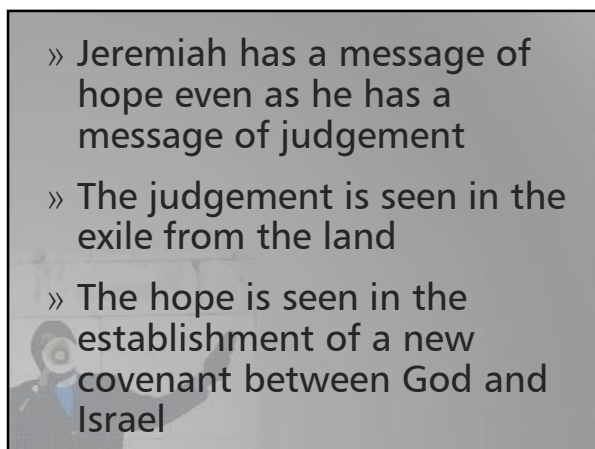


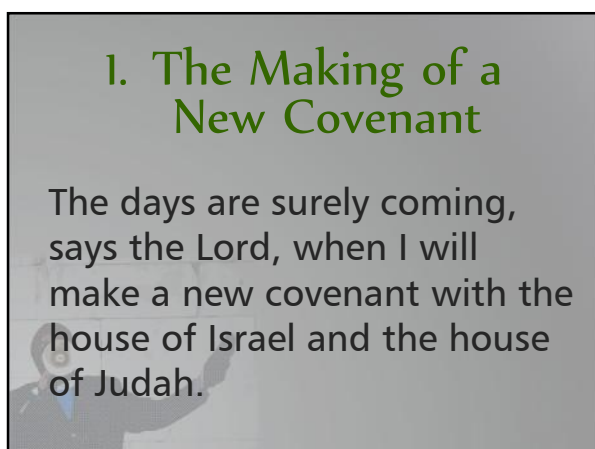


Background

- » Jeremiah was a prophet as Israel was on the verge of exile due to the Babylonian invaders
- » Jerusalem is raised (587 BC) during this time



- » It is a time of loss & displacement but it also becomes a time for new opportunity and a word of hope
- » This passage contains the only reference to the 'new covenant' in the Old Testament



It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 31:31-32

- » God will make a new covenant (a new agreement, treaty)
- » This language comes out of the international polity of the day (v31)
- » Verse 32 alludes to the Old covenant from the time of Moses and the exodus

The Old Covenant

- 1) Established at Sinai with Moses, Israel & Yahweh (Ex. 19 to 24)
- 2) Required obedience to the covenantal law

- 3) Over time Israel's religious practice merged with Canaanite traditions (cultic prostitution)
- 4) Israel's following of Mosaic covenant was deficient (Jer. 13:23) – "a covenant broke, though I was their husband"

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 within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah 31:33-34

The New Covenant

- » A covenant of spirit rather than letter
- » God will do an inner work in the people
- » A response of grace and mercy
- » An opportunity for all of the people

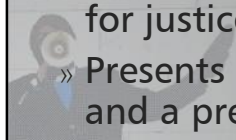
Specifics of the New Covenant

1. Genuine solidarity expressed between God and Israel

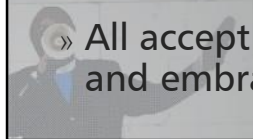


2. Based on full knowledge of Yahweh

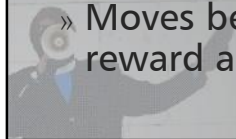
- » Gives identity
- » Affirmation of Yahweh as sovereign Lord
- » Obey his commands calling for justice
- » Presents a concrete memory and a present loyalty



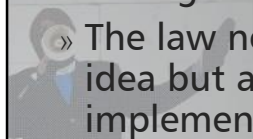
3. Shared access to the knowledge
 - » Egalitarianism in the community (not just for priests)
 - » No one is superior or elitist
 - » All accept the sovereignty and embrace the commands



4. All the newness is based on forgiveness
 - » Forgive their iniquity (v34b)
 - » Based on God's amazing grace
 - » Moves beyond a system of reward and punishment



5. Torah written on their hearts
 - » Jeremiah 31:33 closely connected to the thought of Deuteronomy 6:6
 - » The shema is an attitude towards the law - a willingness to obey
 - » The law not as an abstract idea but a desire to implement



II. Three Oracles

- » Three oracles are given to support the giving of the new covenant



First Oracle

Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the Lord of hosts is his name:

If this fixed order were ever to cease from my presence, says the Lord, then also the offspring of Israel would cease to be a nation before me for ever.

Jeremiah 31:35-36

Verse 35 – A doxology is presented:

- » God gives – ordering of world
- » God stirs – God rules even over the world's chaos

Verse 36 – If/then formulae

- » If “the stars fail” ...
- » Then “I will disregard Israel” (a way of saying, never will I disregard Israel)

- » The point of this Oracle – a pastoral affirmation of God's love in challenging the times
- » See Romans 8:38-39

Second Oracle

Thus says the Lord: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will reject all the offspring of Israel because of all they have done, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 31:37

- » Same if/then pattern
- » If the heavens and earth can be measured
- » Then Israel will be rejected
- » Same point – never rejected!

All of Israel's evil can not undo God's love

- » God will never nullify his relations with his people
- » God's fidelity and solidarity with his people

Third Oracle

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah.

The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Wadi Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate towards the east, shall be sacred to the Lord. It shall never again be uprooted or overthrown.

Jeremiah 31:38-40

- The city shall be rebuilt
- » Day to day concrete reality
 - » Geographical references make this point

An enduring promise is made (v40b)

- » Never again
- » Goes back to Jer. 1:10 – plays on the words uprooted and overthrown
- » Now God rebuilds and establishes Israel

III. Application

1. An invitation to know and walk in the presence of God
 - » A willingness to obey (say yes)

2. It speaks of the new age of grace
 - » We say 'yes' out of love not compulsion
 - » God's interior work in our lives through his spirit

3. Finds full expression in the new opportunities & possibilities given in Jesus
 - » "And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'" (Luke 22:20)

For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

Hebrews 9:15

And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds', he also adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'

Hebrews 10:15-17