

Hebrews 10:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Analysis

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:33, describing the fundamental nature of the new covenant. The contrast with the old covenant is stark: the Law given at Sinai was external, written on stone tablets. The new covenant Law is internal, written on hearts by God Himself. This is not merely behavior modification but heart transformation—regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

"I will put my laws into their hearts" (didous nomous mou ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν) indicates divine initiative and action. God gives, God writes—this is monergistic grace, not synergistic cooperation. The heart in Hebrew thought represents the core of one's being—will, affections, understanding. God transforms the inner person, creating desire for righteousness where before there was only rebellion.

"And in their minds will I write them" (kai epi tēn dianoian autōn epigraphō autous, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς) emphasizes that this transformation includes the mind—our thinking, understanding, and comprehension. Regeneration renews the mind (Romans 12:2), enabling believers to understand spiritual truth and delight in God's Law. What was external commandment becomes internal desire; what was burden becomes delight (Psalm 119:97).

This heart-writing is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification (2 Corinthians 3:3). It fulfills Ezekiel 36:26-27 where God promises to remove the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh, putting His Spirit within His people to cause them to walk in His statutes. This is effectual grace—God's work that accomplishes what it intends, creating new hearts that love His Law.

Historical Context

Jeremiah prophesied during Israel's darkest hour before the Babylonian exile. The old covenant, marked by external law and repeated failures, was demonstrating humanity's utter inability to keep God's commandments through mere external religion. Jeremiah foretold a coming covenant fundamentally different in nature—not just different terms, but different mechanism. Rather than external law-keeping, God would transform hearts internally.

First-century Jewish Christians needed to understand that Jesus inaugurated this prophesied new covenant through His death and resurrection. The Last Supper words "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20) declared the arrival of Jeremiah's prophecy. Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out and the apostles spoke God's word with power, demonstrated the Spirit's work of writing on hearts.

The Reformation recovered this understanding against medieval works-righteousness. The Reformers emphasized that salvation involves heart transformation, not merely external conformity or sacramental participation. Calvin wrote extensively on the Spirit's work in regeneration and sanctification, using this passage to show that true Christianity is internal reality, not external religion. The Puritan movement further developed the theology of heart religion versus mere formalism.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between external conformity to God's law and having His law written on your heart, and which characterizes your relationship with God?
2. How does understanding that God writes His law on hearts through regeneration affect your view of sanctification and spiritual growth?
3. In what practical ways can you discern whether you're living from a transformed heart or merely trying to conform externally to Christian standards?

Interlinear Text

Αὕτη	ἡ	διαθήκη	ἣν	διαθήσομαι	πρὸς	αὐτούς	μετὰ
This	G3588	is the covenant	that	I will make	with	their	after
G3778		G1242	G3739	G1303	G4314	G846	G3326
τὰς	ἡμέρας	ἐκείνας	λέγει	κύριος·	διδούς	νόμους	μου
G3588	days	those	saith	the Lord	I will put	laws	my
	G2250	G1565	G3004	G2962	G1325	G3551	G3450
ἐπὶ	καρδίας	αὐτούς	καὶ	ἐπὶ	τῶν	διανοιῶν	αὐτούς
in	hearts	their	and	in	G3588	minds	their
G1909	G2588	G846	G2532	G1909		G1271	G846
ἐπιγράψω	αὐτούς						
will I write	their						
G1924	G846						

Additional Cross-References

Romans 11:27 (Covenant): For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.