

## Focus on Jeremiah 31:31–34

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Jon L. Berquist

In the new covenant, God will place the divine law into the hearts of the people. God does state the founding principle of this new covenant: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (v. 33). This association of God and people, each belonging to the other, is a frequent theme of Jeremiah (24:7; 32:38), as well as of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 11:20; 34:30; 37:23, 27). The relationship of belonging is the core element of the new covenant. This new covenant differs in form from earlier covenants in that it is written on the people’s hearts (31:33), rather than on tablets (cf. Exod. 34:1).

### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Samuel K. Roberts

Jeremiah’s prophecy offers us as well a powerful vision of the faithful life. Invited now to live a moral life that combines interior and exterior life, the persons living in a community formed by the new covenant will know God in a new way, as the one who seeks constantly to reconcile with us and the one who speaks directly to the heart. Now members of the body of Christ embody a grace-filled living, suggestive of the same graciousness extended to humanity by God and embodied so dramatically in Jesus’ sacrificial living and dying. Ultimately, grace-filled living is pursued in gratitude to God.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Richard Floyd

Lent is a time for confession and penitence, for emptying ourselves so we are prepared for the good news of Easter. Jeremiah invites us to confess and repent boldly, because of the already-and-not-yet promise that God remembers our sins no more. Perhaps it also invites us to confess that the covenantal calculus, our quid-pro-quo approach to God, does not always hold. Now the shadow of the cross falls over everything—a reminder that, even for God’s most faithful one, there is no path around the darkness. Yet there lingers also the hope, the already-and-not-yet promise, that the days are surely coming when even the cross gives way to life.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”

Woody Bartlett

“Will this new law on my heart not take away my freedom to live my own life the way I want to?” For those who have ever been in love, this is an absurd question. Having the law of love firmly engraved in one’s heart is an adventure in freedom. Having the love of God written on one’s heart is the essence of freedom. It is the freedom to be who one truly is, knowing that one’s true character is what is most pleasing to God and therefore reflects the best of what the law requires. All of this will be good news to needy, lonely, and anxious people.