

## **DEEP END - HIGHLIGHTS (text not audio)**

### **2 Samuel 7,11 and 12 - Broken Covenants & Earthen Vessels**

If I remember correctly, it was Peter Leithart who pointed out that we find throughout the Old Testament that immediately that God makes a covenant the recipient of the covenant fails to keep it. So God makes a covenant with Adam (see Hosea 6:7 NASB) and immediately after Adam fails. God makes a covenant with Noah and then immediately after Noah fails (he becomes drunk with wine). God makes a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15) and immediately Abraham fails in seeking to have a son through Hagar.

God makes a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai and immediately Israel fails in the incident of the golden calf. God makes a covenant with David and immediately David commits adultery with Bathsheba.

Then even in the Gospels when Jesus made a new covenant with his disciples, immediately, the very same night, they forsake him and deny him.

We might therefore think that failure is somewhat inevitable, but after Pentecost that is no longer true. Jeremiah prophesied that the day was coming of which the Lord said "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" with the implication that by doing so we would be empowered to keep it (Jeremiah 31:33). Then Ezekiel goes further and explicitly tells us how this will be possible: "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees..." (Ezek. 36:27).

Many scholars have pointed out that Luke's doctrine of the Spirit in Acts is one of power for proclamation (Acts 1:8 etc.) while the doctrine of the Spirit in Paul's epistles is one of liberation from the bondage of sin. (This is not to imply Paul did not teach on the empowerment of the Spirit but simply that the fledgling churches he was writing to had experienced empowerment but were still wrestling with sin and needed liberation. So repeatedly he reiterates the truth that the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" has now set us free "from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).

So while being fully aware that we are no stronger than Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David and the disciples (before Pentecost), we need to be equally aware that because of the death, burial, resurrection, ascension and the pouring out of the Spirit, everything has now changed. God has indeed put his law in our minds and written it on our hearts. His Spirit is now in us and liberates us to follow his decrees. Astonishing!

Covenants were made and promptly broken, but now, while we may fall, there is no inevitability about it. And even "if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim 2:13). So the miracle of grace is that even if we do not keep our part of the covenant, if there is repentance, God can still redeem what has been lost and bring his purposes to fulfillment through our lives. We are still earthen vessels, but now within them there is a hidden treasure. And for this truth the early church both lived and died.