Hope For the Future
Jer 31:31-37
SS Lesson for 09/14/2014

Devotional Scripture: Rom 8:23-25

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO LESSON
Key Verse: Jer 31:31
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary
Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

HOPE IN THE NEW COVENANT PROMISED (Jer 31:31-32)
Future renewal (31)
- God renews into salvation (Ps 80:3)
- God renews from suffering into eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)
- God renews one's spirit into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
- God renews one's way of life (Eph 4:22-24)
- God renews strength (Isa 40:31)
- God renews the inner being (2 Cor 4:16)
Past failures (32)
- Failure because there is none good except God (Mark 10:18)
- Failure because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
- Failure because we are not without sin (1 John 1:8)
- Failure because of relying on earthly powers (Isa 31:1)
- Failure because of not forsaking evil ways and thoughts (Isa 55:6-7)
- Failure because of having a mind hostile to God (Rom 8:7)
- Failure because of turning away from God (Ps 14:2-3)

HOPE IN THE NEW COVENANT DESCRIBED (Jer 31:33-34)
In the minds and hearts (33)
- Commands in the heart (Prov 3:1)
- Truth in the inner parts (Ps 51:6)
- Holy Spirit in us (Ezek 36:27)
- God working in us (Phil 2:13)
- Attitudes of our minds made new (Eph 4:23)
- Renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2)
- We have the mind of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 2:16)
In the knowing of God (34)
- Knowing God is having eternal life (John 17:3)
- Knowing God through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 4:6)
- Knowing God is the beginning of understanding (Prov 9:10)
- Knowing God through spiritual revelation (Eph 1:17)
- Knowing God through Church training (Eph 4:13)
- Knowing God through spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9)
In the forgiveness and forgetting (34)
- Forgiveness and forgetting because our sins have been blotted out (Isa 43:25)
- Forgiveness and forgetting because of God's redemption (Isa 44:22)
- Forgiveness and forgetting because belief in Jesus (Acts 10:43)
- Forgiveness and forgetting because God has removed our sins (Ps 103:12)
- Forgiveness and forgetting because of repentance (Acts 3:19)

HOPE IN THE NEW COVENANT’S ETERNAL COMMITMENT (Jer 31:35-37)
Commitment that uses the power of God (35)
Use of God's power because it is able to resurrect (1 Cor 6:14)
Use of God's power because it allows us to stand against Satan's schemes (Eph 6:10-13)
Use of God's power because it is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor 12:9)
Use of God's power because it is reserved for those who believe (Eph 1:17-21)
Use of God's power because He works in us (Eph 3:20)
Use of God's power because it is what His kingdom is all about (1 Cor 4:20)

**Commitment that will never be forsaken** (36)
- Never forsaken because God promises to be with us to the very end (Matt 28:20)
- Never forsaken because The Holy Spirit will be with believers forever (John 14:16)
- Never forsaken because God will never forsake His people (Deut 31:6)
- Never forsaken because the righteous are not forsaken (Ps 37:25)
- Never forsaken because God will never forsakes His faithful ones (Ps 37:28)

**Commitment that can never be broken** (37)
- Never broken because God's love never fails (Romans 8:35)
- Never broken because God's word never fails (Matt 24:35)
- Never broken because God does not violate His covenants (Ps 89:33-36)
- Never broken because out of God's great love He blesses regardless of our rebellion (Ps 106:43-45)
- Never broken because God always redeems His people of the covenant (Ps 111:9)
- Never broken because God upholds His people and makes them a light to others (Isa 42:6)

**CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

**Commentary Thoughts From Thomas L. Constable**

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**
Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson how as Christians we can always have **Hope for the Future**. The **study's aim** is to consider the meaning of the covenant and to understand how the new covenant, in contrast to the old covenant, puts God's law on people's hearts and empowers them to obey it. The **study's application** is to assure believers in Jesus Christ that they can obey God and grow spiritually. In establishing His new covenant, God has given us His Spirit to apply His Word to our lives. (Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary).

Key Verse: Jer 31:31

31 "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

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

God vowed to provide a new beginning for His covenant people. In this new age God will plant the nations of Israel and Judah with the offspring of men and animals. Jeremiah again used agricultural and architectural metaphors to illustrate God’s work (cf. comments on 1:10). God had judged Judah for her sin, but He will reverse that judgment. God’s work for the nation will silence a proverb that was common in Jeremiah’s day (cf. comments on Ezek. 18:2-4). Those facing judgment in Jeremiah’s day felt they were being unfairly punished by God for their ancestors’ sins. Though the fathers had eaten sour grapes, it was the children who experienced the effects of having their teeth... set on edge. This proverb was false because it implied that God was unrighteous. God’s justice will guarantee that each guilty person will die for his own sin. In addition to a new beginning God promised to make a New Covenant with His people. This New Covenant was expressly for the house of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and the house of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). It would not be like the covenant God had made with Israel’s forefathers at the time of the Exodus because that covenant had been broken by the people (cf. 11:1-8). The earlier covenant God referred to was the Mosaic Covenant contained in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Twice God had announced a series of punishments or “curses” that would be invoked on those who violated His Law (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). The final judgment would be a physical deportation from the land of Israel. With the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. this final “curse” was completed. God had set a holy standard of conduct before the people, but because of their sinful hearts they could not keep those standards. A change was needed. God’s New Covenant will involve an internalization of His Law. He will put His Law in their minds and on their hearts, not just on stones (Ex. 34:1). There will be no need to exhort people to know the Lord because they will already all know God (cf. Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). God’s New Covenant will give Israel the inner ability to obey His righteous standards and thus to enjoy His blessings. Ezekiel indicated that this change will result from God’s bestowal of the Holy Spirit on these believers (cf. Ezek. 36:24-32). In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit did not universally indwell all believers. Thus one different aspect of the New Covenant is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all believers (cf. Joel 2:28-32). A second aspect of the New Covenant will be God’s provision for sin. The sins of the people resulted in the curses of the Old Covenant. However, as part of the New Covenant God will forgive Israel’s wickedness and remember their sins no more. But how could a holy God overlook sin? The answer is that God did not “overlook” sin—its penalty was paid for by a Substitute (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). In the Upper Room Christ announced that the New Covenant was to be inaugurated through the shedding of His blood (cf. Matt. 26:27-28; Luke 22:20). Forgiveness of sin would be part of the New Covenant only because God provided a Substitute to pay the penalty required of man. To underscore Israel’s permanence because of this New Covenant, God compared her existence to that of the heavens and the earth. As God had appointed the sun to shine by day and the moon and stars to shine by night (cf. Gen. 1:14-19), so He had appointed Israel as His chosen nation. It would take a feat as fabulous as making these natural decrees vanish from nature to make Israel... cease to be a nation. The power God displayed in creating the universe was the power that He exercises in preserving Israel as a nation. Throughout history people have tried in vain to destroy Israel, but none have succeeded—and none ever will. How is the church related to the New Covenant? Is the New Covenant being fulfilled in the church today? Ultimately the New Covenant will find its complete fulfillment during the Millennium when Israel is restored to her God. The New Covenant was made with Israel (Jer. 31:31, 33) just as the Mosaic Covenant had been (v. 32). One key element of the New Covenant is the preservation of Israel as a nation (vv. 35-37). However, though the ultimate fulfillment of this covenant awaits the millennial reign of Christ, the church today is participating in some of the benefits of that...
covenant. The covenant was inaugurated at Christ’s death (Matt. 26:27-28; Luke 22:20), and the church, by her union with Christ, is sharing in many of the spiritual blessings promised to Israel (cf. Rom. 11:11-27; Eph. 2:11-22) including the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15; 12:22-24). But though the church’s participation in the New Covenant is real, it is not the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise. The fact that believers today enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (forgiveness of sins and the indwelling Holy Spirit) does not mean that spiritual and physical blessings will not be realized by Israel. That still awaits the day when Israel will acknowledge her sin and turn to the Messiah for forgiveness (Zech. 12:10-13:1). Some Bible scholars, however, take a slightly different view. They see one covenant (a covenant of grace), which God will apply to Israel in the Millennium and is now applying to the church in this present age. In both views the New Covenant is made possible by the blood of Christ. The third aspect of God’s new relationship will be the establishment of a new city for His people. Jerusalem, the city that symbolizes God’s relationship with His people, was destroyed by Babylon. But even before that event took place God promised that the city will be rebuilt. The Tower of Hananel was at the northeast corner of the city (cf. Neh. 3:1; 12:39; Zech. 14:10) and the Corner Gate was probably located on the northwest corner of the city (cf. 2 Kings 14:13; 2 Chron. 26:9; Zech. 14:10). Thus the northern wall will be restored. The locations of the hill of Gareb and Goah are unknown; but since Jeremiah 31:38 described the northern boundary and verse 40 describes the southern and eastern boundaries it may be assumed that Gareb and Goah detail the western boundary of the city. Perhaps Gareb referred to the hill west of the Tyropeon Valley that is today called Mount Zion. The southwestern and southern boundary will be the valley in which dead bodies and ashes are thrown. This is the Hinnom Valley (cf. 7:30-34; 19:1-6). The eastern boundary is the terraces out to the Kidron Valley. This boundary would extend to the corner of the Horse Gate on the southeast tip of the city, where the Kidron Valley and Hinnom Valley unite. God described two characteristics of this new city. First, it will be holy to the Lord (cf. Zech. 14:20-21). The city and its inhabitants will be set apart to God who will dwell in her midst (Ezek. 48:35). Second, the city will no more be uprooted or demolished. The ravages of war will not be experienced in this new city. These verses were not fulfilled after the Babylonian Captivity ended. Since the postexilic period provides clear evidence that holiness was not a primary characteristic of the people in Jerusalem and Judah (cf. Mal. 1:6-14), so the city was destroyed again in A.D. 70 by the Romans. These promises (Jer. 31:31-40) await their future fulfillment during the Millennium.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
"Covenant"—the word may bring to mind a contract, an agreement, or a marriage. Dictionary.com defines "covenant" as "a. the conditional promises made to humanity by God, as revealed in Scripture, b. the agreement between God and the ancient Israelites, in which God promised to protect them if they kept His law and were faithful to Him." The Lord made a covenant with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. In His treatment of the Israelites, the Lord acted like a faithful husband, but they acted like an adulterous wife. In doing so, the Israelites not only violated His covenant; they also broke His heart. Because of their disobedience and unfaithfulness, God allowed the people to be taken captive. But our God is a God of restoration. He would not allow the chastisement to last forever. He is faithful to all generations, and His loving-kindness endures forever. Therefore, God promised to make a new covenant with a new generation of Israelites. The new covenant was made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. At the time that the Prophet Jeremiah was given this message from God, the people were divided into two kingdoms—Israel and Judah. The Lord did not choose Israel over Judah, nor did He choose Judah over Israel. He made the covenant with both. Just so, God wants both the Jew and the Gentile to come into a saving knowledge of His grace and recognize that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

In this new covenant that God made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, He promised to forgive their iniquity and forget their sins. We live in this new covenant today. The Bible promises that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). This agreement between God and man illustrates how much God longs to have a relationship with His creation. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: ... 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). Our covenant with God is not just for show. When we get married, we stand at the altar and say "I do," vowing before God and man that we will do our best to honor, protect, and take care of our spouse. Then, as a symbol of the commitment we just made, we have rings placed on our fingers to remind us of the vows we have taken. God wanted to ensure that His people would not stray from His love again, so He promised that He would write His law inside their hearts. In other words, His Word would become so much a part of them that it would be a constant reminder of their commitment to Him, just as the wedding ring is a reminder of a spouse's commitment. Some couples who have been married for a long time or have been through a traumatic season in their lives will choose to renew their vows. Our hearts are prone to
stray from a faithful God. Every time we come to Him with the knowledge of our sin and repent, we are renewing
the covenant we have made with Him.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A mortgage is a binding agreement between a lender (such as a bank) and the person or persons obtaining the
mortgage. It has obligations and benefits for both parties. The potential home-owners obtain the funds necessary to buy
a house, while the lender benefits by receiving the loan back with interest. Not long ago, my wife and I refinanced the
mortgage on our home. We did this to obtain a lower interest rate and therefore lower our monthly payments. This
required lots of documentation, signing of paperwork, more paperwork, waiting, and finally notification that the new
loan had been approved. Our old mortgage was finished, and our new mortgage was in effect. In this case, newer was
better. Covenants in the Bible also feature agreements that express or imply obligations and benefits between parties.
The Old Testament sometimes speaks of covenants made between two people, such as the one between Laban and Jacob
(Genesis 31:43-53). The most important covenants in the Bible, though, are those between God and people. They are
both like and unlike human-to-human covenants in various ways. This week’s lesson will address God’s covenant with
Old Testament Israel and look at his promise through Jeremiah of a new covenant—a better one.

The first mention of covenant in the Bible is in reference to promises the Lord made to Noah (Genesis 6:18; 9:8-17).
This is followed by other God-to-human covenants: with Abram (Abraham) and his descendants Isaac and Jacob
(Genesis 15:18; Exodus 2:24; 6:5), with the people of Israel after their departure from Egypt (Exodus 19:3-6), and with
King David (Psalm 89:3). The covenants after Noah reflect the progress of the people of God from a family group
headed by Abraham to a developed nation with a king, land, capital city, and temple. As such, these covenants are
interrelated while having distinctive elements. There is a big picture to keep in mind: the God of Israel was known as
the one who kept his covenant (Deuteronomy 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; Daniel 9:4). This distinguished him from the
fictitious gods of other nations, gods who were fickle and might withhold blessings on a whim. Their worshippers
believed these deities needed constant appeasement, even by means of the horrible act of child sacrifice. The God of
Israel, by contrast, promised sure blessings in exchange for faithful obedience to the clearly established terms of the
covenant. To obey God’s commandments was to keep the covenant. Unfortunately, the kings and people of Israel and
Judah frequently disobeyed, thereby violating the terms of the covenant. We should note God’s covenants to be one-
sided affairs in a couple of ways. First, God establishes the terms of his covenants; there are no give-and-take
negotiations in this regard. Second, God always keeps his side of his covenants. Humans may fail, but God’s promises
are always true. The weakness of the covenant to Old Testament Israel was never on the part of God, but on the part of
the covenant people. The relentless cycle of sin, sorrow, supplication, and salvation proved that people needed a new
covenant. Jeremiah 31 mostly speaks of a time of restoration. Such restoration was not to come until after 538 BC, the
year the exile ended. The prophet pictures this restoration as a great parade of the “remnant of Israel” returning from
all directions. This throng is not a victorious army, but includes pregnant women, the blind, and the lame, all weeping
with joy (31:7-9). This sets the tone for Jeremiah’s broader vision of a new covenant.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Hope in the New Covenant Promised (Jer 31:31-32)

31 “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—
32 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.
Future renewal (31)

*God renews into salvation (Ps 80:3)*

3 Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

*God renews from suffering into eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)*

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

*God renews one's spirit into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)*

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

*God renews one's way of life (Eph 4:22-24)*

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

*God renews strength ( Isa 40:31)*

31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

*God renews the inner being (2 Cor 4:16)*

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Past failures (32)

*Failure because there is none good except God (Mark 10:18)*

18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone.

*Failure because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)*

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

*Failure because we are not without sin (1 John 1:8)*

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

*Failure because of relying on earthly powers ( Isa 31:1)*

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord.

*Failure because of not forsaking evil ways and thoughts ( Isa 55:6-7)*

6 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

*Failure because of having a mind hostile to God (Rom 8:7)*

7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

*Failure because of turning away from God (Ps 14:2-3)*

2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
**Hope in the New Covenant Described (Jer 31:33-34)**

33 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.

34 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."

**In the minds and hearts (33)**

*Commands in the heart (Prov 3:1)*

3 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,

*Truth in the inner parts (Ps 51:6)*

6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

*Holy Spirit in us (Ezek 36:27)*

27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

*God working in us (Phil 2:13)*

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

*Attitudes of our minds made new (Eph 4:23)*

23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

*Renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2)*

2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*We have the mind of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 2:16)*

16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

**In the knowing of God (34)**

*Knowing God is having eternal life (John 17:3)*

3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

*Knowing God through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 4:6)*

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

*Knowing God is the beginning of understanding (Prov 9:10)*

10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

*Knowing God through spiritual revelation (Eph 1:17)*

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
Knowing God through Church training (Eph 4:13)

13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Knowing God through spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9)

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

In the forgiveness and forgetting (34)

Forgiveness and forgetting because our sins have been blotted out (Isa 43:25)

25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Forgiveness and forgetting because of God's redemption (Isa 44:22)

22 I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

Forgiveness and forgetting because belief in Jesus (Acts 10:43)

43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Forgiveness and forgetting because God has removed our sins (Ps 103:12)

12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Forgiveness and forgetting because of repentance (Acts 3:19)

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Hope in the New Covenant's Eternal Commitment (Jer 31:35-37)

35 Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The Lord of hosts is His name):

36 "If those ordinances depart From before Me, says the Lord, Then the seed of Israel shall also cease From being a nation before Me forever."

37 Thus says the Lord: "If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the Lord.

Commitment that uses the power of God (35)

Use of God's power because it is able to resurrect (1 Cor 6:14)

14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

Use of God's power because it allows us to stand against Satan's schemes (Eph 6:10-13)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
Use of God's power because it is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor 12:9)

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Use of God's power because it is reserved for those who believe (Eph 1:17-21)

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Use of God's power because He works in us (Eph 3:20)

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Use of God's power because it is what His kingdom is all about (1 Cor 4:20)

20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Commitment that will never be forsaken (36)

Never forsaken because God promises to be with us to the very end (Matt 28:20)

20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Never forsaken because The Holy Spirit will be with believers forever (John 14:16)

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

Never forsaken because God will never forsake His people (Deut 31:6)

6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Never forsaken because the righteous are not forsaken (Ps 37:25)

25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

Never forsaken because God will never forsakes His faithful ones (Ps 37:28)

28 For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

Commitment that can never be broken (37)

Never broken because God’s love never fails (Romans 8:35)

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

Never broken because God’s word never fails (Matt 24:35)

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.
Never broken because God does not violate His covenants (Ps 89:33-36)

33 but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. 34 I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. 35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness — and I will not lie to David — 36 that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun;

Never broken because out of God's great love He blesses regardless of our rebellion (Ps 106:43-45)

43 Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. 44 But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented.

Never broken because God always redeems His people of the covenant (Ps 111:9)

9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever — holy and awesome is his name.

Never broken because God upholds His people and makes them a light to others (Isa 42:6)

6 "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts From Thomas L. Constable

The New Covenant 31:31-34

Many commentators believe that Jeremiah's revelation of the New Covenant was his greatest theological contribution. They view it as the high point of the book, the climax of the prophet's teaching. "The prophecy of Jeremiah marks a watershed in Hebrew religious and cultic life. From this point onwards there is a significant divergence between what has obtained in the past and what will characterize the future religious observances of Israel."

31:31

In the future, the Lord will make a new covenant with all the Israelites, specifically the Israelites who had inhabited the Northern Kingdom and those who had inhabited the Southern Kingdom (cf. 32:40; Isa. 24:5; 42:6; 49:8; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Hos. 2:18-20; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8—9:28; 12:24). This is the only place in the Old Testament where the term "new covenant" appears, though there are many references to this covenant elsewhere. "The short passage which develops from the simple announcement in this verse is one of the most important in deepest insights in the whole OT."

31:32

This New Covenant would be different from the Mosaic Covenant, which the Israelites consistently and inevitably broke in spite of Yahweh's faithful commitment to them. They had worshipped Baal (Heb. ba'al) even though Yahweh had been a faithful husband (Heb. ba'al) to them.

31:33

Instead of God's law being external to them, the Lord would write it on their heart (i.e., mind and will; cf. 17:1). He will do something for them that they cannot do for themselves (cf. Deut. 30:5-6). "Writing on the heart" suggests the removal of written documents and merely human mediators. Having the Lord's Word in the heart prevents sin and fosters obedience (cf. Deut. 11:18; 119:11). David equated having the law written on his heart with desiring to do God's will (Ps. 40:8) "It will become part of the nature of God's people; it will be instinctive. The core of the new covenant is God's gift of a new heart (cf. Ezek 36:25-27). Herein lies the sufficient motivation for obeying God's law." ".. there is no further need of any external means like mutual teaching about God . . ." God would also enter into an intimate relationship with His people as His covenant partners (cf. 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 50:22; 31:1; 32:38; Deut. 31; Ezek. 11:20; 36:28). The old Mosaic Covenant being broken, a new relationship would begin. "If the sheer grace of God's
election of Israel as covenant partner was apparent in the first covenant making, how much more so in this promise following their history of unfaithfulness and rebellion (v 32)." Notice that Jeremiah revealed nothing about human responsibility under the New Covenant. That would come later with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

31:34
All the Israelites, from the least to the greatest, would also know the Lord intimately, without having to be exhorted to do so. "The verb know here probably carries its most profound connotation, the intimate personal knowledge which arises between two persons who are committed wholly to one another in a relationship that touches mind, emotion, and will. In such a relationship the past is forgiven and forgotten." "When the new covenant is fully realized in the nation of Israel, it is true that all will know the Lord in the sense of glad and willing recognition of His right to rule over them, but this will not make unnecessary the ministry of instruction in the ways and will of the Lord." They would know Him in this intimate way because He would forgive their sins and not bring them to memory or judgment any more. True forgiveness, in contrast to the covering of sin that the Old Covenant sacrifices provided, would make intimacy with God possible (cf. Isa. 54:10; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26). "The old covenant spoke of a great physical deliverance from Egypt through the blood of lambs and the power of God; the new covenant proclaims a great spiritual deliverance from sin and death through the efficacious blood of the Lamb of God and the power of God. The Passover Feast memorialized the first; the Lord's Supper memorializes the second." "In the old covenant, the law with its requirements is the impelling force; in the new covenant, the grace shown in the forgiveness of sins is the aiding power by which man attains that common life with God which the law sets before him as the great problem of life. It is in this that the qualitative difference between the old and the new covenants consists. The object which both set before men for attainment is the same, but the means of attaining it are different in each. In the old covenant are found commandment and requirement; in the new, grace and giving." "Based on similar content and contexts, the following expressions may be equated with the New covenant: the 'everlasting covenant' in seven passages ( Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:5) and later in Ezek. 16:60; 37:26); a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit' in three or four texts (Jer. 32:39 [LXX]; and later in Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26); and 'a covenant' or 'my covenant,' which is placed in the context of 'in that day' in three passages (Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 59:21; Hos. 2:18-20). That makes a total of sixteen or seventeen major passages on the 'New covenant.' "Still, Jeremiah 31:31-34 was the locus classicus on the subject, as may be seen from several lines of evidence. It was this passage that stimulated Origen to name the last twenty-seven books of the Bible 'the New Testament.' But it was also the largest piece of text to be quoted in extenso in the NT, vis., Hebrews 8:8-12 and partially repeated a few chapters later in Hebrews 10:16-17. Furthermore, it was the subject of nine other NT texts: four dealing with the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25); two Pauline references to 'ministers of the new covenant and the future forgiveness of Israel's sins (2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 11:27); and three additional references in Hebrews (9:15; 10:16; 12:24; cf. the two large teaching passages mentioned above)." There are three basic views concerning the identity of the people with whom God would make this New Covenant and when He would make it. One view is that God will make it with Israel alone when He resumes dealing with that nation as formerly, namely, in the Millennium (cf. Rom. 11). A second view is that God made it with the church alone, which advocates of this view (i.e., covenant theologians) say replaces Israel in God's plans, and He made it at the Cross. A third view is that God made it with Israel at the Cross, and the church, which does not replace Israel, somehow enters into its blessings. I hold the third of these views. It seems that God made the New Covenant with Israel when Jesus Christ died on the cross (Luke 22:20). The church now operates under this covenant (1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:1-14; Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16-17). However, Israel will enter into the blessings of this covenant, which God promised her, at the time of Israel's restoration, namely, at the second coming of Christ. This arrangement resembles one that is possible to set up in a Charitable Lead Unit Trust under the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. Suppose there was a vastly wealthy and generous philanthropist of the magnitude of a Bill Gates. As he prepared his will he bequeathed millions of dollars to various charitable causes that would benefit millions of people all over the world when he died. He also wrote into his will that when his only son reached the age of 21, he would inherit billions of dollars. When this man died, his son was only five years old, so for 16 years he did not enter into his father's inheritance. However, as soon as the philanthropist died, the millions of dollars he had bequeathed to charity went to work immediately—to help many people. This illustration shows how the church enters into the blessings of the New Covenant. When Christ established the Lord's Supper, it was as though He notarized His will; it became official then. The will is the New Covenant. When He died, His "estate" became available to those He chose to profit from it, namely: both Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ. Soon many people around the world, Jews and Gentiles in the church, began to benefit from the blessings of His death. However, God's chosen people, His son Israel, will not enter into his unique inheritance until the appointed time, namely: the Millennium. Blessings for the church began almost immediately after Christ's death. Blessings for Israel will not begin until God's appointed time arrives: Christ's second coming. "Perhaps an[other] illustration will help us better understand this dual fulfillment of the new-covenant prophecy. Standing with Jeremiah
and Ezekiel at their vantage point in history, we are in a dark tunnel. As we look with them toward the light at the end of the tunnel, we see God making a new covenant with ethnic Israel. We then move through the tunnel and emerge into the light. There ahead of us we see the same scene we saw from afar—God implementing his covenant with ethnic Israel. But now that we have stepped out of the tunnel into the light, our peripheral vision is expanded. To the side of us, incapable of being seen from back in the tunnel, is another scene—God implementing this same covenant with the church of the present era, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The prophets were not wrong—they simply had 'tunnel vision' because their focus was on ethnic Israel." Which blessings of the New Covenant does the church enjoy now and which are for Israel in the future? There are four promises in verses 33 and 34. The promise of having God's law written on the heart has been fulfilled to a limited extent. Christians do have an innate desire to please God because of the indwelling Holy Spirit's ministry, but we do not have the innate understanding of God's will that God promised here since that was a promise for the Israelites. All people do not know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, now. Second, we have a unique covenant relationship with God as Christians, but we are not the same group that will have a unique covenant relationship with God in the future, namely, the Israelites. Third, all Christians know the Lord to some degree of intimacy now, but we do not all have the depth of relationship with God that He promised the Israelites here. We still need teaching and teachers, but apparently this will not be the case for Israel in the future. Fourth, Christians enjoy complete forgiveness of sins individually, as the Israelites will in the future, but the Israelites will also enjoy complete forgiveness of their corporate sins as the nation of Israel as well. So I would say Christians enjoy all these blessings to some extent, but not to the extent Israel will enjoy them in the future. As the return from exile was a partial fulfillment of the promises of restoration, so the church's enjoyment of these blessings is only a partial fulfillment of what God promised Israel. The New Covenant is a branch or outgrowth of the Abrahamic Covenant. In the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised Abraham a piece of real estate for his descendants, an incalculable number of descendants, and blessing for his descendants and for all people through his descendants (Gen. 12:1-7; et al.). Deuteronomy 29—30, sometimes called the Palestinian Covenant, gave more information about the land God had promised Abraham. The Davidic Covenant gave more information about God's promises regarding descendants (2 Sam. 7). The New Covenant revealed the particulars of the promised blessing (Jer. 31). Each of these later covenants relates to the Abrahamic Covenant organically; each is an outgrowth of it in the progress of revelation. In contrast, the Mosaic (Old) Covenant does not relate organically but "was added" (Gal. 3:19) to explain how the Israelites could maximize the benefits God had promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. Consequently, when God terminated the Old Covenant, it did not eliminate anything He had promised in the Abrahamic, "Palestinian," Davidic, or New Covenants.

**Permanent restoration 31:35-37**

**31:35**
The Lord reminded His people that He was the one who controlled the course of nature, not Baal. It operated regularly and within His set limits, as He promised Noah it would (cf. Gen. 8:22; 9:8-17). The sun and moon do not vary from their positions, but the sea appears to operate chaotically, yet the Lord controls them all.

**31:36**
Future Israel would no more cease from being a special nation in God's sight than the fixed order of nature would cease. This is strong testimony that the church has not replaced Israel in God's plans.

**31:37**
If people could thoroughly explore the heavens above or the earth beneath, then the Lord would cast off future Israel because of her sins. "Looking beyond national Israel for the fulfillment of this prophecy in the church, as a spiritual Israel, fails to grapple with the certainty of the statements in Jeremiah 31:36-37."

*Adapted from URL: http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ jeremiah.pdf*

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Jeremiah’s audience would have been astounded at what we know about God’s creation. Think of Mount Everest towering 29,000 feet above sea level, its height more than matched by the depth of the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean. How surprised they would have been to learn that the universe is populated by as many as 70 sextillion stars—that’s 7 followed by 22 zeros! In essence, God said through Jeremiah, “If the time ever comes when you can accurately measure the scope of the creation, that will be the day when I will no longer keep my promises to you.” We have
discovered various facts about the world and the universe, but even the “fact” of 70 sextillion stars is just a rough order of magnitude estimate. It will undoubtedly change as scientific instruments and methods improve. It’s safe to say that we will never in this life know all the facts about creation. God’s promises are just as certain.

We should remember that speaking of an Old Testament and a New Testament does not imply a “bad” covenant and a “good” covenant. The New Testament depends on the foundation of the Old Testament to make its claims. It is the sacrificial system of the old covenant that allows us to understand the atoning, sacrificial death of Jesus—a central doctrine of the Christian faith. The Scripture of the earliest church was the Old Testament, and the New Testament authors quote from it hundreds of times. We are people of the new covenant, but the old covenant is still of inestimable value (see Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11).

When we put Jeremiah 31:31-37 alongside Romans 4:16 and 9:6-8, we see the old covenant being replaced by a new covenant that is not based on law and biological descent, but on faith. This expands the covenant people to include the possibility of every person regardless of tribe or nation. When we read the new covenant promises in light of the eternity of God, the Lord Almighty, we have the complete picture of an eternal people of God. They accept his offer to write his laws on their hearts; they accept his promise of forgiveness of sins through Jesus. There will never again be a need to send God’s people into exile to punish them and cure them of sinful idolatry. The new covenant is the final covenant, and this is the covenant Christians embrace today.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. God's mercy is evident in His dealings with Israel; He is not through with them (Jer. 31:31)
2. The new covenant is not dependent on Israel (or us) keeping the Mosaic Law (vs. 32)
3. Knowing God is not a matter of memorizing and observing outward laws and rituals (vs. 33)
4. Only God's forgiveness effectively deals with the problem of sin (vs. 34)
5. The fulfillment of God's promises is secured by His power and faithfulness (vss. 35-36)
6. Human sin does not invalidate God's faithfulness to Israel or to us (vs. 37)