on the hearts of His people. This is a promise concerning the coming day of Jesus, fulfilled in the gospel. In the gospel, God not only writes His law on our hearts but also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer.

## 1. The Problem of a Heart Engraved with Sin (Jer. 17:1-10)

Jeremiah prophesied during a time of historical intrigue. Assyria and Egypt jockeyed for position in the region; Judah was a blip on the radar. Though the people perceived their greatest threat to be from outside their nation, Jeremiah revealed that what they really had to fear was far closer than that—it was the sin within their own hearts:

*<sup>1</sup> “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, <sup>2</sup> while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, <sup>3</sup> on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. <sup>4</sup> You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”*

The word of the Lord here was bleak. It served as a reminder, both then and now, of just how desperate is our situation. Like the people of Judah, we are tempted to look outside ourselves for danger. We look at the culture, we look at shifting values, we look at enemies across the globe—but we should look first and foremost inside ourselves, for our sin is “engraved on the tablet” of our hearts. And it has been this way since the garden of Eden in Genesis 3.

Looking back to the beginning of the Bible’s storyline, we recall that in the garden, everything was good and right. But then a deceiver corrupted the word of God in the minds of the first couple. Humanity believed the lie and chose to live outside of the loving rule of their Creator. And suddenly, the earth was radically changed. Sin had entered the world. The effect was devastating, and we’re still reeling.

## Further Commentary

“Judah is so firmly rooted in transgression that her sin is indelible. The iron stylus was used for engraving upon hard surfaces (cf. Job 19:24). RSV ‘diamond’ (NEB ‘adamant’) is MT *šāmīr*, a term referring to some obscure stone of impenetrable hardness characteristic of the diamond. Not merely has sin formed an impenetrable layer over national life, but it has permeated the very wellsprings of thought and will. The fruition of the new covenant expectations (31:33) appears in 1 Corinthians 3:2f...Complete reliance upon God was basic to the covenant agreement, and here Jeremiah is enunciating a general principle in the light of Judah’s periodic political dabblings with Babylon and Egypt (cf. Ps. 146:3)... Unregenerate human nature is in a desperate condition without divine grace, described by the term ‘gravely ill’ in verse 9 (RSV ‘desperately corrupt,’ NEB ‘desperately sick’). Cf. 15:18 and 30:12, where the meaning ‘incurable’ occurs. Every generation needs regeneration of soul by the Spirit and grace of God (cf. John 3:5f.; Titus 3:5).”<sup>2</sup>

—R. K. Harrison



## Voices from Church History

“Atheism, pride, self-will, and idolatry, it is true of all, that ‘the heart of man,’ of every natural man, ‘is desperately wicked.’”<sup>3</sup>

—John Wesley (1703–1791)

Shame replaced vulnerability. Fear overtook love. Order dissolved into chaos. The fellowship was broken, and along with it, the rest of the world. Men and women, with their willful disobedience, had dug a trench between themselves and God. And the rest of creation spiraled downward. Earthquakes, tornadoes, famine, flood—these aren’t ultimately the result of weather patterns, environmental changes, or melting ice caps. They’re the result of sin: “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Rom. 8:22).

The Greek definition for *sin* is simply this: “to miss.” We were created in the image of God with the intent to glorify Him through our worship and enjoyment of Him forever. In that, we have missed. Big time. We choose to worship money, sex, and other pretend gods and to focus our enjoyment on the menial pleasures of hamburgers rather than the Almighty. We have missed. That’s a simple definition for the far-reaching condition in which we find ourselves.

Let’s not miss this too—sin isn’t so much an action as it is a condition. It’s true that whenever we violate God’s revealed will, we sin, but we do so because it’s in our nature. Let me put it another way—we don’t become sinners when we sin; we sin because we are sinners. That’s our heritage. It’s the spiritual DNA that we inherited from the parents of the human race.

- ❓ Why is it important to understand that we don’t only commit sins but that we are also sinful?
- ❓ How does knowing this impact the way you understand the effect of the gospel?

<sup>5</sup> *Thus says the LORD:*

*“Cursed is the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his strength,  
whose heart turns away from the LORD.*

<sup>6</sup> *He is like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see any good come.  
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.*

<sup>7</sup> *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,  
whose trust is the LORD.*

<sup>8</sup> *He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,  
for its leaves remain green,  
and is not anxious in the year of drought,  
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”*

*<sup>9</sup> The heart is deceitful  
above all things,  
and desperately sick;  
who can understand it?*

*<sup>10</sup> "I the LORD  
search the heart  
and test the mind,  
to give every man  
according to his ways,  
according to the fruit of  
his deeds."*



## Voices from the Church

"The sin of idolatry lies deep in my heart. This sin deifies my supposed independence. I want to be God. I want to set my own rules for living and terms for happiness. Sin transforms God's holy 'Thou shalt not' into my stubborn 'I will.'" <sup>4</sup>



—Rhett Dodson

Because our hearts are engraved with sin, we have an amazing propensity toward self-deception. We lie to ourselves over and over again. Far from being able to trust our feelings, we must embrace the fact that our feelings will lie to us. We cannot, then, obey when we feel like it, pray when we feel like it, or act lovingly when we feel like it. Because our hearts are engraved with sin, our feelings are not to be trusted.

Instead, we need a higher form of truth than ourselves. We need something outside of ourselves, something stable and trustworthy, to tell us what's right and good. Instead of trusting ourselves, we must place our trust in the unchanging Word of God. God's Word tells us the truth, including the truth about ourselves, even if it's uncomfortable for us to hear.

Also, because our hearts are engraved with sin, our salvation cannot be a message focused primarily on our behavior. Any message that fails to deal with the primary issue of the heart is like putting a Band-Aid on internal hemorrhaging. Therefore, the gospel must meet us at the level of the heart if it is truly going to be a message of good news.

Fortunately for us, the gospel of Jesus Christ is precisely that. As Jeremiah would prophesy, the new covenant would actually meet us at the heart level, doing for us what we never could or would do for ourselves. In this new covenant, the covenant of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God would give us a new heart not engraved with sin but indwelt by Him.

-  The wisdom of the world tells people to "trust your heart" and "believe in yourself." How does Jeremiah 17:1-10 confront this way of thinking?
-  When have your feelings led you astray? What did you learn from the experience?

## Further Commentary

“The new covenant is set in eschatological times of the Messiah and the consummation of history (‘the days are coming’). The name of this ‘new covenant’ suggests a radical break from past covenants. But the word for ‘new’ in Hebrew can also mean ‘renewed covenant,’ especially since three-fourths of the contents of this covenant recall the Abrahamic–Davidic covenants. The principal parties of the covenant are ‘the house of Israel’ and ‘the house of Judah’... suggesting a rejoining of the two parts. This new covenant also applies to the church, because Gentiles were part of this continuing Abrahamic–Davidic new covenant when God promised that in Abraham’s seed all nations would be blessed... The problem with the old covenant was not with its maker or its contents, but with God’s people who ‘broke’ their marriage vows to Him (cp. 11:10). God said this covenant would ‘not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors’ at the exodus or on Sinai, but it would be made ‘after those days’ (v. 33) when the people of Israel are restored to their land. God will still place His law ‘within them and write it on their hearts.’ This law or instruction is a point of continuity between the old and new covenants, only this time God would write the law internally rather than externally on tablets. Gone would be the evil will and heart of the people, which had characterized Israel in the past (13:10; 18:12; 23:17).”<sup>5</sup>

—Walter C. Kaiser,  
*HCSB Study Bible*

## 2. The Promise of a Heart Indwelt by God (Jer. 31:31-33)

Perhaps one of the reasons why the people rejected Jeremiah’s message was because they wanted to hear a different kind of good news than what he was delivering. No doubt the people in Jeremiah’s day wanted to hear a message about outward prosperity, of peace with the warring nations around them, of stability in their lives.

We are not unlike them. We look to God less like the sovereign Creator of the universe and more like a cosmic butler who exists to make our lives more comfortable. We focus our prayers on the relief of physical and emotional discomfort in our lives, asking God to give us things that we perceive would make our lives more enjoyable. We still are asking for peace, stability, and prosperity.

Those requests are based in a fundamental failure to recognize our truest and deepest problem—that of our own hearts. If we could, even for a second, realize the gravity of our own sin and how deeply it runs within us, then the focus of our prayers would dramatically change. We would cry out for deliverance not from the environmental factors around us but from what is within us.

Jeremiah’s message from the Lord might not have met the people’s expectations in terms of the physical, but it cut straight to the heart of the matter. Because our problem is far worse than we dare to imagine, the message is better than we could have dreamed:

*<sup>31</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares 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.*


There are a couple of key things regarding this new covenant Jeremiah prophesied about that we must understand. This covenant is, first of all, **new**.

The Lord declared that this is a new thing from Him. But just because it’s new to us doesn’t mean it’s a brand new idea in the heart of God. Sometimes we have the tendency to think that God’s Plan A was the garden, but once the first humans willfully chose to sin against Him, God had to go back to the drawing board. In this scenario, the new covenant, the gospel, came one day as God had the brilliant idea of sending Jesus into the world, such that Jesus is Plan B.



This is not true, however. If it were true, it would mean that God is on some kind of progressive learning curve, that He made an error in judgment at the very beginning and then was forced to scramble to make up for His lack of foresight. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has always been the centerpiece of history (1 Pet. 1:20-21).

God's plan was not new to God, but it was new to the people. For generations, the people had a history of trying and failing, trying and failing, never able to live up to the written code of the covenant of God. God was merciful time and time again, pursuing them to bring them back to Him, but even so, the old covenant only imposed the law. It did nothing to empower the people to keep it. But here in the new covenant, God would not only provide the knowledge of His will, He would write it within the new hearts of His people.


 Why is it important to know that the new covenant was new to the people but not new to God?

This new covenant would also be **within** His people. Many people today think of believing the gospel as a choice between going to heaven and going to hell. They know they don't want to go to hell, so they choose to trust in Christ in order to be saved and live eternally in heaven instead.

While it's true that trusting in Christ for forgiveness and righteousness is indeed the only way to God, if that's all we think of when we think of the gospel, then we are falling far short of its implications. The gospel is the message that because our hearts are so corrupted by sin, we need a new heart that is turned toward God.

That's why this new covenant is within us, not written on tablets or parchment but written on our new hearts. Paul commented on this reality in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

When we believe the message of the gospel, the old person we once were dies and we are spiritually resurrected with Christ. Our new self, with a new heart, has new desires, new tastes, and most importantly, a new Master. No longer are we imprisoned by sin; instead, God indwells our hearts through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

 How does knowing that you have a new heart change the way you approach obedience?

## Voices from the Church

"A new heart [is] compelled by the Spirit to obedience. It is a voluntary obedience springing from a heart that has been transformed and captivated by the Redeemer."<sup>6</sup>

—Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp

## 99 Essential Christian Doctrines

65. *Work of the Holy Spirit in Life of the Christian*

The Spirit's work in the life of a Christian begins in the work of salvation in bringing a person to faith in Christ and is continued through the work of sanctification in helping the Christian to become progressively more like Christ throughout the course of his or her life. He also empowers and indwells believers, intercedes on their behalf, and equips them with special gifts for the service of God's kingdom. He is the Comforter to the believer and aids us in properly interpreting the Bible.

## Voices from Church History

"Our reward has been very briefly defined by the prophet: I will be their God, and they shall be my people. He has promised us himself as our reward."<sup>7</sup>

"God is the reward, in him the end, in him the perfection of happiness."<sup>8</sup>

—Augustine (354-430)

## Further Commentary

“The result of the new covenant is to be the universal knowledge of God...Having the law written on one’s heart is not so much a matter of immediate knowledge as transformed attitudes and behavior (22:16). The result is said to be not just the knowledge of the law but the knowledge of the Lord, i.e., a relationship with the Lord of the covenant by faith, the goal of all the earlier covenants...There is to be no age, economic, educational, or social barriers under the new covenant; for the basis of the new relationship to God is to be God’s total forgiveness. Before God can fill human hearts with his law, he must remove the sin that is written there (17:1). All memory of sins is to be erased. Thus the experience and practice of forgiveness is a major aspect of the gospel of the NT (e.g., Matt. 6:12; 26:28; Mark 1:4; Luke 1:76; 7:47-49; Acts 5:31; 10:43; Rom. 4:7-8).”<sup>9</sup>

—F. B. Huey Jr.

### 3. The Privilege of a Heart That Knows God (Jer. 31:34)

This new covenant meets us at our deepest need—a heart engraved with sin. It is a promise of a new heart indwelt by God. And this new covenant gives us the amazing privilege of living in fellowship with our Creator. The new covenant includes the privilege of a heart that truly knows God:

*<sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

We were created to live in intimate fellowship with God. We see this in the first days of creation, before the world was broken by sin, when God created man in His own image. Part of being made in the image of God means having the capacity to relate to God in a way unlike any of the rest of creation. So these first humans were able to live in complete, unbroken fellowship with their Creator.

But sin caused a cosmic divide between God and humanity. We have been separated from our true purpose by the chasm of sin. Because God is perfectly holy, He cannot abide sin in His presence. And yet, so great is God’s love for us that He has provided a way for us to return to our true purpose—to know God and to make Him known throughout the world.

- ❓ How important would you say knowing God is to you right now?
- ❓ What are some ways you could cultivate a greater desire to know God in your life?

Jesus knew that the greatest end of humankind is to know and enjoy God forever. He put that truth very succinctly in John 17:3: “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” For Jesus, the very essence of eternal life is the knowledge of God, only available to men and women through the gospel.

This is different than what we typically think of as eternal life, isn’t it? When we think of eternal life, we think of the golden streets, happiness, and lack of pain in heaven. In heaven, there’s no more need for tissues or chemotherapy or funeral processions or goodbyes. It’s where the streets are paved with gold and the eternal worship of a multitude of Christ-followers rings for all eternity. All true, and all wonderful.


But are all those attributes, good as they are, really what makes heaven heaven? The answer, surprisingly, is no. Or at least, not exactly.

Much like the reason why hell is hell is because it's the realm where God is not, the reason why heaven is heaven is because it's the realm where God is present and most fully known. Paul pointed to this reality in 1 Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." Amazing!

How fully known are we from God's perspective? He knows the number of hairs on our heads. He knows our deepest thoughts and motivations, and they are laid bare before Him. He knows us, in fact, better than we know ourselves. He knows our past, present, and future. God knows us completely. Fully. Without exception.

That's how well we will know God in heaven. Face to face. No matter how hard we seek after the Lord here on earth, we will always see a refracted image of Him. The image will always be in some way distorted by our humanity. But in heaven? No distortions. Perfect and complete intimacy with God Almighty. The way we get there is through the gospel.

Because the gospel has solved our problem of a heart engraved with sin and given us the promise of a heart indwelt by God, we can live in the privilege of a heart that knows God.

 In what ways should our knowledge of God motivate us to make God known in the world?

## Conclusion

Knowing God is a two-sided coin. The first side of that coin is our personal relationship with God—a return to the intimacy of the garden to be fully realized in heaven. The other side of that coin is the desire to make God known. This too is a return to God's original intent for humanity. Adam and Eve not only knew God, but they were given the job of ruling over and subduing the earth. As they did so, they would spread the glory of God throughout the earth. As God rules the universe, so humanity was meant to reflect that rule over the world.

When we come to know Jesus in the gospel, we are joyfully pushed outward to spread the glory of God throughout the rest of the world. As we know God, we want to make God known to our families, neighbors, and eventually to the ends of the earth.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** The problem in Jeremiah's day was the people had God's law but were unable to obey Him due to the sinfulness of their hearts. Jeremiah prophesied about a coming day when God would forgive sin and write His law on the hearts of His people. This prophecy is fulfilled in the gospel. Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness. Through the Holy Spirit, God enables us to obey His commands.



## Voices from Church History

"[True spirituality] is not just that we are dead to certain things, but we are to love God, we are to be alive to him, we are to be in communion with him, *in this present moment of history.*"<sup>10</sup>

—Francis Schaeffer  
(1912-1984)



## Further Commentary

"Jeremiah accused Judah of failing to 'know' Yahweh (9:3). To know the Lord was the thrust of the [old] covenant. Such knowledge was to experience a most intimate and personal relationship. Furthermore, to know Him meant to reflect his character in lifestyle (9:24; 22:15-16). In the covenant the term 'know' served 'as a technical term for recognition of the treaty stipulations as binding.' Since Israel and Judah had failed to recognize Yahweh's sovereignty and obey His commandments, the covenant was broken (11:6-8,10)...Whereas the older covenant was written on stone tablets, God would indelibly inscribe the new covenant on the heart (singular). Such a statement implies much more than to know the law by memory. Instead, each one would want to serve Him faithfully. The will (heart, mind) of those in covenant relation would be brought into submission to the will of God. Here was described a new man with a new nature who wills to do God's will."<sup>11</sup>

—Jerry W. Lee,  
*Biblical Illustrator*

## Additional Resources

# Jeremiah Prophecies a New Covenant

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Grow with other group leaders at the Group Ministry blog at [LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry](http://LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry).

## Study Material

- "The Prophesied Kingdom"—Chapter 5 from *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts
- "Can We Ever Trust Our Own Hearts?"—Article by Jen Pollock Michel; find a link to this article at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including "The New Covenant in Jeremiah," can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at [LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator](http://LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator). Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

## Sermon Podcast

David Platt: "The New Covenant in the Old Testament"

Find a link to this at [GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources](http://GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources)

## Tip of the Week

### Foster Openness and Discussion

"Instead of thinking about the most effective way you can teach, think instead about what question you might ask in order to help someone else in your group articulate the information. It's okay if you stand at the front and simply give out the information, but it will be a more engaging and memorable experience if people come to the same conclusion seemingly on their own. After all, the goal is for truth to be expounded."<sup>12</sup>