

## The Greatest Story (Part 29):

A New Covenant

*Jeremiah 31:31-34*

*Memory Verses: Matthew 26:28*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

So, we are in a series called the Greatest Story where we are looking at the Bible from beginning to end to see the story of God's redemption of mankind. Today is a massively important chapter of that story. Up to this point we have seen God make some very serious promises to the Children of Israel; promises which we refer to as Covenants. So let's review where we've been so far this year by reviewing these covenants.

First in **Genesis chapters 1 and 2** we see **the Adamic Covenant**; which in itself has three parts. The first part, often referred to as the Edenic Covenant is God's promise to give man dominion over the Earth, to give a man and a woman to each other in marriage, in a broader sense to give humanity to each other in community, and a promise of everlasting life in a utopian society. However, this covenant was conditional. Paradise would be lost if mankind broke God's law and in rebellion ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which of course they did. Thus the second part of the Adamic Covenant; where mankind and the Earth are punished with the curse of pain, labor, thorns, physical death, and spiritual death. This covenant could be referred to as **the covenant of death** summed up in **Romans 6:23a** "**the wages of sin is death.**" But, in God's infinite mercy he finalizes this covenant with the third part; the proto-evangelion (the first Gospel) where he promises Satan that he will bruise the heel of the seed of woman but that that seed will eventually crush his head and bring an end to his reign of temptation. Here we see the first mention of the coming hope of a savior who will end the curse of sin.

Next in **Genesis chapters 8 and 9** we see **the Noahic Covenant**. Here we see God unconditionally promise that he will never flood the earth again killing every living thing, instead God will be more patient with mankind allowing them to experience his wrath through the covenant of death on an individual basis. This covenant could be referred to as **the covenant of God's patient mercy** summed up in **Psalms 103:8**. Counter to popular belief the rainbow was first created by God as a sign of this covenant and not just the new symbol of LGBT pride.

Next in **Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 17** we see **the Abrahamic Covenant**. Here we see God unconditionally promise to make Abraham

a nation (Israel) through which the whole world would be blessed. Here we see that by placing one's faith in this promised blessing one could be covered by the righteousness of God and be spared spiritual death. This blessing when connected to the Adamic & Noahic covenants could only point to one thing... the eventual end of the curse of death and Satan through the coming messiah. This interpretation is solidified in **Genesis 22** where God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac and then provides a substitute lamb pointing to the exact way the Abrahamic Covenant would eventually be fulfilled. This covenant could be referred to as **the covenant of Israel's eventual blessing** and is best stated by the prophet **Micah in 5:2**.

So up to this point the story is made clear through the covenant promises. We rebelled against a holy God and now we are promised physical death and spiritual death. This spiritual death is an eternal state of torment and separation from God called Hell. God in his just wrath could go ahead and wipe out all of mankind but in his patient mercy he has stayed his hand giving all of us a chance to return to him in faith. His plan to turn humanity back to him and have them place their faith in him again is through a covenant nation called Israel. Which leads us to **the Mosaic Covenant**. Found in **Exodus 19-24**.

The Mosaic Covenant can be a little hard to understand. Like the previous covenants it is unconditional in the sense that God promises to preserve Israel and make them a priestly nation to spread the glory of God throughout the entire world. This is an eternal promise rooted in the Abrahamic covenant. However, the rest of Mosaic Covenant is vastly different in that it is strictly conditional. Here God promises to bless Israel if they remain faithful to him and promises to curse them and send them into exile if they are not faithful. The law is established as a means of determining their faithfulness to God. This covenant could be referred to as **the covenant of the law** which is made clear in **Romans 10:5**.

And here lies a major problem. Israel could not live according to the law. Though they would have times of revival and a returning to the Lord, they were mostly an idolatrous and rebellious people. Of the 40 kings of Judah and Israel only 9 of them proved to be faithful to the Lord. The most prominent of them; David. And, even though David had a time in his life where he fell into temptation he for the most part exemplified a man who was after God's heart. In **2 Samuel 7** we see **the Davidic Covenant**. Here God promises that a son of David would be on the throne of Israel forever. This no doubt coincides with the Abrahamic Covenant that through Israel the world would be blessed. This covenant could be referred to as **the covenant of the coming king**.

Unfortunately the line of kings eventually faltered to the point where God would raise up prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah to warn the people and the kings of the consequences of their rebellion which will eventually be exile in Babylon. So on one hand we have the promises of God to preserve

Israel and the kingdom forever and on the other hand we have the promise of God to send Israel into exile for their idolatry and lack of faith. This is the context of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was a prophet who began his ministry during the revival of Josiah and continued to minister through the reign of his evil successors. Jeremiah's prophecies often read as though Israel has already been sent into captivity but most of them were only warnings up until the point where Jerusalem is destroyed and the prophecy comes true. Jeremiah knew that the wrath of God was imminent. Eventually that day comes and Jeremiah is witness to it all. His homeland is completely devastated. The temple was in flames. His people being carried away as captives and slaves. At this point his message has very little hope in it. In fact, the accounts of Jeremiah are so sad that he is referred to as the weeping prophet.

We've all been in situations where the worst possible outcome seemed inevitable. We've all felt hopeless at times. When it came to the promised salvation of Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12, the Israelites had all but given up hope. They had failed to be the nation that God wanted them to be, they had failed to keep the law. Would their exile in Babylon be their end or was there still another hope. And, so we come to **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. Would you read with me.

This passage is like a glass of cold water to a man who has been wandering in the desert for days. This passage is like penicillin to the man dying of an infection. This passage is a hope unheard of. This is A New Covenant. The Old Covenant of the Law was one which we could never live up to... it only revealed our depravity. But now a New Covenant, one which is not dependent on our works is available. Today I want us to see that God will not give up on us. This passage proves that he will always provide a way of salvation for us. Today I want you to see that... **The New Covenant Is Amazing, Not Because It Is A New Way To God, But Because It Is The Fulfillment of God's Promises To Come To Us.**

### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we learn here about the New Covenant is that... **The New Covenant Brings Inner Transformation (vs.33b)**. We see here in **vs33b** that through the New Covenant the law will be in the minds and written on the hearts of those under it. This is an inner transformation that was foreign under the old covenant. In this new covenant something external would become internal. In **Acts chapter 2** we see that on the day of pentecost this very thing happened. The exterior force of the Holy Spirit was implemented in the minds and hearts of those who accepted Peters message. Lets examine what this means.

First; the law is placed in our minds. **Romans 12:2** says be transformed by the renewing of your minds. We are transformed when our minds are transformed and that transformation takes places internally through the power of the Holy Spirit as it works in conjunction with the read Word of God. The mind is the place of knowledge. We gain knowledge about God through the Word of God. The problem is that, prior to the Holy Spirit we were blinded to truly understanding the law. Only those with divine favor were granted this understanding; men like Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. Now the Holy Spirit living within us reveals the truth of Gods word to our minds and we have a more clear understanding and knowledge of God. The more the Word is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit the more we understand the law and it's purpose. The law's purpose was to judge our faithfulness, but now the law's purpose is to guide our worship. The more the Holy Spirit reveals the Word of God to us the more we understand how to properly worship God as he deserves. We are transformed to joyfully obey his commands rather than religiously observe his commands. So... **When the Holy Spirit reveals the Word of God to our minds we instinctively make better decisions on how to live for God.**

Secondly; the law is written on our hearts – the seat of our emotions. This speaks to the way the Holy Spirit encourages us to yield to the Spirit rather than to the flesh. We now instinctively yearn for God and the things of God more so than we did before the Holy Spirit. **Jeremiah 17:9** tells us that the heart is wicked and deceitful but when that heart is infused with the power of the Holy Spirit, now it leads us to God rather than from him. Before the New Covenant obedience to the law was only accomplished by obeying a list of rules. It was ritual and routine. It was a chore not a desire. Now we actually desire it. Before the New Covenant obedience wasn't really possible. No one can do something they don't desire to do indefinitely. Now that is different... **When the holy spirit gives us a desire and yearning for God in our hearts we instinctively love him with a greater love.**

So, essentially the new covenant does for us what we could not do for ourselves. Charles Spurgeon says it like this... **"things required by the law are bestowed by the gospel. God demands obedience under the law; God works obedience under the gospel. Holiness is asked of us by the law; holiness is wrought in us by the Gospel"**. Do you see now why the new covenant is so amazing? **The New Covenant Is Amazing, Not Because It Is A New Way To God, But Because It Is The Fulfillment of God's Promises To Come To Us.**

Next we see that... **The New Covenant Brings A New Relationship With God (vs.33c-34a)**. Look at verses **33c-34a** again. He says "I will be their God, and they shall be My People (**33c-34a**). This is very similar to what we've heard in the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant.

Well that is because this is the fulfillment of that. You see... the Israelites would never be God's people based upon their own merit... they were God's chosen people only because of God's sovereign choice. Because of this... they were unable to live according to the law. But now in the new covenant they can stop trusting in their works and now simply trust in God's work for them as a holy nation.

But we also see something else here that is extremely exciting for those of us who are not descendants of Israel. Now in the new covenant not only is Israel afforded the opportunity to be God's chosen people but so are the Gentiles... not by works but by faith. Israelites and Gentile together; they all shall know God. Those connected to God by the new covenant have a close and personal relationship with God that was not available before. This effectively made each individual person responsible for their own faith where each person now could choose whether to trust in the New Covenant or not. Before that choice was effectively made for all on the day of atonement. The new covenant makes our faith a personal faith.

But not just a personal faith... but also a personal relationship with God. The work of the Spirit in each believer inevitably gives them a sense of a closeness to God. We see this culminate in **John 15:15** where God calls us his friends. Before they could only know him as one they studied from afar, but now we can know him as a close personal friend who walks with us and talks with us on a daily basis. Once again we see that the new covenant isn't asking us to go to God... it's bringing God to us. **The New Covenant Is Amazing, Not Because It Is A New Way To God, But Because It Is The Fulfillment of God's Promises To Come To Us.**

Lastly, **The New Covenant Brings True Cleansing From Sin (vs.34b)** I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (vs.34b). This point is simple; our sins keep us from a union with God. **Isaiah 59:2** tells us that our iniquities separate us from God. The sacrificial system could merely cover sin... but now in the new covenant it completely cleanses from sin. Now we are justified before God and are given the imputed righteousness of God. This is key because without it we would still be under the wrath of God. Now we are at peace with him. According to **Romans 5:1** we are justified and we have peace with God. Get this... without justification we would still be under the wrath of God but now because of it we are brought back into fellowship with him. Once again... the new Covenant is all about God coming to us cause we could not go to him. He has brought us a cure to sin cause we could never defeat sin. He has brought us peace with him because we could never bring peace ourselves. **The New Covenant Is Amazing, Not Because It Is A New Way To God, But Because It Is The Fulfillment of God's**

## Promises To Come To Us.

### Application (Resolution, You)

The application today is twofold. One of an understanding of the covenant promises and one of an understanding of faith in the new covenant. You see... **The covenants weren't done away with by the New Covenant – they were fulfilled by it.** The covenant of the law was powerless to bring inner transformation through the power of the Spirit. But in the new covenant the Holy spirit causes the ritualistic chore chasing and rule following to become a relationship of joyful obedience. The covenant of the law was unable to cleanse us from sin and make us righteous before God... it could merely cover our sins for a time. The New covenant has imputed us with the very righteousness of God and given us access to a relationship with him again. Hopefully you can see through the old testament covenants how God was preparing a path to the new covenant.

But it's not enough to understand the covenants... you must place your faith in the new Covenant. It is not enough that these covenants exist... we must place our faith in them... as Abraham had faith in the blessing, as Moses had faith in the law, as David had faith in the kingdom... we must now place our faith in these promises... and this is not a promise yet to come but one that has already been fulfilled

### Conclusion

They have been fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is the architect, object, and means to obtain the New Covenant. He says this in **Matthew 26:28** – My blood is the blood of the new covenant. Meaning... Jesus came and died as the atoning sacrifice for all of mankind and in this act he made a way for the Holy Spirit to inhabit us and transform us. In this act he satisfied the wrath of God and makes us righteous. In this act he gives us a personal relationship with the God of the universe.

You see... Jesus is the fulfillment of every one of the Old Testament Covenants and the New Covenant. He is the seed of woman that would be hurt as he died on the cross but then would raise again crushing the head of Satan – He fulfills the Abrahamic Covenant. Look at **Romans 5:12-15**. He is the new Adam who fulfills God's initial plan for humanity.

He is the fulfillment of the patient mercy of God. God waited until the savior would come and allowed mankind grace. Instead of destroying a world that deserved it... he sent his son to save it. He has become the Ark in which we can all be saved. He fulfills the Noahic Covenant

He is the descendant of Abraham who through whom the whole world is blessed. He is the ram in the thicket that the Lord provided to be the sacrifice which brought eternal life to mankind. He fulfills the Abrahamic

## Covenant

He is the perfect sinless one who fully obeyed the law of God and paid the price for everyone of us who could not. He has become the law for us accomplishing the works of God in place of the works of mankind. He fulfills the Mosaic Covenant.

He is the descendant of David who rules his heavenly kingdom and sits on the throne of heaven as king of kings and Lord of Lords... and will one day come back to establish himself as the king of Israel and reclaim the throne of David forever. He fulfills the Davidic Covenant.

And... He is the New Covenant and fulfills the new covenant through his blood and instead of demanding us to come to God... Jesus as God came to us. **The New Covenant Is Amazing, Not Because It Is A New Way To God, But Because It Is The Fulfillment of God's Promises To Come To Us.**

So what is your responsibility to obtain this new covenant... Simple. Throw the weight of your faith upon the shed blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Trust that through him you can be transformed, renewed, and cleansed from your sin. If you truly believe this then you will live this. So, repent of your sins and determine to live your life with the help of the Spirit for God. Then you will be under A New Covenant.