

4//6/25

Sermon Title: The Promise of Giving the New Covenant

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soon-bae

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:23-40

*(Jeremiah 31:23) This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “When I restore their fortunes, they will once again use these words in the land of Judah and its towns: ‘The LORD bless you, you righteous dwelling place, you holy mountain.’*

*(Jeremiah 31:24) People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks.*

*(Jeremiah 31:25) I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.”*

*(Jeremiah 31:26) At this, I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant to me.*

*(Jeremiah 31:27) “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the offspring of people and of animals.*

*(Jeremiah 31:28) Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the LORD.*

*(Jeremiah 31:29) “In those days people will no longer say, ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’*

*(Jeremiah 31:30) Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.*

*(Jeremiah 31:31) “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.*

*(Jeremiah 31:32) It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.*

*(Jeremiah 31:33) “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*(Jeremiah 31:34) No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

*(Jeremiah 31:35) This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD Almighty is his name:*

*(Jeremiah 31:36) "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will Israel ever cease being a nation before me."*

*(Jeremiah 31:37) This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.*

*(Jeremiah 31:38) "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.*

*(Jeremiah 31:39) The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah.*

*(Jeremiah 31:40) The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."*

God promises the restoration of Judah following the restoration of Northern Israel.

This message was given to the people of Judah, who were judged, destroyed by Babylon (in 586 BC), and taken into captivity.

God declares that after the days of utter despair for Judah, a time of restoration and hope will come.

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*and its towns: 'The LORD bless you, you righteous dwelling place, you holy mountain.'*

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Just as judgment was executed according to God's plan, so too will salvation be carried out according to His plan.

God declares that He will plant them again, and they will acknowledge that their destruction was caused by their own sins.

*(Jeremiah 31:27) "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will plant the descendants of Israel and Judah with the seed of people and of animals.*

*(Jeremiah 31:28) Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD.*

*(Jeremiah 31:29) "In those days people will no longer say, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.'*

*(Jeremiah 31:30) Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge."*

Even when Israel returns to its homeland, all that awaits them is a desolate land. No matter how hard they toil to cultivate the land for survival, they will remain impoverished and destitute.

In such an environment, not only will they struggle to thrive, but even maintaining their existence will be difficult.

However, the omnipotent God declares that He will plant the seed of people and animals in the houses of Israel and Judah.

This means that He will cause Israel to prosper and multiply.

God promises to establish a new covenant based on forgiveness.

God has made several covenants with Israel, which are significant in the relationship between God and His people.

The Covenant with Abraham:

God commanded Abraham to go to the land He would show him and unilaterally gave him the following promises:

*(Genesis 12:1) The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you.*

*(Genesis 12:2) "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*

*(Genesis 12:3) I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

*(Genesis 12:6) Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land.*

*(Genesis 12:7) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

God declared to Abraham, "I will give this land, the land of Canaan, to your descendants."

Then, He passed alone between the pieces of the sacrificed animals, confirming that this was a covenant of blood.

In those times, when making a covenant, both parties would pass between the divided pieces of an animal, signifying their commitment to fully uphold the agreement.

This ritual also implied that if either party failed to fulfill their part of the covenant, they would be subject to death.

However, in this covenant, God alone passed between the pieces, carrying a profound meaning: This covenant would be fulfilled solely by God.

There was nothing Israel had to do to make this covenant come to pass.

Thus, this covenant is called the Covenant of Grace because it is entirely dependent on God's promise and faithfulness.

The Covenant with Moses:

After delivering His people, Israel, from Egypt, God gathered them at Mount Sinai and made a covenant with them through His servant Moses.

*(Exodus 19:1) On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the Desert of Sinai.*

*(Exodus 19:2) After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in front of the mountain.*

*(Exodus 19:3) Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel:*

*(Exodus 19:4) 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.*

*(Exodus 19:5) Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,*

*(Exodus 19:6) you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."*

*(Exodus 19:7) So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak.*

*(Exodus 19:8) The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.*

God gave the Israelites laws they were to follow in order to become His people.

He declared, "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then you will be my treasured possession among all nations, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

Unlike the Abrahamic Covenant, in which God unconditionally promised to fulfill His word, this Mosaic Covenant included conditions.

For Israel to be God's people, they had to obey His laws.

This makes it a conditional covenant based on obedience.

The Covenant with David:

God did not allow David to build the temple he desired, but through the prophet Nathan, He gave David the following covenant:

*(2 Samuel 7:8) "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel.*

*(2 Samuel 7:9) I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.*

*(2 Samuel 7:10) And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning.*

*(2 Samuel 7:11) I have done this since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD declares to you that the LORD Himself will establish a house for you.*

*(2 Samuel 7:12) When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.*

*(2 Samuel 7:13) He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

*(2 Samuel 7:14) I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands.*

*(2 Samuel 7:15) But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.*

*(2 Samuel 7:16) Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'"*

David was not required to do anything to fulfill this covenant.

God Himself would bring it to pass.

Like the covenant given to Abraham, this was an unconditional covenant of grace.

And God promised Jeremiah that He would establish a new covenant with Israel in the future.

This is the first mention of the new covenant in the Old Testament.

*(Jeremiah 31:31) "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.*

*(Jeremiah 31:32) "It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.*

The new covenant would be different from the Mosaic covenant, which was established through Moses after the exodus from Egypt.

The new covenant would be fundamentally different from the old covenant (Mosaic covenant)—it would be a covenant based on forgiveness.

*(Jeremiah 31:33) "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

*(Jeremiah 31:34) "No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Unlike the old covenant, which was engraved on stone tablets and required circumcision as a sign of commitment, the new covenant would be written on the hearts of the people.

This means that they would personally know God and have a direct relationship with Him.

Through the Holy Spirit, believers would be transformed, having their corrupt nature and rebellious hearts renewed, so that they would willingly and joyfully obey God's Word by the Spirit's power.

In other words, instead of needing the Law to be externally written and enforced, both children and adults would be recreated as new beings who intimately know God.

While the old covenant demanded strict obedience under the threat of punishment, the new covenant would bring an inner transformation, leading people to obey God voluntarily out of a changed heart.

The one who established the new covenant is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is God who came to this world in human flesh to save humanity.

Though He is God, Jesus Christ came to this lowly world, bore the sins of humanity, and fulfilled the new covenant by shedding His blood and dying on the shameful wooden cross.

On the evening of the Passover, the day before He was crucified, Jesus had the Last Supper with His twelve disciples and spoke of the new covenant.

This was the fulfillment of the prophecy declared through Jeremiah, about 600 years earlier, now fulfilled in AD 30.

*(Luke 22:15) And He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*

*(Luke 22:16) For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."*

*(Luke 22:17) After taking the cup, He gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.*

*(Luke 22:18) For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

*(Luke 22:19) And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

*(Luke 22:20) In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

The new covenant was fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

By participating in the new Passover covenant, established through Jesus' sacrificed body and blood, we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Through this, the new covenant became the foundation of salvation.

Compared to the old covenant, which was external and temporary, the new covenant is internal and eternal.

*(Jeremiah 31:35) This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD Almighty is his name:*

*(Jeremiah 31:36) "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will Israel ever cease being a nation before me."*

*(Jeremiah 31:37) This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.*

God is saying that as long as the sun shines and the moon gives its light, the prophecy of restoration for His people will surely be fulfilled.

It means that God's plan for Israel is absolutely unchangeable.

God promises the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

*(Jeremiah 31:38) "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.*

*(Jeremiah 31:39) The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah.*

*(Jeremiah 31:40) The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."*

This passage implies that the rebuilt Jerusalem will be just as glorious—if not more so—than it was at the height of David's kingdom.

Beloved members of Church of God's Dream,

God knew that Israel could never truly become His people through the old covenant.

This is because all humans are born with a sinful nature and cannot live without sinning.

Therefore, God promised to give Israel a new covenant.

And He declared that those who are within this new covenant would receive the grace of forgiveness of sins and become His people.

True to His promise, God sent Jesus Christ to this earth.

Jesus bore the sins of humanity and died on the cross in our place, removing the burden of sin and setting us free from it.

He fully resolved the fundamental issue of humanity: the problem of sin.

In doing so, He perfectly fulfilled the new covenant, where God promised to forgive the sins of His people and remember them no more.

Now, we who believe have been forgiven of all our sins and set free from them through the new covenant, becoming God's people.

We gave praise, glory, and honor to God who forgave us—sinners—and made us His own.

We offer infinite thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus, who suffered on the cross to fulfill the new covenant.