

Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 15

*From the prophets I will prove that the Old and New Covenants have one Lawgiver. And so, what does Jeremiah say? “I will give you a new covenant.” Do you see Jeremiah’s prophetic reference to a new covenant that shines forth brilliantly for so many years before Christ’s coming? “I will give you a new covenant.” But how does it seem that he gave even the Old? When he said, “I will give you a new covenant,” he added, “not like the covenant that I gave to your ancestors.”*

St. Augustine, *Homilies on Repentance and Alms giving*, 6.4.15

Our lesson is a continuation of the poetic composition called “Jeremiah’s Book of Consolation” that began in Jeremiah Chapter 30 (see the previous lesson). The Book of Consolation contains a message of comfort to the exiles in Babylon by looking forward to their return to the land and the good things God promises for His people (Jer 29:11-14).

Timeline:

- Reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon 605-562 BC
- Reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah 597-587 BC
- Second deportation of exiles to Babylon 597 BC
- Fall of Jerusalem and third deportation in 587 BC

The four ways the divine “I” is used in God’s promises to redeem the faithful remnant of His exiled covenant people in a “new exodus” out of Babylon in Jeremiah 31:8-9 recalls His four promises to the children of Israel in exile in Egypt in Exodus 6:6-7:

Promises in Jeremiah 31:8-9	Promises in Exodus 6:6-7
1. <i>I shall bring them</i>	1. <i>I shall free you</i>
2. <i>I shall lead them</i>	2. <i>I shall rescue you</i>
3. <i>I shall guide them</i>	3. <i>I shall redeem you</i>
4. <i>I am a father to Israel</i>	4. <i>I shall be your God</i>

*22 How long will you hesitate, rebellious daughter? For Yahweh is creating something new on earth: the Woman sets out to find her Husband again [literal translation: a woman shall encompass a man].*

St. Jerome saw this verse as a Messianic prophecy of the Virgin Mary and the birth of the Son of God. The “something new” is not the birth of a man encompassed or enclosed in the womb of a woman. The “something new,” in the context of the “new covenant” in Jeremiah 31:31, is the advent of a new creation in which the promised Redeemer-Messiah comes forth from a woman—a reversal of the old creation event in which Eve came forth from the body of Adam (Gen 2:21-22). Jerome wrote, “The Lord has created a new thing on earth; without seed of man, without carnal union and conception, ‘a woman will encompass a man’ within her womb—One who, though He will later appear in wisdom and age through the stages of infancy and childhood, yet, while confined for the usual number of months in His mother’s womb, will already be perfect man” (Jerome, *Commentarii in Ieremiam*, 4.31).

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*31 “Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, 32 but not like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt ... 34b No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest, Yahweh declares, since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind.”*

The new and eternal covenant promising the forgiveness of sins in Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:40; 50:5 is fulfilled in Luke 22:20 and Matthew 26:28; also see 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 8:8-13; 10:16-17.

There are seven Old Testament Covenants made with the ancestors: (1) Adam, (2) Noah, (3) Abraham, (4) Sinai corporate covenant with Israel, (5) Aaronic covenant, (6) Phinehas perpetual priesthood covenant, (7) Davidic covenant. See the chart at: <http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/charts/Yahweh's%208%20Covenants.htm>.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES IN JEREMIAH		
Prophecy	Jeremiah reference	New Testament Fulfillment
The Church in the Messianic Age	Jer 3:14-17	Mt 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-12
The death of Christ, the lamb of sacrifice, and the Eucharist	Jer 11:19	Jn 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pt 1:19; Rev 5:6, 12-13
Davidic “Branch” and “Yahweh-is-our-Saving-Justice”/ “Lord of Righteousness”	Jer 23:5, 6	Jn 2:19-21; Rom 1:3-4; Eph 2:20-21; 1 Pt 2:5
Will be born a king and descendant of David	Jer 30:9	Lk 1:32-33; Jn 18:37; Rev 1:5
The massacre of infants	Jer 31:15	Mt 2:17-18
The Incarnation: “something new on earth”	Jer 31:22b	Mt 1:20; Lk 1:35
A New Covenant	Jer 31:31-33	Mt 26:27-29; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:15-20; 1Cor 11:25; Heb 8:8-12; 10:15-17; 12:24; 13:20
The Gospel of salvation and the forgiveness of sins	Jer 31:34	Mt 26:26-28; Heb 10:16-18; 1 Jn 2:27
The coming of the Davidic Messiah	Jer 33:15-16	Mt 1:1-17; 16:18; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:31-33; Jn 1:32-33, 41
Everlasting Covenant	Jer 32:40; 50:5	Heb 13:20
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