

THE NEW COVENANT – PART 1

Jeremiah 31:31-32 ... “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.”

Today we start a series on the new covenant between God and Israel. Do not quit reading because you believe that God’s relationship with Israel does not affect you. You were grafted into that race of people – God’s chosen people, the Jews – when you accepted Christ as your Savior. So, this study is very much for you.

I have seldom heard Philippine priests and pastors teach on this subject. Most seem to limit their Biblical references to Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, and the New Testament. Due to inadequate Bible training, many pastors believe that the Old Testament has little significance for believers today. However, there is great importance in Old Testament scriptures, without which you cannot fully understand the significance of the New Testament.

A covenant is similar to a contract; an agreement between two parties about something they consider important. A covenant is binding, which means there will be consequences if either party violates it. If you buy a new motorcycle on a payment plan, the company selling it will ask you to sign a contract (covenant) in which you promise to make monthly payments on time in the amount specified, to maintain the motorcycle, and to register and insure it as required by law. If you fail any of those requirements, the company can take your motorcycle away from you and you will lose your deposit and any payments you made previously.

When God sent Moses to rescue the Jews from Egyptian slavery, he promised to provide all they would need, to keep them safe and free from future bondage, to bless them with land and prosperity, and to make their nation rule over all other nations on earth. God only required that the Jews worship and obey him. God’s promise was his covenant with Israel, which they agreed to when they followed Moses out of Egypt. In very short order, Israel began to violate the agreement. They cursed God for making them walk across the desert, even though God provided them with all of the water and food they needed for the journey. When they arrived at the promised land a few weeks later, scouts revealed that hostile tribes were ready to fight them. God promised to wipe out their enemies, but the fear of the Israelites was greater than their faith in God, so they refused to enter the land. God punished them by making them wander around in the desert for 40 years, before he again gave them the opportunity to enter the promised land, which they then did.

Today’s verse from Jeremiah prophesized that God was going to make a new and different covenant with Israel, the terms of which we find in the New Testament. The old covenant had failed due to Israel’s repeated disobedience and rebellion against God. Jeremiah promised that God would give Israel another chance to be reconciled with God. In our next devotional, we will look at God’s new covenant with Israel (and you and I), which he introduced through Jesus Christ, God’s son.

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