

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Jeremiah 31:29-37

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, September 14, 2014

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 14, 2014**, is from **Jeremiah 31:29-37**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Jeremiah 31:29-37

(Jeremiah 31:29) In those days they shall no longer say: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

In his message of comfort and hope, the LORD wanted Jeremiah to emphasize individual accountability and responsibility. The Judeans who went into exile could not blame their parents and the sins of their parents for their punishment from the LORD and their exile in Babylon. In the future, especially in the coming days of the Messiah, if the parents have done wrong they will be held responsible for their actions. Though children often suffer from the neglect and irresponsibility of their parents, their suffering is not the result of God punishing them for their parents' sins.

(Jeremiah 31:30) But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Before and after the Messiah came, God punished individuals for their own sins, but some thought that God punished children for their parents' sins. For example, the disciples of Jesus wanted to know why a man was born blind (see John 9:2). When the Judeans were sent into exile, their children suffered their same fate, which was God's discipline on a rebellious people. The wages of sin is death for every individual who sins; therefore, God will not punish a child for their parents' sins (Romans 6:23). God will not punish a victim that someone has sinned against. God will not punish an innocent person because they have been violated by a sinner. God will only punish the sinner.

However, a parent's sins can bring unjust suffering to a child and God will give the child justice when He disciplines the parents. God will give justice to those who are the victims of the sins of others, but that justice may not be seen in this life on earth.

(Jeremiah 31:31) “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

Because the house of Israel and Judah (all 12 tribes of Israel) had broken the covenant God had made with them, God declared through Jeremiah that He would make a new covenant or agreement with them. God would make the new covenant when He sent the Messiah, who would make the new covenant in his blood.

(Jeremiah 31:32) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

God made the Old Covenant with Israel when He established the Passover feast, saved them from the destroying angel and slavery in Egypt, and when God gave Moses the 10 Commandments and the sacrificial system on the mount of God. God treated them as a father would

treat his children, and as a husband would treat his bride when he makes a marriage covenant. However, because of her sins and idolatry, Israel broke the covenant that God had made; Israel became like a rebellious child or a rebellious bride.

(Jeremiah 31:33) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares 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.

The New Covenant would contain the same moral law, the same law of love, the same 10 Commandments that God revealed in the Old Covenant. However, rather than being written on stone and read and obeyed as an external law, under the New Covenant God would write His law internally upon the heart of His people. He would remain their God, and they would remain His people. Under the New Covenant, God's people would do the will of God and obey His laws from an inner recognition of their rightness for everyone. True love for God and others would be their motive for obeying God's law. God would renew a right spirit within them and send the Holy Spirit to live within them to guide them in the right applications of His laws in every situation. The external law written on stone could never achieve these goals, but Jesus the Messiah could

achieve them in the lives of His followers after His death and resurrection that created the New Covenant.

(Jeremiah 31:34) And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Jeremiah prophesied that a day would come when the evangelist would no longer be necessary, for everyone would know the LORD; whether they were rich or poor, young or old, educated or uneducated, Jew or Gentile. There would come a time when God would forgive His people for their all of their sins and choose not to remember their sins. Their past sins would never come between Him and His people. They would never sin against God again and He would forget their sinful past.

(Jeremiah 31:35) Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD of hosts is his name:

Through Jeremiah, God promised a New Covenant, and the Messiah Jesus came and established the New Covenant as God promised. Those who follow the Messiah do not

break God's New Covenant, because God's work of grace within them helps them substantially obey God in a process the Bible calls sanctification. When the Messiah returns, those who have been sanctified will be visibly glorified on earth and in heaven. God promised that this would be as certain as the fixed order of the created universe.

(Jeremiah 31:36) “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”

The nation of Israel formally ceased to exist in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant, and the city of Jerusalem; however, by that time some of the offspring of Israel and some Gentiles had united under the Lordship of the Messiah in the New Covenant and had formed the kingdom of God on earth, which continues even today as the Church. The nation of Israel was reestablished as a nation in 1948.

(Jeremiah 31:37) Thus says the LORD: “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD.”

God has never rejected “all the offspring of Israel.” God did not reject them because of “all they have done.” God established a New Covenant through the Messiah and established the Kingdom of God on earth with His followers that will be apparent to all when the Messiah returns as God promised. God intended these words of Jeremiah to encourage His people and give them hope not only right before they went into exile in Babylon but throughout the subsequent generations until the Messiah Jesus came and until He comes again as He promised.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What kind of an effect can the sins of the parents have on their children?
2. What did God mean when He told Jeremiah “all shall die for their own sins”?
3. Who did God say that He would make His New Covenant with? Why is that important? Where can we learn the most about the New Covenant?
4. What did God say that the Israelites had done with the Old Covenant?
5. What did God say that He would do in the New Covenant?

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