

## **The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34 FBC Canton Sunday am January 28, 2024**

**Introduction:** We continue our study in the Bible seeking the pattern, which will point us to the pattern designer.

*In Genesis 1* we see the beginning of everything: and we see that Jesus was already there. Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:1-4, I John 1:1-10

*In Exodus 12* we see the redemption, it is Jesus who is the Passover Lamb that takes away the sin of the world

*In Leviticus 23* we see that Jesus fulfills of the 7 Feasts of Israel.

*In Numbers 21* we see that Jesus' crucifixion is displayed by a serpent on a pole.

*In Deuteronomy 19* we see Jesus in the cities of refuge.

*In Joshua 10* we see a history book of victorious conquest, and a prophetic book pointing to Revelation!

*In Judges* we see a theological cycle that is also a mathematical cycle! 490!

*In Ruth* we see an account of a romance that prepares us to understand redemption and Revelation 5!

*In I and II Samuel* we see that the phrase 'as in the days of Noah' Jesus used was about demonic giants in the land.

*In I and II Kings* we are going to see Elijah's rapture is a picture of our Rapture.

*In I and II Chronicles* we discover the construction of the temple is the picture of us.

*In Ezra* we see the pattern of predicted prophecy.

*In Esther* we see the pattern of God's providence to protect His people.

*In Nehemiah* we see the pattern of God's precision timing in prophecy.

*In Job* we see the wisdom of the Resurrection.

*In Psalms* we see the pattern of the sequence of personalities of the King.

*In Proverbs* we see the pattern of decision.

*In Ecclesiastes* we see the pattern of man's reason verses God's reason.

*In Song of Solomon* we see the pattern of God's Love.

*In Isaiah* we see the pattern of the Millennium.

**In Jeremiah we see the pattern of the New Covenant.**

## **The Old covenant was established at Mount Sinai. The New covenant was established on Mount Calvary II Corinthians 3:4-6**

And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

That does not mean we ignore the OT...it means we rejoice we are under the new covenant and learn that all that has been written before time has been given as an example.

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**I. The Creator of the New Covenant needs to give us a heart and mind transplant. v. 31-33**

Matt 26:27-29 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

**a. The world seeks to pressure you to conform your thinking from the outside in. Romans 12:1-2**

**i. The Savior will transform your thinking from the inside out.**

1. The battles of life are fought in the mind. When we think differently, every perspective changes.

**b. The heart transplant is required, not optional. Jeremiah 17:9**

- i. Why did the people fail to keep the covenant in their day? Because they were incapable of keeping it. The heart is incurable, no amount of fear. no amount of inspiration, no amount of perspiration, nor education, nor mentoring can change the fact that we need a new heart.

1. God was faithful to them as a husband, but their hearts made them automatically fail.

**II. The New Covenant requires children, not grandchildren. v. 33-34, John 1:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

**a. He has to be your God, not your families.**

1. Not your neighborhoods.
- ii. Abraham was a friend of God
- iii. Moses talked to God as a man talks to his friend.
- iv. David said the Lord is my shepherd.

v. You have to be born again. No one can do it for you. John 3  
**b. How do you know He is your God? You will know them by their fruits.**  
**Matthew 7:21-29**

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Col 1:29

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

**III. The New Covenant promises no more condemnation. Romans 8:1.**

Rom 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in

the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**a. The new covenant is founded upon the eternal character of God. He is merciful! Lamentations 3:22-23**

*The certainty of God's mercy.* Just as pain is a global and ever-present experience, however, so too is God's mercy for those who trust him through Christ. Although it recounts suffering as bluntly and awfully as anywhere in the Bible, the high point of [Lamentations](#) is its spelling out of a steady trust that "the [LORD](#) is good to those who wait for him" ([Lam. 3:25](#)), for "the steadfast love of the [LORD](#) never ceases; his mercies never come to an end" ([3:22](#)). As surely as judgment awaits the faithless, mercy awaits the faithful—those who look to God, waiting on him, trusting in his Son, and yielding themselves to him.

**Conclusion: Because God has established this new covenant we can be new.**

1. That which is in our past no longer has to define us. Stop letting people define you with the sins of your past. Stop believing that there is a limit to what God wants to do through you. Sins do not define, but consequences remain...David...Paul.
2. We can look forward to the time when God will make all things new.
3. The new covenant promised in Jeremiah and fulfilled in Jesus is a pattern of the scripture.

## C. The New Covenant.

### 1. ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)) The glorious promise of the glorious New Covenant.

“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. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

a. **The days are coming, says the LORD:** What Jeremiah prophesied as God’s faithful messenger was not yet present in his day.

b. **I will make a new covenant:** God announced that at a time future to Jeremiah’s day, *He* would **make a new covenant**. This **new covenant** would first be with **Israel**, but it would be **not according to the covenant** that God made with Israel in the Sinai desert.

i. Throughout the Bible, God reveals His plan of redemption through a series of covenants. After the extended story of the fall and ruin of humanity in [Genesis 1-11](#), the story of the covenants begins.

- The Abrahamic Covenant promised to Abraham and His covenant descendants a *land*, a *nation*, and a *blessing* to extend to all nations ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)).
- The Mosaic or Sinai Covenant gave Israel the *law*, the *sacrifices*, and the *choice* of blessing or curse ([Exodus 19](#)).
- The Davidic Covenant that promised an *everlasting dynasty*, a *perfect ruler*, and the *Promised Messiah* ([2 Samuel 7](#)).
- God’s plan of redemption through the covenants is completed and perfected in the New Covenant. Over the span of Old Testament passages that announce the new covenant (especially [Ezekiel 11:16-20](#), [36:16-28](#), and [37:21-28](#)), we see the promises of *gathered Israel*, of *cleansing and spiritual transformation*, and the *reign of the Messiah*.

ii. “The promise relates to a ‘new covenant’ and is a prediction of a radical change in God’s economy (i.e., his dealing with humanity).” (Feinberg)

iii. Jesus specifically instituted this new covenant by His death on the cross, and He specifically instituted the recognition and remembrance of it with the bread and cup of communion ([Matthew 26:28](#), [Mark 14:24](#), [Luke 22:20](#)). It was future to Jeremiah’s day, but it was put into effect by Jesus and specifically by His work of atoning sacrifice at the cross.

iv. The writer to the Hebrews quotes this passage and develops the theme of the new covenant, especially in contrast to the old ([Hebrews 8:8](#), [8:13](#), [9:15](#), and [12:14](#)).

c. **My covenant which they broke**: A new covenant was promised and needed because Israel did not and could not keep the covenant God made with them at Sinai. That covenant was not designed to be enough; it was preparation for the new covenant to come.

i. "The old covenant had taken a new lease of life in Jeremiah's early days, when the lost 'book of the covenant' was found and read and reaffirmed, to become the blueprint of Josiah's continuing reformation. Yet everything that we have read in Jeremiah confirms that 'the law made nothing perfect', for the response was skin-deep, and died with the death of Joshua." (Kidner)

d. **I will put My law into their minds, and write it on their hearts**: The new covenant brings *inner transformation*. The law of God was no longer only external; God would change the minds and hearts of those connected to Him by the new covenant.

i. The new covenant does not do away with or renounce the law. It makes the law *closer* and *more* important by setting it in the mind and heart, instead of on a stone tablet or page. "It would no longer be like the external one made with the fathers, but spiritual and internal, and based on an intimate knowledge of Jehovah." (Morgan)

ii. "Obedience to the Law is not a prior condition for entering the New Covenant. Rather, it is one of the promised blessings of the New Covenant." (Ryken)

iii. "Things required by the law are bestowed by the gospel. God demands obedience under the law: God works obedience under the gospel. Holiness is asked of us by the law: holiness is wrought in us by the gospel." (Spurgeon)

iv. Here, the heart is written upon in a good, positive sense. "The heart as a writing material is spoken of in [Jeremiah 17:1](#) in relation to sin." (Thompson)

e. **I will be their God, and they shall be My people**: The new covenant brings *new relationship* with God. Those connected to God by the new covenant have personal, close relationship with God that they did not have before: **they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them**.

i. Notably, this relationship with God had a *personal* aspect (**they all show know Me**). "Probably the most significant contribution which Jeremiah made to religious thought was inherent in his insistence that the new covenant involved a one-to-one relationship of the spirit. When the new covenant was inaugurated by the atoning work of Jesus Christ on Calvary, this important development of personal, as opposed to corporate, faith and spirituality was made real for the whole of mankind. Henceforth anyone who submitted

himself consciously in faith to the person of Christ as Saviour and Lord could claim and receive membership in the church of God.” (Harrison)

f. **I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more:** The new covenant brings *true cleansing from sin*. The sacrificial system under the old covenant could only *cover* sin and its guilt; the new covenant brings forgiveness so complete that it could be said that God no longer remembers the sin of those connected to Him through the new covenant.

i. “The new covenant does not envision sinlessness but forgiveness of sin resulting in restoration of fellowship with God.” (Feinberg)

## ESV Global Study Bible :: Footnotes for Jer 31

**Jer. 31:31–34** God’s people have a long-standing problem. Most are circumcised in body but so few are circumcised in heart (that is, truly **know the Lord**). God will remedy this problem. The benefits that God will provide—knowledge of the Lord and forgiveness—were all offered in the OT but all-too-rarely accepted.

**Jer. 31:31** The **new covenant** will provide a fresh start for **Israel** and **Judah**, the first recipients of both the old and now the new covenant (see note on vv. **31–34**). This is the only OT passage to use the specific term “new covenant”; for NT uses of the phrase, see **Luke 22:20**; **2 Cor. 3:6**; **Heb. 8:8–12**.

**Jer. 31:32** This new **covenant** will be different in that it will not be broken, as Israel and Judah **broke** the first one despite God’s faithfulness as a good **husband**.

**Jer. 31:33** Rather than writing the **law** on tablets and scrolls (see **Ex. 34:1**; **Deut. 31:9–13**) and asking the people to internalize it (**Deut. 6:4–9**), God will **write it on their hearts** from the start. He will be the God of this new covenant, just as he was for the old covenant partners who loved him.

## ESV Global Study Bible: The Global Message of Jeremiah

### THE GLOBAL MESSAGE OF JEREMIAH

### Jeremiah in Redemptive History

Jeremiah lived and prophesied in the sixth century **B.C.**, in the days leading up to the exile of Judah to Babylon, and then in the wake of that tragic event. Jeremiah’s prophecy exposes the rebellious hearts of God’s own people, which has led to their impending exile to a foreign land. This rebelliousness goes all the way back to Eden, where the first human couple likewise rebelled against their Maker and Lord. Adam and Eve were exiled from Eden when they rebelled, and the same fate is falling on God’s corporate people as they are exiled from the Promised Land.

**God’s covenant promises.** The reason this exile is so devastating is that at the heart of God’s covenant promises to Abraham was the promise of the land of Canaan. When God’s people are driven out of this land, it seems as though God’s own promises are coming unraveled. Yet throughout Jeremiah we find that God’s strong statements of judgment are surpassed by his pledge of mercy. He **will not** abandon his people, no matter how sinful they remain. Indeed, the



radical problem of sin requires a radical solution—nothing less than the Lord himself writing his law not on tablets of stone but on the very hearts of his people ([Jer. 31:33-34](#); compare [2 Cor. 3:6](#)). So it is that, at the climax of Jeremiah, we are reassured of God's determination to restore his people to himself ([Jeremiah 30-33](#)).

God's final answer. This restoration includes a promise of causing "a righteous Branch to spring up for David" who "shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" ([Jer. 33:15](#)). Ultimately, the tension between the people's stubborn waywardness and God's unbreakable covenant promises is resolved only in Jesus Christ. In Christ, God's promise of a permanent Davidic heir is fulfilled ([2 Sam. 7:12-16](#); [Jer. 33:14-26](#)). Christ is the true and final "righteous Branch" who proves fruitful where Israel proved fruitless ([23:5](#); [33:15](#); [John 15:1](#)). Only through his atoning work is God able to extend mercy to his people in spite of their sin.

God's worldwide redemption. Jeremiah looks forward not only to the coming of Jesus Christ, the true heir of David, but also to the worldwide extension of grace through Jesus far beyond the national borders of Israel. Through Christ and the fulfillment of God's promises, God's promise to Abraham that in him "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" begins to be fulfilled ([Gen. 12:3](#)). God will judge the nations for their sin, as he must ([Jer. 46:1-51:64](#)). Indeed, he will also judge Judah, who has proven to be as wicked as the nations surrounding her ([21:1-29:32](#)). Yet through and despite such judgment God will not be deterred from his ultimate purpose of calling to himself a people from every tribe and language and race and nation ([Rev. 5:9](#); see [Jer. 3:16-17](#)).

## Universal Themes in Jeremiah

The promise-keeping God. Jeremiah's prophecy resounds with the theme of God as the great keeper of promises. When God makes a covenant with the nation of Israel, he will not let that relationship be thwarted, even when his people are faithless. The pledge "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" is the constant promise of God to wayward Israel throughout the book of [Jeremiah](#) ([Jer. 7:23](#); [11:4](#); [30:22](#)). This is great encouragement to God's people around the world today, for they have become the heirs of God's covenant promises to ethnic Israel. No matter how others identify us socially, ethnically, or racially, believers today can know that, through Christ, the God of the Bible will be our God, and we will be his people.

Sin as hard-heartedness. Throughout the book of [Jeremiah](#) the focus shifts back and forth from God's own covenant people to the nations. In both cases, however, the same fundamental problem persists. Both are sinful. Both have hard, stubborn hearts ([Jer. 5:23](#); [11:8](#); [18:12](#)). While the nations may be uncircumcised physically, Judah is uncircumcised spiritually ([9:25-26](#); see also [4:4](#); [6:10](#)). This hard-heartedness is seen in [Jeremiah](#) especially through the hypocrisy of Israel's leaders—the artificial service and hollow religiosity of the prophets, priests, and other officials ([3:10](#); [5:2](#); [7:1-4](#)).

The inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God. Jeremiah's prophecy helps to advance God's promise to Abraham that he would be a blessing, and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him ([Gen. 12:1-3](#)). Jeremiah was to go to the nations both "to destroy and to overthrow" as well as "to build and to plant" ([Jer. 1:10](#)). Israel will multiply and increase in the land ([3:16](#); compare God's original call to Adam and Eve in [Gen. 1:28](#)) and "Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the [LORD](#), and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the [LORD](#)" ([Jer. 3:17](#)). To God "shall the nations come from the ends of the earth" ([16:19](#)). This inclusion of the nations is one reason God shows mercy to Judah: if they return to the Lord, "then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory" ([4:2](#)).



## The Global Message of Jeremiah for Today

**Global justice.** The hard-heartedness of God's people manifests itself not only vertically (toward God) but also horizontally (toward other people). "This people has a stubborn and rebellious heart," and as a result "they have grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless... and they do not defend the rights of the needy" ([Jer. 5:23](#), [28](#)). The church can learn from the book of [Jeremiah](#) about God's tender heart toward the oppressed. We also learn of his desire for his own people to be mediators of mercy to those who are marginalized and disadvantaged. Indeed, knowing God includes, by definition, the defense of "the cause of the poor and needy" ([22:16](#)).

**New hearts.** As the global church labors on gladly in its great mission to make disciples of all nations ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)), we must recognize the need for God to do a deep, cleansing work of the heart in creating new people for himself. When people profess faith in Christ, they must be taught as well about the divine cleansing of the heart that is effected through his indwelling Holy Spirit. In the new covenant that has dawned in Christ ([Heb. 8:8-13](#); [9:15](#)) we find that forgiveness of sins and the writing of God's law on the heart are closely connected. The gospel saves men and women of all ethnicities by wiping away their sins [and](#) by implanting within them new desires for God and holiness. The sinful hard-heartedness of all people cannot be altered in any humanly manufactured way ([Jer. 13:23](#)). A new internal work on the heart by God is required ([31:31-34](#)). As global Christians speak the good news to those in their own neighborhoods and around the world, we do so in utter dependence on God, knowing that only he can soften hearts—and that he loves to do so.

### ESV Global Study Bible: The Global Message of Lamentations

## THE GLOBAL MESSAGE OF LAMENTATIONS

Jewish tradition tells us that [Lamentations](#) was written by Jeremiah, though no author is identified in the book itself. Regardless of who wrote it, the historical events of [Lamentations](#) overlap significantly with those of Jeremiah. The key event in [Lamentations](#), as in [Jeremiah](#), is the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 B.C.

## The Catastrophe in Lamentations

Such a disaster in the life of God's people cannot be overestimated. The author of [Lamentations](#) recounts some horrific circumstances taking place in Jerusalem as the city starves, yet the greatest disaster is the apparent failure of God's covenant with Israel. The entire Old Testament has been gradually working toward the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham in [Genesis 12:1-3](#)—promises of blessing, descendants, and land. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon, the third of these—the promise of land—appears to have failed. And not only are God's people failing to enjoy promises made to them, but they are also now failing to be a light to the nations. Instead of bringing God's saving purposes to the world, they are being conquered by a godless nation.

## The Hope in Lamentations

[Lamentations](#) points to the people's sins as a reason Jerusalem is falling ([Lam. 1:18](#)), as well as leaders who have failed ([4:13](#)) and people who have refused to follow their leaders. Even in the midst of this low point in Israel's history,

however, hope remains. At the climax of the book, God's covenant faithfulness is affirmed and celebrated. "The steadfast love of the [LORD](#) never ceases" ([3:22](#)). God "will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love" ([3:32](#)).

This steadfast love is expressed ultimately in the coming of Christ, the great hope of Old and New Testament believers alike. Those who trust in the Lord can know, when facing adversity, that they will never be forsaken by their Father, because Jesus hung on the cross and cried out in lamentation and [was](#) forsaken by his Father. We can know that God has not "utterly rejected us" ([Lam. 5:22](#)) because God's own Son was rejected in our place. And one day, because of Christ's restorative work, the city that was destroyed 2,500 years ago will come down out of heaven, restored and remade, in glory and beauty ([Rev. 21:2](#), [10-11](#)).

## Universal Themes in Lamentations

*The reality of pain.* [Lamentations](#) has much to say about pain. God seems to be absent, and his promises seem to be forgotten ([Lam. 1:12](#); [2:1](#)). Indeed, God himself is inflicting this pain upon his own people ([2:1-8](#); [3:32](#)). Women are being raped ([5:11](#)) and are even boiling and eating their own children ([2:20](#); [4:10](#)). The cause of all this pain is unmistakably clear: the people have sinned ([1:5](#), [8](#), [14](#)). They "have been very rebellious" ([1:20](#)). Yet while [Lamentations](#) speaks of pain resulting from a very specific historical event, the dismay and despair that resound through its pages are universal experiences in this fallen world, right up to the present time. Indeed, God's own people often suffer greatly due to their loyalty to Christ ([Matt. 10:16-25](#); [Acts 14:22](#); [2 Tim. 3:12](#)).

*The certainty of God's mercy.* Just as pain is a global and ever-present experience, however, so too is God's mercy for those who trust him through Christ. Although it recounts suffering as bluntly and awfully as anywhere in the Bible, the high point of [Lamentations](#) is its spelling out of a steady trust that "the [LORD](#) is good to those who wait for him" ([Lam. 3:25](#)), for "the steadfast love of the [LORD](#) never ceases; his mercies never come to an end" ([3:22](#)). As surely as judgment awaits the faithless, mercy awaits the faithful—those who look to God, waiting on him, trusting in his Son, and yielding themselves to him.

*The importance of godly leadership.* As in the book of [Jeremiah](#), so in [Lamentations](#) we see that it is those who were called to lead God's people who are largely responsible for misleading them. We read that it was "the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests" ([Lam. 4:13](#)) that resulted in the Lord giving vent to his wrath and pouring out his anger on Jerusalem ([4:11](#)). In [Lamentations](#) as well as around the world and down through time, as the leaders of a people go, so go the people. As we learn from the judges and kings of Israel earlier in the Old Testament, wicked leadership breeds corporate wickedness, while godly leadership breeds corporate godliness.

## The Global Message of Lamentations for Today

The central message of [Lamentations](#) for the church today around the world is that of God's sustaining grace in the midst of suffering. One thinks of global poverty and mismanagement of wealth, various kinds of assault on the dignity of the human individual, and conflict at the level of the family all the way up to international conflict. Persecution, too, is as widespread and as volatile as ever it was before. More than 200 million people in over 60 nations today are socially sidelined and denied various human rights due to their loyalty to Christ.

Mere words of encouragement are not enough in the face of such difficulty. Much better is social and political advocacy and solidarity, even as we "weep with those who weep" ([Rom. 12:15](#)). Beneath all such activity, however, stands the greatest hope of all: God's unfailing, unstoppable mercy toward his beloved people. The Lord himself sovereignly oversees all that his children go through, yet "he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men" ([Lam. 3:33](#)). "For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love" ([3:31-32](#)).

God draws near to his suffering saints. Indeed, in Jesus Christ, God has drawn closer to us than could have been imagined—he has become one of us, sharing in all that we suffer in this fallen world ([Heb. 2:14-18](#); [4:14-16](#)).

Remembering him and his cross, and the glory into which he entered and into which we too shall enter ([Rom. 8:17](#)), we trustingly submit to him and his fatherly governance of our lives and the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world today.

#### Heb 12:22-24

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

#### Heb 8:

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "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 — 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

#### Hebrews 9

Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience — 10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Chuck Smith:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that 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 bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD ([Jer 31:31-32](#)):

I'm going to make a new covenant. Not like the covenant that I made.

Now what was the covenant that He made with them? When they came out of Egypt, they came to mount Sinai and there God gave them the law and God said when He gave them the law, "He that doeth these, he that liveth by these things and doeth them shall be My people." So the covenant that God made with them first was a covenant that was predicated upon their obedience to that law. Now they broke that covenant, God said. They didn't obey the law. God gave to them the Ten Commandments; they broke them. They did not keep them. So God said, "I'm going to make a new covenant with them. In that day I'll make a new covenant. Not like the old covenant that was

predicated upon their obedience and their faithfulness to obey the law. And I will be their God and they will be My people, and so forth, if they live by these things and do these things."

But what is the new covenant?

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people ([Jer 31:33](#)).

That is, I will give them a change of attitude within. I will give them a change of heart. It will not be an outward law that is forcing me obedience, but now it is a new covenant where God writes His law in my heart by creating in me a new nature. Now that's, of course, exactly what God has done for us. That's what Christianity is all about. Jesus said, "You've got to be born again. You were born of the flesh, but you've got to be born of the Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Don't marvel that I say you've got to be born again" ([John 3:3,6-7](#)). You need to have this new nature. And when you have this new nature, God then writes His law in your heart. You have a whole new desire, a whole new... You have such a change. It's from within and the desire for the things of the Lord as He writes His law upon my heart. And this new covenant that God has established with us through Jesus Christ, it's the same thing-the change of nature. Born again by the Spirit, a new nature after Christ Jesus.

And it is so important that we be born again, because we cannot keep that first covenant that God established. The law, we've all broken it. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So God has established this new covenant. The old covenant was established upon man's faithfulness to obey the law. The new covenant is established upon God's faithfulness to justify us by our faith in Jesus Christ. The old covenant failed because it was predicated upon man. The new covenant will stand because it is predicated upon God's work.

And so we have this new covenant that God has established with us and also will establish with the house of Israel in that day. They are still trying to relate to God under the old covenant, but not completely. They no longer have any sacrifice, which was required of God to put away their sins. And so they're still seeking to relate to God outside of the covenant through Jesus Christ whereby our sins are taken away.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more ([Jer 31:34](#)).

What a glorious covenant. God having forgiven our iniquities, not remembering our sins.



**Olive Tree  
Ministries**



## **Some Things I Never Thought I Would See**

**By Jan Markell**

**January 18, 2024**

[www.olivetreeviews.org](http://www.olivetreeviews.org)

I'm at it again—mulling over the insanity of our day, even though such absurdities were predicted for the last days. I say a dozen times a day, "*I never thought I would see the day.*" Be honest. You do, too!

### **Here's my current list:**

#### ***I never thought I would see the day:***

When churches would see our mind-numbing headlines and stories and suggest that there are perhaps a hundred or a thousand years before Jesus returns! They say we've always had perilous times. Nothing is new.

#### ***I never thought I would see the day:***

The *World Economic Forum* would meet the week it was minus 40 degrees in my hometown and obsess over global warming and electric vehicles, since they don't function well right now in Minneapolis. And all of us are cheering for global warming.

#### ***I never thought I would see the day:***

When the champion of the hurting around the world, the Red Cross, would deny care and medication to Israeli hostages and instead scold the hostages for Gaza's destruction.

#### ***I never thought I would see the day:***



When the *International Court of Justice* would declare Israel guilty of *genocide* when it was Israel who experienced a genocidal attack. Imagine, portions of the free world siding with barbarians rather than a democratic ally. Did someone say “upside down world?”

***I never thought I would see the day:***

All of the leaders of sanctuary cities and states would be screaming bloody murder to keep illegals out of their sanctuary cities and states.

***I never thought I would see the day:***

When a U.S. Secretary of State would tell another country—Israel—they cannot win a war. They cannot defeat terrorists who perpetrated genocide on them.

***I never thought I would see the day:***

I would watch *entire church denominations* side with those who perpetrated the worst slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust. What Bible are they reading? They believe Jesus was a *Palestinian*. Really?

***I never thought I would see the day:***

The nation of Nigeria, with its Christian population nearly decimated by Muslims, not be put on Washington’s 2024 persecution watch list!

***I never thought I would see the day:***

When Democrats admit that Hamas or the Taliban or al-Qaida may be crossing our southern border and then *brag about our strong national security!* Reprobate minds see upside down.

***I never thought I would see the day:***

When the world would favor elements of society who cry “Death to Israel” and “Death to America” and glorify these thugs. When “Israel Derangement Syndrome” would overtake entire nations, and when universities would favor them, *even as Jews hide in closets and secret rooms.*

***I never thought I would see the day:***



When at the most significant time in history, believers would talk about “rapture fatigue” and “end-time burn-out” because they were tired of watching and waiting for Christ’s return. It’s just taking too long.

***I never thought I would see the day:***

When the tragedy of Lahaina, Maui—with all of its mystery and likely conspiracy—would so quickly be forgotten and the people so *pathetically abandoned*. And yet people still trust the government!

***I never thought I would see the day:***

When lockdowns would become a part of normal society! First it was Covid lockdowns. Now I am learning about climate lockdowns coming. I guess the mantra is, “You will go nowhere and be happy!”

***I never thought I would see the day:***

That the subject of Israel—who is the primary subject of the Bible—would be the issue causing enormous church splits since October 7. Denominations don’t want to acknowledge that Jews wrote our Bible or play a prominent role today. I guess theology matters to some and their theology erases the nation of Israel!

I could go on for endless pages with further examples, sadly. The Bible is blunt that the last days would be perilous and filled with unruly and selfish people. It says society would be “given over” (Romans 1). *We just didn’t think it would be this bad.*

But God placed you and me in it for such a time as this! We are here on assignment and not by accident. *We can be the salt and light needed for our times!* The followers of Jesus Christ are to shine no matter what the circumstances and no matter how bad it gets.

*Hang on a little longer.* And it is the darkest before the dawn—the dawn being the glorious Rapture of the church when we leave this wicked planet behind! *Only*

*in Eternity will we cease being shocked by the world and by an upside-down society. Only then will everything make sense. Finally, I will be able to stop saying, "I never thought I would see the day."*

## **Russell Brand Reveals Why He Wears a Cross and Is Reading the Bible 'a Lot More'**

**CBN NEWS**

01-22-2024

Russell Brand, the controversial English comedian and actor, is opening up more about his spiritual journey of discovery and new realizations about his faith and relationship with God. The revelations come as he is also facing some very serious allegations of sexual misconduct that are being investigated by police. In a short 90-second video posted to the social media platform X on Sunday, Brand shared why he wears a cross on a necklace.

"The reason I wear a cross is because Christianity and in particular, the figure of Christ are it seems to me inevitably becoming more important as I become more familiar with suffering, purpose, self, and not self," he said.

Brand, 48, told his followers he was reading the Bible "a lot more" and is also reading Rick Warren's book [\*The Purpose Driven Life\*](#).

"When I grew up, Christianity seemed like it was either really irrelevant and old-fashioned and sort of dusty and sort of incense and sort of 'Anno Domini'," he chanted. "Or they tried to modernize it," the comedian continued as he pretended to hold up a guitar, switching his voice to another accent. "And it seems just like, 'Right. Ok, we're gonna talk about Jesus.'"

"And like both of those routes seemed like ooh I don't know if there's anything for me," Brand said. "And I suppose it takes a certain amount of adulthood and it

might be different for all of us. But for me, it seems that it's taken quite a lot to recognize that you need, I need, a personal relationship with God."

"It occurred to me that if instead of always talking to myself inwardly, I could replace one of those voices with an indwelling God," he said. "It says in Galatians, it is our job to die so that as Christ died on the cross he might be reborn in us."

"I'm very interested to hear what you think because for me, my heart is open," Brand said as he invited his followers to let him know what they thought in the comments.

Thousands of users responded to Brand's request.

"Amen. Jesus is interested... He loves you," one user said.

Another user shared, "Jesus has changed me too! He can do it for anybody if they call on Him in faith!"

"Praise, praise, praise the Lord! #JesusChrist the only one that can change and transform a life. Try Him, your life will never again be the same!!" a user wrote.

***\*\*Please sign up for [CBN Newsletters](#) to keep up to date with the news that matters most.\*\****

And another user, Greg Laurie, senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship, saw Brand's video and reached out to him, replying directly.

"Hi Russell- I love what you have to say in this video! We have never met, but I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Greg Laurie and my life was radically changed by Jesus Christ. I like you was put off by Christians at first, but then I heard the Gospel message," Laurie wrote.

"The word 'Gospel' means 'Good news.' We are all sinners and we have broken God's commandments and fallen short of His standards. But the good news is that God loved us so much He sent His only son to die on the cross for our sins and then rise from the dead. Jesus is alive and ready to come into your life, Russell!" he continued.

"He is just a prayer away. You might pray something like this," Laurie suggested.

"Lord Jesus, I want to have a personal relationship with you. I know I am a sinner and I believe you died on the cross from my sins. I turn from those sins and put

my faith in you right now to be my Lord and savior, my God and friend. Thanks for hearing this prayer. In Jesus name, I pray, amen."

"Russell- To know more about a new relationship with God, go our our website, <http://Knowgod.org>. There was also a movie made about how my life was changed by Jesus called @JesusRevMovie. You can watch it on @netflix," Laurie continued.

"Russell- We are all praying for you!" he concluded.

Also responding to Brand, one user commented, "Paul had a resume to boast about religious accomplishments more than any. However, he realized that 'loosing himself' as he described in Galatians as 'crucified with Christ' was where he truly found his identity. @rustyrocks

(Brand's X handle) - it starts with @reglaurie words above."

Another user called upon all believers to pray for Brand as he appears to be seeking the truth.

"Believers" in the Lord Jesus Christ, let's lift up Russell Brand in prayer and ask the Lord to open his heart to receive the gospel of salvation. If he is seeking sincerely, the Lord will find him. It's not complicated. PRAY & BELIEVE! John 3:16," the user wrote.

As [CBN's Faithwire](#) has reported, Brand has long discussed God. In a 2017 episode of his podcast, "Under the Skin," he asked former atheist Alister McGrath turned Christian apologist: "Is there any point in God?"

It seems Brand has now found that point. He told Fox News in March 2023, "Like many desperate people, I need spirituality," Brand said. "I need God, or I cannot cope in this world. I need to believe in the best in people."

### **Nine Women Claim Brand Sexually Assaulted Them**

Brand has been accused of sexually assaulting at least nine women, according to various media reports. He was questioned for a second time by London police last month as they were investigating sexual offense allegations, according to U.K. media outlets.

British police do not name suspects who have not been arrested and charged, according to [USA Today](#).

Brand has denied the allegations. In a video posted to social media before the first four allegations became public in September, he said he refuted what he called "very serious allegations," according to [NBC News](#).

One of the women sued Brand in November, alleging he sexually assaulted her during the production of the movie Arthur in July 2010.

***EDITOR'S NOTE: In reporting about steps that high-profile individuals may be taking toward God, CBN does not endorse past or current behavior that may not line up with the Word of God. As we report positive developments in celebrities' spiritual journeys, we encourage our readers to pray for anyone and everyone in the news, that the fruit of God would grow in all of our lives.***

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