



A New Covenant with Israel

The author of “The Abingdon Bible Handbook”, Edward P. Blair, says about the book of Jeremiah: “Jeremiah has particularly rich information about the life, the personality, the times, and the message of the prophet who stands behind it.” Then he adds, “We know more about Jeremiah than about any other Old Testament prophet. Jeremiah’s ministry, like Isaiah’s, extended over some four decades.”

Jeremiah was born at Anathoth, a village of Benjamin, about two and one-half miles northeast of Jerusalem and, apparently, into a family of exiled priests (I Kings 2: 26-27). God called him while he was just a little boy. He writes: *...the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”* Jeremiah said, *“Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.”* But the Lord said to him, *“Do not say, “I am only a boy”; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,”* says the Lord.

His prophetic ministry took place during turmoil, harassment, intimidation, and national decay. Other powerful nations came to Israel and took away the younger generation of young men and women into captivity to live in Babylon for several decades. Destruction and chaos reigned all over the nation of Israel after the social and political activities collapsed due to the corruption implemented by the kings, the nation, their religious priests, and the false prophets who were working together to infect Israel with the sins of their neighboring countries. After breaking God’s first covenant over and over again, Jeremiah’s prophecy contained the following words, *“The days are surely coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah”*. At that time Israel was divided into two kingdoms: The Northern and the Southern Kingdoms.

Jeremiah continued, saying, *“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, *“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.”*

The story of Israel is full of transgressions, punishment, repentance, and forgiveness. But other nations are not better than Israel. It is because of this that God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to fulfill God’s amazing promise to the

nation of Israel, which comes to us through the voice of the prophet Jeremiah. This New Covenant was much better, with a better promise to both the Jewish and the Gentile nations. John the Baptist was the bearer of God's fulfilled prophecy and Jesus, like Moses, embodied the promises of this New Covenant. Jesus offered his body and blood to liberate Israel and all those who believe in Him of their sins. The New Covenant is now written in the heart of every individual, not on tablets made out of stone. It is written in the hearts of those who are longing to be with the Lord, who enjoy being in God's company, and who are waiting for all of God's promises to be fulfilled.

The Lenten season reminds us of the forty days Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan. It reminds us, also, that He conquered all temptations. Good Friday and Easter point to the victory Jesus had and because of His victory, we are becoming victorious through faith in Him.

Are you waiting for the manifestation of Jesus? His death and resurrection are the best signs of His love and the mercy He has for us. Thanks be to God for His New Covenant and for His amazing love and grace, which has been included in His plan for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

God bless your life and ministry through this Lenten season. This is my prayer to God for you.

Pastor Rey Díaz