

Jeremiah 31:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Analysis

This verse describes the relational intimacy and comprehensive forgiveness of the New Covenant. 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother' uses lamad (למד, teach), referring to basic instruction about knowing God. The promise isn't that teaching ceases entirely but that universal, direct knowledge of God will characterize New Covenant believers. 'Saying, Know the LORD' uses yada (יָדָע), intimate, experiential knowledge—not mere intellectual awareness but personal relationship. Under the old covenant, knowledge of God was mediated through priests, prophets, and teachers. Most Israelites knew God secondhand. The New Covenant democratizes this knowledge. 'For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them' uses kol (כָּל, all) with qaton (קָטָן, least/small) and gadol (גָּדוֹל, great/large)—comprehensive scope regardless of age, status, or education. Every believer will have direct access to God and experiential knowledge of Him. 'Saith the LORD' adds divine authority. The climactic promise follows: 'For I will forgive their iniquity' uses salach (סָלַח), meaning pardon, forgive—a verb used exclusively of divine forgiveness in the Old Testament. 'And I will remember their sin no more' employs zakar (זָכַר, remember) with negation—God chooses to not hold sins against His people. This doesn't mean divine omniscience fails but that sins are removed from the covenant relationship.

They're forgiven, covered, and no longer affect standing before God. The verse establishes that the New Covenant provides:

1. universal knowledge of God among all believers
2. direct access without mediating priesthood
3. complete forgiveness of sins,
4. permanent removal of sin's guilt.

This finds fulfillment in Christ's high priesthood (Hebrews 7-10), the Spirit's indwelling every believer (Romans 8:9), and justification by faith (Romans 3:21-26). John writes: 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things' (1 John 2:20).

Historical Context

Under the Mosaic covenant, access to God was restricted and mediated. The high priest alone entered the Holy of Holies once annually (Leviticus 16). Common Israelites approached God through priests who offered sacrifices. Religious education required rabbis and scribes. Most people knew God's Law through oral teaching, as few possessed written copies. Knowledge of God was hierarchical and indirect. The Day of Atonement provided annual covering for sins (Leviticus 16), but sins were 'remembered' year after year—the sacrifices repeated endlessly because they couldn't perfect the conscience (Hebrews 10:1-4). The old covenant featured ongoing consciousness of sin and distance from God. Jeremiah's prophecy promised revolution: every believer would know God personally and directly. Sins would be forgiven completely and permanently, not merely covered temporarily. This awaited Christ's once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10-14) and the Spirit's universal outpouring. Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy: 'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh' (Joel 2:28). The early church experienced this democratization—unlearned fishermen like Peter preached with authority, the Spirit revealed truth to all believers (1 Corinthians 2:12), and access to God's presence became universal (Ephesians 2:18). The Reformation recovered this truth when reformers insisted Scripture belonged in the hands of common people, not just clergy. Every believer is a priest (1 Peter 2:9) with direct access to God through Christ. The promise that God 'remembers sins no more' secures eternal justification—once forgiven through Christ, believers stand righteous before God permanently.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the New Covenant promise of universal knowledge of God change the role of teachers and spiritual leaders in the church?
2. What does it mean practically that God 'remembers your sins no more' under the New Covenant?
3. In what ways should every believer's direct access to God through Christ shape personal spiritual life and church structure?
4. How does the complete forgiveness promised in the New Covenant differ from the repeated sacrifices required under the old covenant?
5. What assurance does this verse provide for believers struggling with guilt over past sins that have been confessed and forgiven?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ	עַד וְאֵשׁ	אֶת רֵעֵהוּ
H3808	H5750	H853
And they shall teach	and every man	his neighbour
H3925	H376	H7453
וְאֵשׁ אֶת אָחִיו לֵאמֹר יָדַע וְאֶת יְהוָה הַכִּי		
H853	H251	H559
and every man	his brother	saying
H376	H251	H559
Know	the LORD	
H3045	H3068	H3588
כֻּלָּם יָדַע וְאוֹתֵי י לְמִקְטָנִי וְעַד גְּדֻלָּם		
H3605	H853	H5704
Know	me from the least	of them unto the greatest
H3045	H6996	H1419
נֹאמִם יְהוָה הַכִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנֵיָם וּלְחַטָּאתָם		
H5002	H3588	H5545
of them saith	for I will forgive	their iniquity
H5002	H5545	H5771
the LORD	their sin	
H3068	H2403	
לֹא אֶזְכֹּר עוֹד:		
H3808	H5750	
and I will remember		
H2142		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:25 (Sin): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Hebrews 8:12 (Sin): For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Isaiah 54:13 (References Lord): And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Jeremiah 33:8 (Sin): And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

1 John 2:27 (Parallel theme): But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing

teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Jeremiah 50:20 (Sin): In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

John 17:3 (Parallel theme): And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jeremiah 24:7 (References Lord): And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

John 6:45 (Parallel theme): It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Micah 7:18 (Sin): Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.