

Jeremiah 31:31-34

God's new covenant

God promises a new covenant. It will not be like previous covenants, nor like the written Law that the people had broken. The new covenant will be written on people's hearts and is summarised: 'I will be their God and they shall be my people.' Everyone will know God – and God's forgiveness.



ACT

Who are the 'people of God' that you know? Is there a way that your family can connect with them this week by sending a text, card, or invitation to meet with you?

REFLECT

On a piece of paper, draw a symbol of a promise or commitment you have made. You could draw a rainbow, a wedding ring, or other appropriate symbol. Say a prayer of thanks for the promises that God has made to you and all people.



Find out about the life of St Patrick and share some of the stories about this famous patron saint of Ireland. Discuss together how Patrick helped people to know more about God.

Bible notes



Following their time in the wilderness, the people of God settle into the 'promised land'. Their success at living as God's people is mixed, with periods of faithfulness to God and periods when they go astray. Through the prophets God calls them to return to living their covenant relationship with God.

Close to 500 years after being set free from slavery, the land splits into two kingdoms, a divided people. A couple of hundred years later, having persistently ignored the warnings to turn back to God, the northern kingdom is captured by Assyria, the ruling superpower of the time, and is no more. Little over 100 years on, the much smaller southern kingdom is also ignoring warnings to turn back to God from, among others, Jeremiah. Jeremiah pronounces God's judgement on the remaining people of God, which will lead to their capture and exile at the hands of Babylon, the current ruling superpower. However, Jeremiah's message is tinged with hope and promise. After the judgement and exile will come restoration. When God's people, in exile, turn back to God, God will make a new covenant with them. This covenant, described in today's reading, will be characterised by a close relationship with God. It will not rely on a knowledge of God mediated to the people by a few or passed on through the stories of God's past interactions with them. It will be a new covenant, a covenant for this people, the current and future people of God. At its heart is the promise that 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (v.33). Some 500 years later, despite a return to God and from exile, the promise has not been fully realised and some of the people of God look for this being fulfilled in Jesus.

First impressions

- What ideas and beliefs are at the core of your being?
- What does God's promise 'I will be their God and they shall be my people', mean to you?
- How might having God's law written on your heart be freeing?



A prayer for others

Dear Jesus, thank you that your promise of hope is for all people. Help us to share this good news with our friends and family, and everyone we meet. Amen.

WATCH

Watch 'That's How You Know' from Disney's Enchanted where Giselle is explaining, in song form, how someone might know that they are loved. Jeremiah tells us we will all know God. What do you think it means to 'know God'? How do you know that you are loved by God?