

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHETS AND KINGS GOD THE PURSUER

Jeremiah Prophesies A New Covenant

Old (First) Covenant	New (Last) Covenant
Garden of Eden	Garden of Gethsemane
Tree of Life	Christ Hung On a Tree
First Adam (death)	Last Adam (life)
Israel	Church
Saved from Egypt	Saved from Hell
Crossed the Red Sea	Baptized into the Body
First Passover	Christ our Passover
Manna from Heaven	Jesus the Bread of Life
Law from Moses	Grace & Truth from Christ
Physical Weapons & Fight	Spiritual Weapons & Fight
Rest in the Promised Land	Rest in Heaven

As you know, the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments. The word testament also means covenant, a contract between two parties. The difference between the Old and New Covenants is that the Old Covenant was written on stone when God gave the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai and the New Covenant is written in blood. Jesus said in *1 Corinthians 11:25 (ESV)* ²⁵ *In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood...”* Both the Old and New Testaments are the story of the

same God, a God of love and mercy who gave His people the freedom to choose. The Old Covenant was for a specific people in a specific place and time. The New Covenant extends to the entire world:

Last week we studied the calling of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. Today, we look to his prophecy of the New Covenant. As we think of the Tablets of the Law that were written on literal stone, we are reminded that the hearts of God’s people figuratively turned to stone because of sin. They were in need of a ‘heart transplant’ as every human being is. Jeremiah spoke of the problem of a heart engraved with sin.

Read Jeremiah 17:1-6 (ESV) ¹ *“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, ² while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, ³ 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. ⁴ 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.” ⁵ Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. ⁶ 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.

Judah had begun idol worship of other nations' gods – false gods with demons behind them. They dabbled with child sacrifice offering their own children to the gods of other nations. There was a reformation in Judah under King Josiah as he attempted to change many of the sinful things that men had brought into the nation. Looking back on that reformation we find that it was only outward. David Legge writes, “Why is it that many of the reformations of God’s people are only outward? The reason is that the problem is not outward, the problem is inward, the problem is the disease of the heart. The problem is not simply on the skin surface, but it goes deeper... the deadly cancer is deep within the soul...they had dabbled in religious apostasy, insincerity, dishonesty, adultery, injustice and slander of one another and because of it God says: *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.*”

The point of a diamond on a pen of iron indicates the permanence of the engraving. Judah's sin had become so deeply engraved that it could not be removed. The altar in both the tabernacle and the Temple had four projections (horns) – one at each corner. According to God’s Word, the blood of atonement was placed on the horns of the altar. In this passage, the message from the LORD was: **Your sin is where the blood ought to be!**

Paul wrote in *Ephesians 4:30 (ESV)*³⁰ *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* The people of Jeremiah’s day were grieving the Spirit of God. Sadly, our sin continues to grieve the heart of God today. Judah copied their pagan neighbors by building altars to various gods making high places in the hills and planting obscene symbols of the goddess Asherah. Asherim is the plural of Asherah. We commit similar sin when our actions copy the ways of our world. *Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD.* Putting our trust in any man to change our world is futile. The only thing that will genuinely change our world will be heart transplants that come only from trusting in the God who became Man and died to cover our sins with His blood – Jesus!

Their idolatry defiled the land – their inheritance from God. Because of their own sin, their inheritance would be plundered. They would lose everything, and it would be their own fault. God’s law should have been written on their hearts. *Proverbs 3:3 (ESV)*³ *Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.* But instead, their sin was engraved there. Warren Wiersbe comments, “We may forget our sins, but our sins never forget us. They're inscribed on our hearts until we ask the Lord for forgiveness. *1 John 1:9 (ESV)*⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

As with other passages depending upon the actions of the people, the LORD will give either cursing or blessing. We have read about the cursing – now let’s look to the blessing.

Read Jeremiah 17:7-10 (ESV) ⁷ *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.”* ⁸ *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.”* ⁹ *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?* ¹⁰ *“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.”*

The LORD said through His mouthpiece, Jeremiah, that a cursed man was like a *shrub in the desert* a picture contrasting plants receiving plenty of water. As I read the LORD’s promise of blessing, I am reminded of **Psalms 1:3 (ESV)** ³ *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

We hear the expression often in our world, “just follow your heart.” So, is following our heart scriptural? No! We just read what the LORD says of the human heart: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick.* The Devil would like for us to believe that our hearts are working compasses that will lead us to true happiness if we just have the courage to listen to it. Jesus the Great Physician said in **Matthew 15:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

Jon Bloom of Desiring God says, “Our hearts were never designed to be followed, but to be led. Our hearts were never designed to be gods in whom we believe; they were designed to believe in God.” Our hearts tell us what we want to hear instead of the truth! Our hearts will not save us. God’s truth is what we need to be saved from the sin in our hearts.. **Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)** ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.* ⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

God makes it clear why we sin—it’s a matter of the heart. Our heart is inclined toward sin from the time we are born. It is easy to fall into the routine of forgetting and forsaking God. But we can still choose whether or not to continue in sin. A diseased heart is only a life threatening illness if we do not accept the cure. *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.* Ask the LORD to search your heart with the intent of bringing your sins to your mind so that you can confess them.

The promise of a heart indwelt by God.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-33 (ESV) ³¹ *“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,”* ³² *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.* ³³ *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.

When the LORD spoke of the ‘new’ covenant he was not speaking of something NEW to Him. This covenant would be new to the people. God did not go back to His ‘drawing board’ and begin again. He planned this from the foundation of the world. God the Father knew He would write a covenant with the blood of God the Son because of His knowledge of the choices humans would make.

There are some people who teach ‘replacement theology’ meaning they believe that the church has replaced Israel in God’s plan. I disagree. I believe that all the covenants were made with Israel. Even when Jesus said in **Luke 22:20 (ESV)**²⁰ ... “*This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood*, He was speaking to the Jews. Gentiles have become partakers of this New Covenant mentioned first in the Old Testament by becoming grafted into the family. **Romans 11:17 (ESV)**¹⁷ *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree*. Many of the Jewish people did not believe and still do not believe. Paul pictured them as branches broken off the tree. But he saw an amazing thing taking place: other branches were being grafted into the tree to share in the life of the tree. These branches were the Gentiles. Anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. From the words of the LORD through Jeremiah, we understand that God is not through with Israel. During the Tribulation Period, the Jews will become God’s ‘star witnesses.’ They will be partakers of the New Covenant through the blood of Jesus just like we are! The emphasis is *personal* rather than national, with each person putting faith in the Lord and receiving a "new heart" and with it a new disposition toward godliness.

The privilege of a heart that knows God.

Read Jeremiah 31:34 (ESV)³⁴ *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.”*

David Jeremiah says, “in the New Covenant every individual would truly know the Lord through a direct personal relationship rather than one that was mediated through priests and prophets.” We have the privilege now of knowing the Lord. We have the privilege of our sins being removed. **Psalms 103:12 (ESV)**¹² *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

And one of these days everyone is going to know the LORD. But, until that day comes His children have a job to do and it involves our hearts! **1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)**¹⁵ *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*