

## Jeremiah 31:10-34

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This chapter is well known among believers (or should be!). Here, God promises to establish a new covenant in coming days. However, it is good for us to take some time to reflect on the problem that this promise addresses—the reason we need a promise to start with. There are at least four aspects of our problem—four ways that sin manifests itself in our lives.

### **Sin Affects our Relationship to the World**

In this chapter we see people are scattered (v. 10), overtaken (v. 11), in a foreign land (v.16), under strong discipline (v. 18), and plucked up, broken down, overthrown, destroyed, and harmed (v. 28). A man I used to know would frequently say, “Sin will take you farther than you expected to go, keep you longer than you expected to stay, and cost you more than you expected to pay.” Sin is deceptive. Sin has real effects and often results in unintended divisions and outcomes on those around us and our lives in the world.

### **Sin Affects our Relationship to Ourselves**

In this chapter, we see people are languishing (v. 12), mourning (v. 13), in sorrow (v. 13), not satisfied (v. 14), lamenting and bitterly weeping (v. 15), refusing to be comforted (v. 15), grieving (v. 18), ashamed and disgraced (v. 19) and weary with languishing souls (v. 25). In Psalm 32, David describes a time in his life when he tried to hide his sin from God. He says that it felt like his very bones were wasting away, he experienced internal groaning all day long, and that he felt the heaviness of God’s hand upon him. Our sin problem also results in internal conflicts and despair in our own hearts and minds.

### **Sin Affects our Relationship to God**

In this chapter, we see people are wavering and faithless (v. 22) and have broken their covenant with God (v. 32). It reminds me of Psalm 32. There David faced not only his own judgment against himself, but his sin also caused a rift with God. David hid from God and tried to cover his sins himself. When we are caught in a cycle of sin, often the last thing we want to do is confess our sins to God and have that relationship healed.

### **Sin is Even Worse Than That**

In this chapter, we see God’s answer to sin is to put his law within us (v. 33), to write the law on our hearts (v. 33), and to forgive and remember our sin no more (v. 34). This is great news precisely because it addresses the actual problem. Sin is not something that attacks us from outside. Sin is an internal problem. Sin is (most significantly) not something that happens to us, but something that is present in us. This means that we cannot fix this problem ourselves - no matter how hard we try or what methods we might try to use.

We are desperate because we cannot fix the most fundamental problem that we face. We must rely on someone outside of us to do it for us. Of course, the good news is that this is exactly the solution God has provided. However, in this season of Advent, it is good for us to spend some time dwelling on the problem and our desperate situation (the bad news) before too quickly jumping to the solution (the good news of the gospel). Doing so will help us to see the birth of Jesus as the amazing, unimaginable, glorious event that it really is!