



[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

(31) 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: (32) 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 brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) 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. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, 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.

King James Version

(See also [Ezekiel 37:26](#); [Jeremiah 50:5](#), 20)

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) provides an encouraging conclusion to the saga of Israel and Judah once they have repented and returned to the land. These verses, quoted in [Hebrews 8:8-12](#) and 10:16-17, show that this is the same covenant that the church has already made with [God](#). Rather than doing away with the law of God, the New Covenant gives the people the means, not merely to obey it, but to accept it and make it a part of their lives. God will give the people of Israel and Judah new hearts, and they will finally be able to follow God consistently and have real relationships with Him. God will forgive their sins, and Israel will finally begin to be the witness to the rest of [the world](#) that God intended her to be (see [Deuteronomy 4:5-8](#); [Isaiah 62:1-2](#)).

Even though God makes this covenant primarily with Israel and Judah ([Jeremiah 31:31](#)), it is not exclusive. Through Isaiah, God shows that Gentiles who submit themselves to Him can and will also make this covenant. Of particular interest is the requirement that the [Sabbath](#) be kept by those wishing to do this ([Isaiah 56:1-2](#), 6-8).

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[Ezekiel 11:17](#), 19-21 foretells of Israel and Judah receiving from God a new heart—: spiritual heart that will enable them to keep His commandments and statutes.

Throughout its history, the essential difficulty in Israel's [relationship with God](#) has been one of the heart. God exclaims, "Oh, that they [Israel] *had such a heart* in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" ([Deuteronomy 5:29](#)). In [Hebrews 3:10](#), God again identifies this problem: "Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray *in their heart*, and they have not known My ways'" (emphasis ours throughout).

The heart or spirit of a man is the center of his thought, reason, and motivation. Because of human nature, the natural—unconverted—heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)). It has an innate, powerful pull toward the self, always making evaluations based on what it perceives as good for the individual regardless of the effect on others. Humanity has had approximately 6,000 years of such self-centered and destructive living, proving that man is simply unable to govern himself for very long. He needs direction and leadership from another—divine—source.

The Old Covenant that God made with Israel was a *good* agreement as far as it went, because all of God's works are good. The problem was not with its terms, but with the *people* who made it ([Hebrews 8:7-8](#), 10). They lacked the right heart that would have allowed them to follow God truly and obey His laws. God, though, will give a new heart—anew spirit—torepentant Israelites, along with any others who desire to covenant with Him.

This "new spirit" is the Spirit of God—the[Holy Spirit](#) (see also [Jeremiah 32:37-42](#); [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#); [37:14](#); [39:29](#); [Joel 2:28-29](#)). It is the same Spirit that [Jesus](#) told His disciples they would receive, the power that would allow them—throughtheir words and especially through the conduct of their lives—tobe witnesses of God ([Acts 1:8](#); see [Luke 24:49](#)). It is a Spirit "of power and of [love](#) and of a sound mind" ([II Timothy 1:7](#))—amind that is balanced because God's concerns reside at its core. It is a mind inclined to obey God and to seek Him as the only Source of true solutions in a world that does not have the means or inclination to live in a way that is good for everybody and good eternally.

As Israel becomes God's model nation, due to her new heart and Spirit, the rest of the world will see that God's way—including His commandments, statutes, and judgments—produce[peace](#) and abundance. It is the nature of God's laws that, because of their Source, they bring good, prosperity, health, abundance, peace, and contentment ([Deuteronomy 4:5-8](#)). Yet, it takes the same spirit—heart—as the Lawgiver for one to

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understand and keep the laws in their true spiritual intent.

— David C. Grabbe

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