

Living in a New Relationship with God

Jeremiah 31

“All religions are the same”. In these verses we’re encouraged to “spot the difference” between the Mosaic covenant of Law and the anticipated New Covenant we enjoy through Jesus.

What was relationship with God like in the Old Covenant?

- The mediator was Moses - he was a reluctant leader who at times lost patience with the people he led.
- Characterised by distance - fire, smoke, all the people stayed at a distance
- Blessing from God was conditional upon obedience Leviticus 28: “Obey and be blessed, Disobey and you will be punished”

By contrast, in the New Covenant:

- The mediator is Jesus. He delighted to do God’s will. He’s sympathetic with our weaknesses.
- Not Distance, but Presence. At Pentecost they all received the fire of God’s presence.
- Blessing from God is unconditional - based on faith in Jesus. Basis is forgiveness not performance.

But positively, the New Covenant has many other benefits: “I will be their God and they will be my people” --> Jeremiah is speaking of a time with we will have new relationship with God.

1. Blessed beyond our imagining: Ephesians 1:3 says in Christ we are blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing in Christ. Not as a reward but by grace.
2. A new responsive heart (flesh not stone) that wants to obey God Ezekiel 36
3. A promise of power when we need it. Acts 2 quotes Joel on the Spirit empowering us “Dreaming dreams, prophesying, young and old, male and female, salvation coming”

Questions

1. A willing mediator - why does it help to know that Jesus is the mediator of the new way of relating to God?
2. Do you see God as distant or near? What does Acts 2 teach us about this?
3. Grace or Works? Do you think your relationship with God is based on your performance? Why is that erroneous thinking?
4. If the New Covenant is not based on our behaviour- what makes us want to obey God?
5. Opposites: you can see "Law and Grace" as opposites. Why is also vital to see the new covenant having the Spirit at the centre?