

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 30-31

Imagine you haven't left the city for eighteen months.

Your pantry is empty. When the kids take a bath you notice their ribs show. Disease in the city is epidemic. Garbage is piling up in the street. The rats are out of control. There's a stench in the air you can't escape.

And there's a foreign army camped outside the walls. The Babylonians have a ruthless reputation. They've toppled other cities. Every day they launch their taunts and threats. You can see them preparing to attack.

And every time you go to the Temple to cry out to God for help, the prophets assure you *"All is okay."* They keep promising that God will deliver the city.

Well, this was the situation facing the inhabitants of Jerusalem when Jeremiah penned Chapters 30-33.

These were the darkest days Judah had seen since Egyptian slavery. The people were scared and shaken.

Jeremiah had the painstaking task of overseeing their final days. He'd pleaded for the king to surrender.

Yet in the nation's darkest hour God gave Jeremiah their brightest hope. Though the nation had failed to obey the covenant that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai, God was willing to strike a new covenant.

The Jews will be exiles in Babylon for seventy years, but God will do a new work. He'll regathered them to the land, change their hearts... they'll be His people.

This New Covenant was intended for Israel, but we've become part of it through the cross of Jesus.

On the night before His cross, Jesus activated this covenant. At His last supper Jesus told His disciples (Matthew 26:28), "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." This makes these chapters relevant to us!

Chapter 30 begins, "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, "Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.'" This book within a book - Chapters 30-33 - is called, "The Book of Consolation."

"For behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'" The more you study Scripture the more sensitized you become to certain phrases.

Expressions like "*the days are coming,*" or "*in the latter days,*" or "*the day of the Lord*" are all signposts pointing to the end of time - a day still future. A lot of the promises in these chapters have yet to be fulfilled.

At the time, Judah was about to be taken captive, but their exile would last a generation, 70 years, before God moved to regather Israel and Judah to the land.

Verse 4, "Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. "For thus says the Lord: 'We

have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.” The false prophets were saying, “Peace, peace...” - but that was not what the Lord was saying.

It’s interesting the final judgment - what the Bible calls, “Great Tribulation” - is also preceded by shouts of “peace.” Judgment is prefaced with a pseudo-peace.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 tells us, “For you... know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they shall not escape.”

Verse 6, “Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child?” I know some women who wish their husbands could taste a little of the pain of childbirth. Maybe they’d be a bit more empathetic.

But the day is coming when men as well as women will double over in pain. “So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.” Jeremiah foresees a day when all men will be in pain. Daniel 12:1 ominously refers to this same judgment, “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”

Even Jesus spoke of this terrible day (Matthew 24:21), “Then there will be Great Tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” As difficult as it was in Jeremiah’s day, it’ll be worse for Judah in the future. If they think it’s bad now, *they ain’t*

seen nothing yet.

Pain and problems are coming that'll turn men pale.

And notice the name Jeremiah coins for this future judgment. What we refer to as *"The Great Tribulation"* Jeremiah calls, *"The Time Of Jacob's Trouble."*

The whole world will be judged, but the central focus of these final seven years will be *"Jacob"* or Israel.

The New Covenant promises glorious days for Israel, but before the glory they'll undergo severe punishment.

Verse 8, *'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.'* After the time of Jacob's trouble, at the end of the seven years of tribulation, Israel will be liberated from foreign domination, and be restored to self-rule.

And notice this future Israel will serve the Lord!

Apparently, what is today a secular state, filled with agnostic Jews, will experience a spiritual awakening.

We'll see this in tonight's text, but the new covenant consists of three promises: Jews are **regathered** to their land... a **regeneration** occurs in their hearts... and the Kingdom of David is **reestablished**.

And the covenant unfolds in this order... **regathering**, **regeneration**, and the **reestablishment** of the Kingdom.

Remember when the rabbi and Jewish leader, Nicodemus,

paid a nighttime visit to Jesus. It was the first Nick-At-Night. Jesus told him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus saw that Judah had been regathered to the land. Now he wants to know when God will rid them of Romans, and restore the kingdom.

Nicodemus was either overlooking the middle promise of the new covenant or he was mistaking the religious zeal of Judaism for spiritual life. But Jesus presses rewind. Go back to the second promise.

The regeneration the New Covenant promises is more than outward deeds and religious zeal - you have to be born again. God wants to birth spiritual life in us.

Jesus says to Nicodemus, before God births His Kingdom, He'll birth new life in the hearts of the Jews.

This is why the purpose of the Great Tribulation is not only to *judge the world*, but it *purifies the Jews*.

The *time of Jacob's trouble* is the period God gets their attention, and humbles the Jews, and brings them to repentance, and shows them their need for a Savior.

When the Jews bow to Jesus, God will restore His Kingdom. For the first time since 586 BC a Jewish king will rule in Israel. Verse 9 tells us his title is *“David.”*

Some folks believe that King David will actually be resurrected to rule over Jerusalem - *obviously, under the authority of the Messiah...* Or it could be the name *“David”* here is actually a title. It's a dynastic name.

In 1 Samuel 7 an everlasting kingdom is promised to David and his descendants forever, thus this future successor will be known as a “*David...*” I believe this *David* it’s none other than Jesus - who the Gospels call “*the son of David.*” Our Lord will sit on David's throne.

Verse 10, ‘Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,’ says the Lord, ‘nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid.’”

The fact Israel or *Jacob* has never had “*rest*” in the land, and lived unafraid - is proof this prophecy is still unfulfilled. Immediately following the Jews return from Babylon they were under Persian control - then the Greeks oppressed them - then the Romans dominated.

Even today Israel has ominous foes that make them uneasy and afraid. Only when Jesus comes and sits on David’s throne will we see this prediction come to pass.

“For I am with you,’ says the Lord, ‘to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished.’” This prophecy too, is still unfulfilled. For the last 2000 years “*the wandering Jew*” has been a fugitive and vagabond. Jews have migrated to just about every country on Earth, yet they’ve found trouble and persecution everywhere they’ve been.

Yet in the end the Jews will outlive the nations.

In Genesis 12:3 God says He'll judge the nations by how they treat Israel. "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you." This is why Israel will survive, but her persecutors will be judged.

Again, the Great Tribulation is the period when the nations will be *punished*, and Israel will be *purified*.

Verse 12, "For thus says the Lord: 'Your affliction is incurable, your wound is severe. There is no one to plead your cause, that you may be bound up; you have no healing medicines. All your lovers have forgotten you; they do not seek you... Her "*lovers*" were the false gods and idols Judah worshipped instead of Yahweh.

And He wants to know, "*Now, that Israel is in trouble, where are those gods? Will they come to your aide?*"

"For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of your iniquities, because your sins have increased." Their plight is God's way of exposing the folly of their idolatry. They've trusted in the wrong god!

"Why do you cry about your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable. Because of the multitude of your iniquities, because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you." God allowed Israel's hardships to wake her up. Yet He will not abandon her forever. *He says...*

"Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall become plunder, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey. For I will restore health to

you and heal you of your wounds,' says the Lord, 'because they called you an outcast saying: "this is Zion; no one seeks her."'”

Despite Judah's idolatry, in the end the God she forsook is the God who'll stand by her and heal her.

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; the city shall be built upon its own mound, and the palace shall remain according to its own plan.’” The Hebrew word translated “*mound*” is the word “*tel*.” Visit modern day Israel, and you’ll find *Tels* throughout the country - Tel Aviv, Tel Dan, Tel Megiddo.

In ancient times when a city was conquered the site was cleared, and the rubble was used to build a new city on top of the old mound. Over centuries the tearing down and building up made mounds still visible today.

Here, Israel will return to build upon its ancient *Tels*.

Verse 19, “Then out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry; I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.” Again, he’s describing a regathering of Jews to their land.

“Their children also shall be as before, and their congregation shall be established before Me; and I will punish all who oppress them. Their nobles shall be from among them, and their governor shall come from their midst...” He predicts, Jews will be ruled by Jews.

This is a glorious prophecy. Jewish self-government was

embodied in the right to capital punishment. The Romans stripped the Jews of this right in 19 AD. This is why they needed Pilate's approval to crucify Jesus.

But the days is coming when it will be restored!

In Genesis 49:10 Jacob had told his son, Judah, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes."

The "scepter" speaks of the right of self-rule. The term "Shiloh" refers to "the Messiah." The prophecy predicts the right to self-rule will remain intact until Messiah appears on the scene. This is why the Romans revoking the right of corporal punishment in 19 AD caused great consternation among the rabbis.

In their minds it meant God had broken His promise. *The scepter had departed and where was Messiah?*

They didn't realize He was working at a carpenter's bench in Nazareth. Preparing and waiting for His time.

Verse 21, "Then I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach Me; for who is this who pledged his heart to approach Me?' says the Lord." The governor was a political ruler. He'll be a Jew. But this governor will also approach the Lord. That means he's a priest.

Under the Old Covenant there was a separation of offices. Priests were from the tribe of Levi, and kings from Judah. But this one ruler is both... *a royal priest*.

Only the Messiah had this right. Here God is making a New Covenant. Even the rabbis interpreted this passage as Messianic. Their Targum reads, "Messiah shall be revealed to

them out of their own midst.”

Verse 22, ‘You shall be My people, and I will be your God.’” This is the whole point of the New Covenant. God wants a personal relationship with His people.

“Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goes forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind; it will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord will not return until He has done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it.” Here Jeremiah concludes what I’ve mentioned throughout... the ultimate fulfillment of chapter 30 wasn’t for his day, but for *“the latter days.”*

A final judgment is yet to come. And notice the ominous language. It’s fierce and furious. *“A continuing whirlwind will fall violently on the head of the wicked...”*

Yet Chapter 31 is full of hope. *“At the same time,”* says the Lord, *“I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.”* Thus says the Lord: *“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness - Israel, when I went to give him rest.”*

This is where it helps to read the end of the book first. In Revelation 12, half-way through this final period of judgment, that we call Great Tribulation, a ruler called the Antichrist, will turn on Jews and Jerusalem.

He’ll invade their land, and the Jews in Jerusalem will flee to the wilderness. Isaiah 16 identifies their wilderness hideout as the Edomite, rock-city of Petra.

There God will protect and provide for His people until the

judgment is over and rest has come to Israel.

Here Jeremiah comments on this future episode...

The prophet speaks very specifically, the Jews will find *“grace in the wilderness.”* Is it possible that in their desert hideout they’ll reflect on the mistake it was to embrace a false messiah, the Antichrist - and to reject the true Messiah, Jesus Christ? Zechariah 12:10 tells us that *“they will look on Him who they pierced...”*

Hosea 5:15 God predicts, *“Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will diligently seek Me.”*

One day, in the time of Jacob’s trouble, Israel will repent, they’ll look to Jesus, and be saved by grace.

“The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.” If it were not for God’s everlasting love none of us would be saved.

It’s His lovingkindness that’s entices us, woos us, draws us. 1 John 4:19 tells us, *“We love Him, because He first loved us.”* *We’re saved because God is love, not because we’re so lovable.* Faber once wrote, *“How You can think so well of us, yet be the God you are, is darkness to my intellect, but sunshine to my heart.”*

If God stopped loving us we wouldn’t have a leg to stand on. We’d be doomed to hell forever. But we have nothing to fear, His love for you is *“an everlasting love.”*

“Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!” God is speaking of Israel’s restoration.

These are the people who committed spiritual adultery with idols - who God compared to a harlot.

Yet He's forgiven them, and intends to redeem them.

Apparently, God's restoration and purification is so thorough, He calls them, "*virgin of Israel.*" *Beautiful!*

"You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.

You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food." This has current political ramifications.

Today "*Samaria*" is the West Bank - Palestinian territory. Here we're told Israel will plant vineyards on Samaria's mountains. I've seen those vineyards...

One year our tour group visited a kibbutz in the West Bank area called Shiloh, and we saw the vineyards planted by Israeli settlers, just as Jeremiah predicted.

Verse 6, *"For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, 'arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God."* To make the trip from Jerusalem to Shiloh we had to take an armored bus, just in case we met with Palestinian hostilities.

Often the kids like to throw rocks at tour buses.

Yet Jeremiah foresees the day when residents of Ephraim will freely go up to Jerusalem to worship God. *No checkpoints. No searches. Totally free passage.*

"For thus says the Lord: "sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise,

and say, 'O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!' Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labors with child, together; a great throng shall return there." Jeremiah foresees a mass return of Jews to the land of Israel.

And this is happening in our day. In fact, the most recent wave of immigration, did come from "*the north country.*" From 1989 to 2006 nearly a million Jews from Russia and the former Soviet Union immigrated to Israel. The Jewish State ended up assimilating a 20% increase in population. It was an amazing feat.

Jeremiah continues in verse 9, "*They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them.*

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." I believe this prophecy foreshadows an greatest influx of Jewish immigration - one that's yet to occur - it's still future.

When Jesus returns to Earth, mourning and repentant Jews from all over world will return to Israel.

Today, there are 14.2 million Jews in the world, yet less than half, 6.1 million, live in Israel. When Jesus returns He'll send out His searchers to hunt down the Jews and return them to the land. Don't ever let anyone convince you that God is through with Israel!

"Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather

him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’ For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he.”

Satan has tried to destroy God’s people, but God will wrestle the Jews from Satan’s hand and retrieve them.

Verse 12, “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord - for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all.

“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.” When Jesus returns He’ll usher in prosperity for Israel.

Today, Jews are returning to *the land*, but not to *the Lord*. Most Jews in Israel are agnostic. But the day is coming when they’ll “*stream to the Lord’s goodness.*”

There’s an interesting prophecy in verse 15, “Thus says the Lord: “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.” This is the prophecy that’s part of the Christmas story. It’s quoted in Matthew 2:18.

“*Ramah*” was near Bethlehem. It’s where Rachel was buried. Its women were considered her daughters.

When Herod killed the babies of Bethlehem to eliminate the

Messiah, this verse described the reaction of these ladies. They wept for the children.

But in Jeremiah's day, Ramah was a staging area for Nebuchadnezzar. It's where he processed Jews to be taken back to Babylon. Here, Rachel, the mother of the nation, is mourning for the exiles taken to Babylon.

Yet, God speaks to Rachel. "Thus says the Lord: "Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come back to their own border." Rachel is assured and comforted that her children will return.

It's a promise that Israel will return to the land.

Verse 18, "I have surely heard Ephraim (Ephraim is another name for Israel) bemoaning himself: 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained bull..." God used the Babylonian exile to break a wild buck. Israel was domesticated, and fitted for a yoke.

But now Ephraim cries out, "Restore me, and I will return, for You are the Lord my God. Surely, after my turning, I repented; and after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh; I was ashamed, yes, even humiliated, because I bore the reproach of my youth.'

To strike your thigh was a sign of grief and sorrow.

And how does God respond when His people repent? "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore

My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord.” God’s heart yearns for His people. He’s quick to show mercy.

Verse 21, “Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went.” He’s saying to the exiles, remember the way back. Follow the signs and landmarks - come home.

“Turn back, O virgin of Israel, turn back to these your cities, how long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter?” Don’t be a “*gad about*” - *that is*, restless or aimless. Don’t flounder around in Babylon, return to the land God promised. He’s doing a new work in Israel...

Don’t miss out! “For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth” In other words, He’s going to do what He’s never done before - an unprecedented event will take place, “a woman shall encompass a man.”

The earliest Jewish commentators saw in this verse a reference to the virgin birth of the Messiah.

Before the time of Christ, one rabbi wrote in of this passage, “Messiah is to have no earthly father. The birth of Messiah will be without defect. The birth of Messiah will be like that of no other man.” Another rabbi put it, “The birth of Messiah will be like the dew of the Lord as drops on the grass without the action of a man.” The idea of a woman surrounding or encircling a man is a vivid picture of her nurturing Him in her womb.

I believe the miracle of the virgin birth was not only predicted in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14, but by Jeremiah

600 years before the angel visited Mary.

There are other commentators who see in this passage a foreshadowing of Revelation 12, where Israel is the woman who brings forth a male Child. This Child, Messiah, rules the nations with a rod of iron.

Either way, Jeremiah is encouraging the exiles to return to the land... *for their Messiah is about to be born!*

Verse 23, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: ‘The Lord bless you, O home of justice, and mountain of holiness!’ This must’ve been a common greeting, but when they return to the land they’ll use this language again... *“home of justice, mountain of holiness.”*”

“And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” What a journey is ahead for Israel - *to Babylonian exile and back again.*

Yet in the end, God will refresh their weary souls.

Then Jeremiah says, “After this I awoke and looked around, and my sleep was sweet to me.” All of chapter 30 and 31 must’ve been communicated in a dream, for now he awakes. *God has made such sweet promises.*

And He’s not done! Verse 27, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast.

And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the Lord.”

The dream that Jeremiah saw was a mixture of *sweet and sour - hope and horror*. There’s judgment ahead, but the purification will be followed by blessing.

Verse 29, “In those days they shall say no more: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’” This was a popular proverb at the time. The reason I’ve got evil tastes is because my parents sucked on sour grapes. Let’s shift the blame.

People today no longer quote this proverb, but that doesn’t mean they don’t live by it! Parents get a bum deal. All our dysfunctions are blamed on some deficiency in the parenting of those who raised us.

Yet God replies, “But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.” God is saying everyone is personally responsible. If there’s a tart taste in your mouth it means you’ve been eating sour grapes. Your parents may’ve made mistakes, but you’ve had ample opportunity to turn it around with some good choices.

Verse 31 tells us, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My

covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.” This was a qualitatively different covenant than the old one.

Remember, a covenant establishes the terms of a relationship. Whenever God wants a relationship with mankind He makes a covenant. The parties enter that relationship by agreeing to the terms of the covenant.

When God brought Israel from Egypt to be His own, He ushered them to Mount Sinai where He gave them terms... **commandments - cleansing** or a system of sacrifice - and **consequences**, blessings and curses.

There were **613 commandments** regarding morality and civics and ceremony... But the people sinned and violated the commandments, thus God constructed **a sacrificial system** to cover their sin. This included sacrifices, priests, even a Temple to present their offerings... And to provide added motivation to keep the Law, God gave to Israel a series of **blessings and curses**. Blessings if they obeyed. Curses if they didn't.

But their sad history was that they failed to live up the covenant. The desperate conditions they faced at the time of Jeremiah were exactly what God predicted.

Yet in the wake of their failure, God doesn't leave them hopeless. He still wants a relationship with the Jews so He promises new terms, a New Covenant.

Through Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel God promised this NC - yet it wouldn't be activated for 600 years. For just as the OC was ratified by blood, so was the new.

Just before His crucifixion Jesus took the cup, and said (Matthew 26:20), **“This is My blood of the New Covenant.”** On the cross Jesus did far more than gain our forgiveness. He created for us a new way to relate to God - new terms for a relationship that had soured.

In verse 32 God compares Himself to a heart-broken husband who’s wife had been unfaithful. The NC is as much a *relief to God*, as it is a *revival in us*.

What Jesus did was monumental! Here it is... Verse 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 in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”**

The OC consisted of Laws written on stone tablets.

There was nothing wrong with the Law God gave to Moses. The Law of God was perfect. The Law didn’t fail the Jews, it was the Jews who failed to keep the Law. The problem is where the Law was written...

Stone tablets can be neglected, rejected, forgotten, misunderstood, misapplied, taken out of context, obeyed in action, but not in attitude. They can even serve to discourage us, rather than encourage us.

But not the NC. Rather than write His laws on stone tablets, God writes His intentions in our mind and hearts. He puts in us the desire to obey and love Him.

The OC was too dependent on human willpower. Whereas, the NC is God’s work. Our only part is faith.

The Law told men what to do, but didn’t give them the power

to do it. The NC avoids that deficiency.

It's been said, "To work and run the law commands, yet gives me neither feet nor hands. Better news the Gospel brings, it bids me fly, then gives me wings."

Verse 34, "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord." Under the NC we have a personal, intimate relationship with God.

We no longer need a priest or intermediary to teach us about God. Under the NC we can experience God firsthand. Every Christian has backstage pass to God.

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Another pitfall of the OC is it only offered a temporary pardon. Sacrifices had to be repeated. They covered sin, but never erased the sin. Whereas, the blood of the NC forgives and forgets!

Under the OC the Jews were on probation. Now we're fully pardoned. The OC trained us to think of God as a parole officer - there to catch us messing up. But the NC teaches us that God is a loving Father. He cheers for us and His Spirit empowers us to do good.

All Christians are under the NC, *but some live as if they were under the Old*. They're still grinding out an obedience - instead of resting in God's forgiveness, and trusting His Spirit to do the living in their lives.

When Jesus activated the NC, He didn't institute a new set of rules, He led us into a new way of living...

Verse 35, “Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The Lord of hosts is His name); if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Israel’s national survival is as certain as the sunrise. God is committed to His people.

Thus says the Lord: “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord.”

The US may change policies toward Israel - *to their own peril* - but God won’t. He’ll never abandon Israel.

Verse 38, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that the city shall be built for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. The surveyor’s line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the Lord.”

Jeremiah predicts the rebuilding of Jerusalem. And he provides a surveyor’s description of the boundaries.

This is vital. The folks who deny God’s promises to Israel like to spiritualize them and apply them to the Church. But that’s not what Jeremiah does here. He gives us a literal, physical layout of the city.

God is sending a message - His promises to Israel should be taken literally. Don't spiritualize them.

And speaking of Jerusalem, verse 40 ends, "It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever."

Here's another reason why this passage speaks of future events. After Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem it didn't last forever. The Romans destroyed it in 70 AD.

Here the Lord says it shall never be thrown down. This obviously, refers to the Jerusalem Jesus will build.