



Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin (Jer 1:1) led a difficult life. "The word of the LORD came" to him (1:2) during one of the darkest stretches of history for the descendants of Abraham. It was a time of violent political unrest, vicious foreign kingdoms, corruption in Jerusalem, unbelief on the part of the vast majority of his hearers, and intense personal hardship as Israel was experiencing the consequences of forsaking their covenant with God. But through it all, the LORD had been faithful and Jeremiah 31 has "covenant" language we need to hear and understand.

"At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be _____ people."

Thus says the LORD:

"The people who survived the sword
found _____ in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,
the LORD appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an _____ love;
therefore I have continued _____ faithfulness to you. (31:1-3)

✿ Looking back at Jeremiah 31:10-11, what is the LORD promising?

✿ Interestingly, immediately after promising to "turn their mourning into joy" (31:13) and "give them gladness for sorrow," we run across very dark words in 31:15. What is the LORD foretelling? How do we know?

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a _____ covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, _____ 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 _____, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 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 _____ them, and I will write it on their _____. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall _____ 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 _____ more." (Jer 31:31-34)

- ✿ When an original hearer of Jeremiah's message thought about the covenant that the LORD had made with their forefathers, what would have immediately come to mind?

- ✿ What do you think Jeremiah's generation would have thought when they heard, "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" (31:31)?

- ✿ "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (31:33). What goes through your mind as you hear that promise?

- ✿ "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" (31:34). What does this mean, and how was it different from what Israel had been used to?

- ✿ "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (31:34). How does what we are reading in Jeremiah 31 prepare us for the important words spoken by Jesus in Luke 22:20?

- ✿ We'll spend much more time in the New Testament *Letter to the Hebrews* in our next study, but for now, let's turn our Bibles back to Hebrews 8 and read 8:7-13. A really important point is being made that we need to see and understand. What is that point and why does it matter? What does it have to do with us?