

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" (διδοὺς νόμους μου 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" (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 ἡν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτούς μετὰ^{μετά}
This G3588 is the covenant that I will make with their after
G3778 G1242 G3739 G1303 G4314 G846 G3326

τὰς ἡμέρας ἔκείνας λέγει κύριος· διδοὺς νόμους μου^{μου}
days those saith the Lord I will put laws my
G3588 G2250 G1565 G3004 G2962 G1325 G3551 G3450

ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτούς καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διανοιῶν αὐτούς^{αὐτούς}
in hearts their and in minds their
G1909 G2588 G846 G2532 G1909 G3588 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.