

## LECTURE 14: JEREMIAH

### “The God who enforces covenant”

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#### I. Orienting Data

- A. **Prophet & Audience:** Jeremiah, of priestly lineage from the village of Anathoth, about 3 miles south of Jerusalem; to Judah in the wake of the northern kingdom’s destruction
- B. **Date of Prophetic activity:** 627–580 B.C.
- C. **Content:** oracles of judgment against Judah and the nations, along with oracles of future hope, interwoven with narratives of Jeremiah’s role in the concluding days of Judah
- D. **Emphases:**
  - 1. Judah’s unfaithfulness to Yahweh will end in its destruction
  - 2. In keeping with the covenantal promises of Deuteronomy, God has a bright future for his people—a time of restoration and a New Covenant
  - 3. Yahweh’s own love for his people revealed through the heart of Jeremiah
- E. **Historical Flow of Jeremiah’s Life:**
  - 1. Although Jeremiah received his call during the 13<sup>th</sup> year (or 31 yrs) of Josiah, only one of his oracles is dated to that period (3:6–10). Most come from the tumultuous years in Jerusalem after Josiah’s death, during the reigns of two sons, Jehoiakim (609–598) and Zedekiah (597–586)
  - 2. Josiah had reigned during a lull on the international scene, as Assyria was in decline and both Egypt and Babylon were vying for supremacy in the “Land Between.”
  - 3. Josiah had died in battle against the Egyptian pharaoh Neco (609), but Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in turn defeated Neco (605), and in the same year carried away some of Jerusalem’s leading officials (including Daniel and his friends). The rest of Judah’s final years are related to the political events that followed.
  - 4. Josiah’s sons (and one grandson, Jehoiachin) spent their few ruling years always under Babylonian control but repeatedly turned to Egypt for help to throw off the Babylonian yoke and to gain independence.
  - 5. The political policies eventually resulted in a siege by Nebuchadnezzar in 598/597 that brought Jehoiachin’s brief 3 month reign to an end, as he and most of Jerusalem’s leading people (including Ezekiel) were sent into exile (2 Kgs. 24:8–17; Jer. 29:2; Ezek. 1:1–3)
  - 6. The final king of Judah, Zedekiah, returned to the hopeless policies, which led to a second siege and the total destruction of Jerusalem (586)
  - 7. A still further rebellion by a remnant of those who remained in Judah finally resulted in a flight to Egypt in which both Jeremiah and Baruch were taken along.

#### II. Jeremiah in the MT & LXX:

- A. **The Issue:** Certain OT books like Samuel and Jeremiah witness major differences between the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) and the other texts and versions. At least

with Jeremiah the differences appear to point not to textual corruption but to there being two different editions of the book.

**B. The Composition & Transmission of the Biblical Books:**

1. Stage 1: A book's literary growth up to a form that was final in respect to its content (focus of literary criticism)
2. Stage 2: A book's copying and textual transmission of the final form (focus of textual criticism)
3. Challenge: Before some compositions were "completed," parts of the biblical books or earlier editions of entire books were already set into writing, allowing for copying and textual transmission to happen *before* the final copy and resulting in more than one edition of a given book.
  - E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 316: "When the early editions of these books were completed, they were accepted as authoritative and were accordingly put into circulation, but at a later period, 'revised editions' of the books, intended to replace the earlier ones, were written and again circulated. The process of substitution of consecutive editions, however, was only partial, so that the early editions did not completely go out of existence.... Thus, the early editions remained in use in places that were not central from a geographical and sociological point of view, such as the Qumran repository of texts and the various manuscripts from which the Greek translation was prepared in Egypt. These early editions were thus preserved for posterity, by mere chance, in the Septuagint translation and through the discoveries of Qumran."

**C. Jeremiah's Witness to Two Different Editions:**

1. The Septuagint (LXX) of Jeremiah is about one-eighth shorter than the MT and lacks approximately 2,700 words found in the Hebrew text. It includes, however, nearly 100 words not present in the MT. Furthermore, the chapters in the LXX are arranged differently, the most striking distinction being that the oracles against foreign nations occur at the end of the MT edition (chs. 46–51) but in the middle of the LXX edition (between the MT 25:13 and 25:15 with v. 14 being omitted). With this, the ordering of these oracles differs between the two editions:
  - MT = Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, Babylon
  - LXX = Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus, and Moab
2. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the conclusion that the differences found in LXX Jeremiah are not the result of scribal error but point to a totally different edition of the book has been made more plausible, in that the reading of Jer 9:22–10:18 found on one of the partial Jeremiah manuscripts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Cave 4 (4QJer<sup>b</sup>) appears to reflect the wording of the LXX over the MT.

**THINK!**

How should an evangelical rightly respond to the likelihood that at least two different versions of Jeremiah existed during the time of Jesus? Should we consider both inspired and authoritative? Should both editions be included in our one Bible? Do we need to be cautious toward claims that the book itself was finalized long after the prophet's death? If so, why? If not, why not?

3. The book of Jeremiah itself suggests that multiple editions of the book were created and circulated: Seraiah's shorter Babylonian edition (Jer. 51:59–64) vs. Baruch's longer Egyptian edition (36:32; 45:1–5 with 43:5–7). Is the shorter

edition what is witnessed to at Qumran and in the LXX and the longer edition retained in the MT?

- In Jeremiah 30:2, the prophet is told to write in a book all that God has spoken to him. In 25:13, we were already told that the words proclaimed through Jeremiah were being written in a “book.” Later in 36:2, “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah,” the prophet is instructed to write on a scroll “all the words that I have spoken to you ... from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today.” Jerhoiakim then burns this scroll, but we are then told God had him make another scroll that would contain “all the former words that were in the first scroll” (36:28). He did so, “and many similar words were added to them” (36:32). This latter volume is then referred to in 45:1. At this point, then, we have had two versions of Jeremiah—one short (burned) and another long. Could Jeremiah have had another copy of the short version?
- Regardless, there is at least one longer volume, but a distinct volume appears to be referred to in 51:60, for here Jeremiah “wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon” and sent the words eastward with Seraiah. The concluding, “Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (51:64) suggests the book ended there. Yet our edition continues one more chapter through details of Jerusalem’s fall and the Babylonian captivity (ch. 52), along with the extended discussion of Jeremiah’s time and prophesies in Egypt (chs. 42–44). An extended version of Jeremiah including the Egypt material is the text we have. The shorter version would then not have this material. Is this true in the LXX?

### III. Literary Structure of Jeremiah

Prologue (ch. 1)

A Oracles of Judgment against Jerusalem (chs. 2–25)

B Non-Chronological Narratives Holding out Hope for the Future (chs. 26–36)

B’ Chronological Narratives Regarding the Fall of Jerusalem (chs. 37–45)

A’ Oracles of Judgment against the Nations (chs. 46–51)

Epilogue (ch. 52)

**Fig. 14.1. Categories of Prophetic Oracles**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Indictment</b>   | Statement of the offense<br>(specification of covenant <i>stipulations</i> violated)               |
| <b>Judgment / Warning</b>   | Declaration of the punishment to be carried out<br>(warning or promise of covenant <i>curses</i> ) |
| <b>Instruction</b>  | Clarification of the expected response<br>(call to heed covenant <i>stipulations</i> )             |
| <b>Salvation / Aftermath</b>  | Affirmation of future hope or deliverance<br>(promise of covenant <i>restoration blessings</i> )   |
| Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie; adapted from John H. Walton, <i>Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament</i> (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 54. |  |

#### IV. Prologue (Jeremiah 1)

##### A. Overview:

1. Jeremiah's historical setting (1:1–3)
2. Major themes (1:2–16)
3. The main foes and the promise of sustaining grace (1:17–19)

##### B. Major Themes:

1. Jeremiah's call (1:5) and reluctance (1:6–9)
2. Jeremiah's message (1:10)

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| "to pluck up and break down" | He will preach against sin.<br>(Indictment)                                    |
| "to destroy and overthrow"   | He will announce judgment.<br>(Judgment / Warning)                             |
| "to build and plant"         | He will teach and promise restoration.<br>(Instruction; Aftermath / Salvation) |

3. The certainty of judgment (1:11–16)

##### C. Main Foes and the promise of sustaining grace:

1. Kings, priests, officials, and people (1:18)
2. Jeremiah's perseverance ensured (1:19)

#### V. The Broken Covenant & Israel's House of Pride

##### A. Hosea as Background to Jeremiah 3:8–11

##### B. Deuteronomy as Background to Jeremiah:

1. *Indictment*: Israel has uncircumcised hearts (Jer. 4:4; 9:25; cf. Deut. 10:16; 30:6)
2. *Warning / Judgment*: Israel will receive the curses of the covenant (Jer. 11:1–13; cf. 17:5–8; Deut. 28)
3. *Instruction*: Israel must heed the stipulations of the covenant, trusting Yahweh alone (Deut. 6:4–5).
4. *Aftermath / Salvation*: Yahweh will restore his people after exile with a New Covenant (Jer. 30–33; cf. Deut. 30:1–10)
5. *Summary*: Israel is a covenant breaker, not simply through idolatry but also through syncretism!

##### C. Jeremiah's Temple Sermon: Truth has been replaced with a lie (chs. 7–9)

1. *The Lie Defined*: God will receive my worship and I will always stand protected, regardless of whether I obey the will of God.
2. *Background to the Lie*:
  - a. Deut. 4:5–8. See, I have taught you statutes and rules.... Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has *a god so near* to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has *statutes and rules* so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?
  - b. 2 Elements:
    - (1) The nearness of God
    - (2) The Word of God
3. *The Lie Described*:
  - a. *The Nearness of God*: God's presence will always be here to give security and to help, regardless of how I live in relationship with him (Jer. 7:1–8:3):

- (1) *The people's actions*: Though the enemies are arising, Israel goes to the house of God proclaiming securely, "The Temple of Yahweh!" (Jer. 7:2, 4, 9–10; cf. Deut. 29:18–20; Jer. 5:12; 6:14; 14:13–14; Isa. 28:15; Amos 9:10; Mic. 2:6, 11; 3:11; Zeph. 1:12; Mal. 2:17; Ps. 10:4–11, 13)
- (2) *Yahweh's response*: Attendance at the house of God and religious exercise are no substitute for a real meeting with God and obedience to his will (Jer. 7:5–7, 9)
  - "Do not trust in deceptive words" (7:4, 8)
  - Destruction is coming (7:12–15)
  - Do not even pray, Jeremiah, for I will not listen! (7:16)
  - The people are hurting themselves (7:19)
  - The reason for Israel's lack of response: they have lost connection with the truth (7:21–28, esp. vv. 23–24, 28)

**THINK!**

In Jeremiah 7:31 we read, "And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, *nor did it come into my mind.*" This and the similar statements in 19:5 and 32:35 are used by open theists, dualists, and Arminians to show that God's sovereignty does not mean he knows all or controls all things. How would you respond, taking the wording of the text seriously? Once you wrestle on your own, read my response in A.14.1. "Did God not anticipate Israel's sacrificing of children?"

- b. The Word of God: Simply because God's will has been revealed to us, we stand secure in God's favor (8:4–9:26):
  - (1) *The people's proclamation*: "We are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us" (8:8); therefore, we can proclaim "peace" and need not fear war
  - (2) *God's response*: Possession of the Word of God and profound understanding of truth are not substitutes for putting God's Word into practice and knowing the one who is truth!
    - There is no real peace, but terror! (8:11, 15)
    - By holding fast to deceit and failing to repent and to return to Yahweh, the people show that they "do not know the ordinances of Yahweh" (8:5–7).
    - Indeed, while claiming, "We are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us," "the lying pen of the scribes has made it a lie" (8:8)
    - Therefore, they will perish! (8:12–13)
    - In exile the people will cry, "Is Yahweh not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" (8:19) But they fail to see that it is they and not Yahweh who have turned.

**Fig. 12.2. Israel's House of Pride: Major Pillars of Israelite Security**

1. The reality & promises of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants provided undue security for Israel, for they forgot their need to heed the covenant obligations in order to enjoy the covenant blessings.
2. The reception of God's revealed will along with the promises of land, divine presence, and lasting kingship generated false pride rather than persevering dependence.

4. *The Conclusion (ch. 9):*

a. God's people are living a lie:

- Jer. 9:3–6. Israel is living a lie, failing to see the truth – “Through deceit they refuse to know me” (9:6)
- Jer. 9:8. With his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor, but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.

b. Final words:

- Jer. 9:12–16. Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of Yahweh spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? And Yahweh says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. Therefore thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink. I will scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them.
- Jer. 9:23–24. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am Yahweh who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight.

**D. The Broken Covenant & Possibility of Real Mercy Where There Is Real Repentance**

1. Israel's lack of covenant faithfulness has brought “sure” destruction (Jer. 11)
2. Hope of restoration is still present where repentance is manifest (Jer. 18:7–10)

## VI. The New Covenant: Hope beyond the Curse

### A. Introductory Comments:

1. The holy God must punish all human sin, but his passion to preserve and display his glory through a people intent on serving him pushes him through curse to restoration blessing (Deut. 4:25–31; 30:1–10).
2. The goal of all redemptive history is to see God exalted as sovereign over his world, at peace with his creation.

### B. The “New Covenant” Titles and Texts

1. Old Testament
  - a. 4x = “Covenant”: Isa. 42:5–7; 49:8–12; 59:21; Hos. 2:18–23
  - b. 6x = “Everlasting Covenant”: Jer. 32:36–41; 50:2–5; Ezek. 16:59–63; 37:15–28 (esp. v. 26); Isa. 55:1–5 (cf. Rev. 21:6; 22:17)
  - c. 3x = “Covenant of Peace”: Ezek. 34:20–31 (esp. v. 25); 37:15–28 (esp. v. 26); Isa. 54:1–10 (esp. vv. 9–10)
  - d. 4x = Promise that the people of God will be given a new/unified heart and a new spirit: Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 11:18–21; 18:30–32; 36:24–32 (esp. v. 26)
  - e. 1x = “New Covenant”: Jer. 31:31–34
2. New Testament:
  - a. Instituted at the Lord’s Supper
    - Luke 22:20. And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the *new covenant* in my blood.” (Cf. Matt. 26:27–28; Mark 14:23–24)
    - 1 Cor. 11:25–26. In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the *new covenant* in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.
  - b. Ministers of the New Covenant
    - 2 Cor. 3:6. [God] made us competent to be ministers of a *new covenant*, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
  - c. Jesus as the Mediator in contrast to the Old
    - Heb. 8:6–8, 13. But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,... In speaking of a *new covenant*, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Cf. Heb. 9:15; 12:24)

### C. Jeremiah’s New Covenant Vision

#### 1. Jeremiah 3:16–17 with 4:1–2

- a. Observations:
  - (1) The northern kingdom of Israel is promised restoration and forgiveness if they will but acknowledge their guilt and return to Yahweh at Zion (3:13–14).
  - (2) Upon their return, the ark of the covenant will no more be remembered or missed, for all Jerusalem, wherein will be gathered not only restored Israel but the nations, will have become Yahweh’s throne—they will be the ark, housing within them the law of God (3:16–17).
  - (3) If a united Israel and Judah return to Yahweh, removing all sin and swearing, “‘As Yahweh lives,’ in truth, justice, and righteousness, then

nations shall declare themselves blessed in him [Yahweh], and in him shall they glory” (4:1–2).

b. Theological significance:

- (1) When the ark of the covenant was lost in the days of Samuel, it was considered a huge tragedy (1 Samuel 4–6), but its absence in the new covenant age will be no problem, for the picture will have been trumped by reality. Specifically, God’s throne will be made up of all Jerusalem, which will be coextensive with the restored and reunified remnant of Israel and a remnant from the nations (3:14, 17). In short, God’s people will become the ark of the covenant (3:16–17).
- (2) The tablets of the Decalogue were placed in the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies, directly where a sculptured god would have rested in the temples of Israel’s neighbors (Exod 40:20–21; cf. 25:21–22; Deut 10:1–5). For Yahweh, his image would not and could not be mediated through idols of wood or stone. Instead he purposed that his image would be evident in his people’s living out of the Decalogue. As Peter Gentry has proposed, “This is why there could be no image at the centre of Israel’s worship—God wanted the commands or instructions in the ark to be imaged in one’s actions: this was the divine character embodied in human lives” (P. J. Gentry and S. J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 190 n. 23).
- (3) Significantly, in Jeremiah’s day, we are told that sin, not the Decalogue, was “engraved on the tablet of their heart” (Jer 17:1). That is, for them, God’s law remained external, only on tablets of stone housed in the ark. (Recognizably, there was always a remnant, but it was small [see Isa 51:7; Ps 37:31; 40:9[8]; 119:11; Prov. 3:3; 7:3]. However, in the eschatological age of the new covenant, God’s people would become the ark, and they would house within them the law written on the heart (Jer 31:31). Paul draws on these images in 2 Cor 3:3, when he writes to the predominantly Gentile believers in Corinth, “And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” Yahweh would teach every member of the restored remnant (Isa 2:3; 54:13; John 6:45–46; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 Thess 4:9; 1 John 2:20–21), ultimately through his Messiah (Isa 42:4; 51:4; cf. Matt. 28:20), with the result that all in the covenant would faithfully follow the Lord, rightly imaging God’s character and worth within the world (Jer 31:34; cf. 22:15–16 with 9:24).
- (4) Yahweh envisions a day when all Jerusalem will be his throne, coterminous with the dwelling place of both restored, reunited Israel and a remnant from the nations (Jer 3:17–18; 12:16; 30:8–9; cf. Rev 21:2, 9). As the divine presence rests on his people it will produce covenant faithfulness and the consummation of Israel’s mission, as Israel’s return moves the nations to declare themselves blessed in Yahweh (Jer 4:1–2; cf. Gen 22:18; 26:4). Thus the new covenant is the consummation of the Abrahamic promises.



## c. New Covenant Reflections

(1) It is vital to understand the already but not yet elements to these new covenant promises.

- Heb. 10:9. He does away with the first [covenant] in order to establish a second.
- Heb. 8:13. In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
- Heb. 9:26. [Jesus] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
- Heb. 6:5. [They] have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come.

(2) As members of the new covenant today, we are *already* gathered to Jerusalem, and God's kingdom is *already* among us, but we still await the day for the old to completely be done away with so that the new, which is unshaken, may remain.

- Heb. 12:18, 22, 24, 26–29. For you have not come to [Mount Sinai]. . . .<sup>22</sup> But *you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . .*<sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant. . . .<sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”<sup>27</sup> This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates *the removal of things that are shaken*—that is, things that have been made—in order that *the things that cannot be shaken may remain*.<sup>28</sup> Therefore let us be *grateful for receiving a kingdom* that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,<sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.

## 2. Jeremiah 12:14–17

## a. Observations:

- (1) Who are God's “evil neighbors” (v. 14)?
- (2) What does God initially promise to do with them in response to their oppression of his people (v. 14)?
- (3) What gracious promise does he then provide, and what is its condition (v. 16)?
- (4) What will be the result if the condition is not met (v. 17)?

## b. Theological Significance:

- (1) God provides a way for Gentiles (once God's “evil neighbors”) to be established in the midst of redeemed and transformed people of God (v. 16; cf. Rom 11:17–27).
- (2) The qualification for participation in God's family is that they “learn *the ways of my people, to swear by my name, ‘As Yahweh lives’*” (v. 16). What is meant by these terms?
  - (a) To “swear by my name” suggests declaring allegiance to and submitting to the future judgment of King Yahweh.
  - (b) The “ways of God's people” are likely bound up in a written body of instruction that can be “heard” (v. 17) and “learned” (v. 16) or rejected—i.e., The ways of God's people that Gentiles will learn are bound up in a written Word, as anticipated by Moses himself in Deuteronomy 30:8: “And you shall return and you shall obey the voice of Yahweh and keep *all his commandments that I command you today*.”
    - Deut. 5:1; 6:3; 9:1 – “*Hear, O Israel...*”

- Deut. 10:12–13. And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, *to walk in all his ways*, to love him, and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of Yahweh, which I am commanding you today for your good.
- Deut. 30:16. If you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God that I command you today to love Yahweh your God *by walking in his ways*, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.
- Cf. Deut. 8:6; 11:22; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9

### 3. Jer. 23:1–8. A New Exodus and a New David

- a. The hope of restoration and better shepherds (23:1–4; cf. 3:15)
  - (1) Jesus the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14, 16), the great shepherd (Heb 13:20), and the shepherd-Lamb (Rev 7:17)
  - (2) Elders as “shepherds/pastors” (Eph 4:11) who “shepherd” God’s church (Acts 20:28)
- b. The hope for the new king David, whose identity will be “Yahweh is our righteousness” (23:5–6)
  - 1 Cor 1:30. And because of him you are in Christ, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.
  - Phil 2:8–9. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.
  - 2 Cor 5:21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- c. The hope of a new exodus (23:7–8)
  - Luke 9:30–31. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,<sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoken of departure [lit., exodus], which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.
  - Eph 1:7. In [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.
  - Col 1:13–14. [The Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### 4. Jeremiah 30:8–9

- a. Observations:
  - (1) Jeremiah is called to write his book for the benefit of a redeemed Israel and Judah (vv. 2–3; cf. Ezek 33:33)
  - (2) Same “new covenant” context as Jer. 31:31–34 (v. 3)
  - (3) “Foreigners,” who once served Nebuchadnezzar (v. 8; cf. 27:7–8, 11), will serve Yahweh their God and David their king (v. 9; cf. 23:5–6)
  - (4) God will make a “full end” of all the nations/Gentiles but will save a remnant of Israel and Judah (vv. 7, 11)
  - (5) All will happen “in the latter days” (v. 24)
- b. Theological Significance:
  - (1) If the nations are destroyed, but the “foreigners” are alive serving Yahweh *their God* and David *their king*, what does this tell us about the “foreigners”? Answer: They’ve been adopted into Israel! (For a

parallel discussion, see Obad. 1:17–18, where a remnant of Edom will be preserved in Mount Zion as Jacob’s possession, while “there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau.”)

- (2) Therefore, everything we read about God’s new covenant with Israel is true of the redeemed foreigners, including the internalized gracious redemption (31:34) and law-giving (31:33).
  - (3) Jeremiah was written not only for the redeemed houses of Israel and Judah (i.e., Christian Jews, 30:2–3) but also for the redeemed foreigners that would be included in Israel (i.e., Christian Gentiles). Thus Jeremiah was appointed as “a prophet to the nations” (1:5).
- c. The Old Testament can be understood fully only in light of the coming of Christ.
- (1) In Jer 30:2–3, God instructs the prophet to write his words in a book *because* one day he would restore a transformed people. The logic suggests that the reason the book of Jeremiah was written was ultimately for the future, restored community.
  - (2) Further support for this view is found in 30:24, which states, “The fierce anger of Yahweh will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his mind. *In the latter days you will understand this.*” True understanding of God’s purposes will only come “in the latter days.” When is this?
  - (3) The very next verse declares: “At that time, declares Yahweh, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people” (31:1). The latter days time of understanding will be recognized when God’s covenant with his people is again celebrated. Jer 31:33 identifies this time as the new covenant age: “But this is the [new] covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Yahweh: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
  - (4) We thus learn that Jeremiah recognized that his words would only be understood in the latter days when the new covenant would be established and when foreigners would join restored Israelites in following Yahweh their God and David their king. In the words of Peter: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup> inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”
  - (5) Similarly, through Isaiah we are told that Yahweh chose to let Israel’s history be characterized by “deep sleep” and inability to “read” the Word, as if the Bible was a sealed book (Isa 29:9–12): “Astonish yourselves and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! <sup>10</sup> For Yahweh

has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers).<sup>11</sup> And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”<sup>12</sup> And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot read.”

- (6) Finally, Daniel too was instructed that the kingdom revelation he received would be sealed up until the right time (Dan 9:4, 9–10): “But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase. . . .<sup>9</sup> Go your way Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.<sup>10</sup> Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand” (cf. v. 13; 8:26).

### 5. Jer. 31:31–34. A New Covenant with Internalized Law and Lasting Relationship

| Jeremiah 31:31–34   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>General Time:</b> Future<br><b>Main Idea:</b> Yahweh will establish a new covenant unlike the former<br><b>Explanation (or Ground):</b><br>(a) The nature: Internalized law<br>(b) The result:<br>- Covenant relationship<br>- Covenant knowledge (i.e., loyalty) grounded in spiritual redemption | <p>31 Days are coming when ...<br/>I will cut a new covenant with Israel and Judah (32) unlike the covenant that I made with the fathers after redeeming them from Egypt, that they broke.</p> <p>33 <u>Indeed</u> this is the new covenant I will make with Israel after those days:<br/>I will put my torah in their midst; even on their heart I will write it.<br/><u>And</u> I will be their God, <u>and</u> they my people.</p> <p>34 <u>And</u> they will not teach one another, “Know Yahweh,”<br/><u>because</u> they will all know me<br/><u>because</u> I will forgive their iniquity <u>and</u> no longer remember their sins.</p> |

- a. *The time frame of the covenants* (vv. 31, 33)?
  - (1) Old is before the new and thus temporary
  - (2) New is after the old and eternal (cf. v. 34, vv. 35–36, 40)
    - (a) I will make the new covenant “after those days” (v. 33)
    - (b) “I will remember their sin *no more*” (v. 34)
  - (3) NOTE: “In the *latter days* you will understand this (30:24) > “At that time . . . I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people” (31:1 // 33:3) > “Behold, the days are coming” (31:27, 31, 38)
- b. *The parties of the covenant* (vv. 31, 33)?
  - (1) Old: Yahweh and those who came out of Egypt (Mosaic/Israelite/Sinai covenant) (v. 31)
  - (2) New: Yahweh and reunited house of Israel (houses of Israel and Judah) (v. 33).

- (a) Implied appears to be the participation of once-enemy but now-redeemed and adopted members from the “nations/Gentiles” (see Jer. 4:1–2; 12:14–17; 30:8–9)
- Jer. 4:1–2. If you return, O Israel, declares Yahweh, to me you should return. If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver,<sup>2</sup> and if you swear, “As Yahweh lives,” in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.
  - Jer. 12:14–17. Thus says Yahweh concerning all my evil neighbors who touch the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit: “Behold, I will pluck them up from their land, and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them.<sup>15</sup> And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land.<sup>16</sup> And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, “As Yahweh lives,” even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.<sup>17</sup> But if any nation will not listen, then I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it, declares Yahweh.
  - Jer. 30:8–9. And it shall come to pass in that day, declares Yahweh of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him.<sup>9</sup> But they shall serve Yahweh their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
- (b) On the NT appropriation of these texts, see Gentry, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 496–502.
- c. *The problem of the old covenant*: lack of loyalty leads to broken relationship—“the covenant that they broke, though I was their husband” (v. 32). Israel had sin, not the law, “engraved on the tablet of their heart” (Jer 17:1). They were “rebellious” (Deut 1:26, 43; 9:7, 23–24; 21:18, 20; 31:27), “unbelieving” (1:32; 9:23; 28:66), and “stubborn” (9:6, 13; 10:16; 31:27), and in God’s eternal purposes climaxing in Jesus, he did not change their hard hearts: “To this day Yahweh has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear” (29:4; cf. Rom. 11:8, 10)! Israel would enter the Promised Land and break the covenant by rebelling against Yahweh (Deut. 30:1; 31:16, 20, 27, 29), and Yahweh would in turn justly and rightly bring upon Israel the curses, climaxing in their exile from the Promised Land (4:25–28; 29:18–28; 31:16–21; cf. Dan. 9:11). Jeremiah was living through their rebellion, and he affirmed that the result would be exile (Jer 17:3–4).
- d. *The promise of the new covenant*: loyalty empowered and lasting relationship enjoyed (v. 33).
- (1) The old covenant was characterized by sin being “engraved on the tablet of [Judah’s] heart” (Jer 17:1), whereas in the new covenant the law will internalized (31:33).
  - (2) The old covenant called for the law’s internalization (e.g., Deut 6:6; Prov 3:3; 7:3), but sin controlled the wills of the majority in Judah (Jer 17:1). That is, God’s gracious gift of law remained external for the majority—a feature symbolized in the Ten Commandments, which were etched on stone, located within the ark of the covenant, and

centered in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle/temple, but which were never lived out in human lives. The Ten Commandments were a parable of the old covenant: The law was kept in a box and read by none, and only in the new covenant does the law get enshrined in human lives and read by all.

- (3) The promise of an internalized law (Jer 31:33; cf. 2 Cor 3:3) meant that humans would become the ark of the covenant and the Holy of Holies (cf. 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16), from which Yahweh's holy presence would emanate (see comments on Jer 3:16–17; Ezek 36:27). An internalized law means that our entire dispositions will be reoriented toward God and his ways and that humans will finally reflect, resemble, and represent Yahweh as his image bearers, for the fame of his name.

e. *The result of Yahweh's new covenant work:*

- (1) Lasting relationship with God enjoyed: The old covenant relationship between God and his people was broken, due to human sin, whereas the new covenant relationship will remain solid eternally because God will work decisively (Jer 31:31–34). Note the combination of commitment and expectation (32:38–41).
  - (a) *I will be their God*—their supreme master, sole savior, and sovereign satisfier. I will watch over them and provide for them in pleasure and in pain—through miscarriage, I will be there; through broken relationships, I will be there; through sickness and loss, I will be there. I will be their God. All my power, indeed all authority in heaven and on earth, will be used for them taking them out of trial or sustaining them through it. And their hearts will be strengthened and completely satisfied, confident that in my presence is fullness of joy, and at my right hand are pleasures forever (Ps 16:11). I will be their God.
  - (b) *They shall be my people*. . . . They shall not run to others but will live knowing they are mine. They will celebrate that I am for them, and they will rest confident that I will protect them. When the storms rise, they will know peace; when the enemy lies, they will declare, “I am God’s.” Their loyalty will be to me—when desires for lust are awakened, they will say, “No!”; when they are tempted to despair, they will remember, “My God is with me!”; when they are delighting in health and life, they will remember, “My God has supplied all!” And when they are without a job or when their home burns to the ground, they will remember “My God will supply all!” Their love will be to me; their lives will be to me. They shall be my people.
- (2) Intimate knowledge of God experienced: every covenant members will know God personally (v. 34)
  - (a) Whereas the old covenant included both remnant and rebel and whereas old covenant disloyalty spanned “from the least of them

to the greatest” (Jer 6:13), Yahweh’s miraculous intervention in the new covenant will mean all members will “know Yahweh”:

- i. Knowledge of God implies reflecting God’s character as one who loves others and works for justice, without prejudice.
  - Jer. 9:23–26. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, <sup>24</sup>but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am Yahweh who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares Yahweh. <sup>25</sup>Behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when I will punish all those who are circumcised with a foreskin—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, <sup>26</sup>for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.
  - Jer. 22:15–17. Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. *Is not this to know me?* declares Yahweh. But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.
  - 1 John 4:6–8. We are from God. Whoever *knows God* listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. <sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and *knows God*. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love *does not know God*, because God is love.
- ii. Knowledge of God results in keeping his commands and fleeing from sin.
  - Jer. 4:22. For my people are foolish; *they know me not*; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are “wise”—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.
  - 1 John 2:3–6. And by this we know that *we have come to know him*, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says, “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup>but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. <sup>6</sup>By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same in which he walked.
  - 1 John 3:6–7. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or *known him*. <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.
- iii. Knowledge of God requires teaching truth and promoting what is good.
  - Jer. 2:8. The priests did not say, “Where is Yahweh?” Those who handle the law *did not know me*; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.
  - Jer. 9:3. They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and *they do not know me*, declares Yahweh.

- Jer. 9:6. Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, *they refuse to know me*, declares Yahweh.
- iv. Knowledge of God results in heeding his messengers.
  - 1 John 4:6. We are from God. Whoever *knows God* listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.
- v. One purpose for which Christ came was to enable knowledge.
  - 1 John 5:20. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that *we may know him* who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.
- (b) The fact that all will know Yahweh means that the new covenant will *not* be a mixed community of remnant and rebel; *all* in the covenant will have a personal relationship with God and so certain types of teaching will no longer be necessary: every member of the community will be effectually taught by God.
  - Isa. 54:13. All your children shall be taught by Yahweh, and great shall be the peace of your children.
  - John 6:44–46. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the Prophets, “And they will all be taught by God.” Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—<sup>46</sup>not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.
  - 1 John 2:20–21, 27. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. <sup>21</sup>I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.... <sup>27</sup>But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.
- f. The *reason* why the new covenant work is effective: Knowledge of Yahweh is grounded in and generated by forgiveness of sins, not merely a physical / external redemption from slavery (vv. 34–32).
  - (1) “All” know Yahweh because “all” have been forgiven.
    - (a) Forgiveness means cleansing from guilt (33:8). All new covenant members have felt grieved over their sin.
      - Jer 33:8. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.
    - (b) Forgiveness is only the fruit of repentance (36:3). All new covenant members have repented of sins.
      - Jer 36:3. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them, so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.
    - (c) New covenant pardon is so complete that it is as if we have never sinned (50:20).
      - Jer 50:20. In those days and in that time, declares Yahweh, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none, and sin in Judah, and none shall be found, for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.
    - (d) New covenant forgiveness is enjoyed because of every member’s direct relationship with the new David, whose name is “Yahweh is



our righteousness” (Jer 23:5–6; cf. Isa 53:11). This shapes the backdrop to Paul new covenant ministry of righteousness (2 Cor 3:9).

- Jer. 23:5–6. Behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘Yahweh is our righteousness.’”
- Isa. 53:11. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.
- 1 John 2:1–2. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- 2 Cor 3:9. For if there was glory in the [old covenant] ministry of condemnation, this [new covenant] ministry of righteousness must far exceed it.

- (2) In Leviticus, the call to be holy by loving one’s neighbor (Lev. 19:1, 18) *overflows* from the atonement addressed in the first part of the book. Most of old covenant Israel, however, were unable to love as they were called, *because* they never experienced real forgiveness.

g. Theological Significance

- (1) The old covenant age was characterized by a “my way” lifestyle; the new covenant is characterized by a “God’s way” among the elect.
- (2) While the opportunity for forgiveness was in place in the old covenant, the fact that the covenant was broken (i.e., that those in the old covenant did not “know Yahweh”) suggests that they never experienced forgiveness, for in the new covenant, the fact that all know Yahweh is *because* all are forgiven.
- (3) The new covenant is made up of people who recognize their sinfulness and need for Jesus.
- (4) Every member of the new covenant is “remnant,” not “rebel.”
- (5) The new covenant is filled with people so gripped by the remarkable love shown us that we are empowered to follow God and love others.
  - 1 John 2:2–3. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.
  - John 3:19. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
  - 1 John 2:8–9. It is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

## 6. Jeremiah 32:37–44

a. God-enablement of new exodus and restoration to the land (32:37, 41)

- Deut. 30:4–5. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. And Yahweh your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it.
- Jer. 16:14–15. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when it shall no longer be said, “As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the

land of Egypt,” but “As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.” For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers. Behold, I am sending many fishers, declares Yahweh, and they shall catch them. (cf. 23:7–8)

- Ezek. 36:24. And I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.
- Isa. 11:16. And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.
- Cf. Isa. 35:1–11; 40:3–4; 42:14–16; 43:18–21; 51:9–11; Hos. 2:14–15

b. Relational restoration (32:38) = “covenant formula”

(1) Abrahamic covenant declarative promise:

- Gen. 17:7–8. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, *to be God to you and to your offspring after you*. And will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and *I will be their God*.

(2) Mosaic covenant declarative promise:

- Exod. 6:7. *I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God*, and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. (cf. 29:45–46)

(3) Mosaic covenant conditional promise:

- Lev. 26:12. [If you obey me ...] I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and *will be your God, and you shall be my people*. (cf. 22:33)
- Jer. 7:23. Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.
- Cf. Deut. 29:13; Jer. 11:4

(4) New covenant declarative promise:

- Jer. 24:7. I will give them a heart to know that I am Yahweh, and *they shall be my people and I will be their God*, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.”
- Jer. 31:33. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declare Yahweh: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*.
- Ezek. 11:19–20. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And *they shall be my people, and I will be their God*.
- Ezek. 36:27–28. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and *you shall be my people, and I will be your God*.
- Cf. Jer. 30:22; Ezek. 14:11

(5) New covenant fulfillment:

- 2 Cor. 6:16 (citing Lev. 26:12). What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*.”
- Rev. 21:3. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and *they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God*.”

- c. God-enablement of a unified heart and way (32:39)
  - Ezek. 11:19. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them.
- d. God-enablement of new covenant fear and holiness (32:39–40)
  - (1) The close link between holiness and fear:
    - Exod. 20:20. Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.
    - Jer. 32:40. I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.
    - Prov. 1:7. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
    - Prov. 9:10. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
    - Phil. 2:12–13. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
  - (2) Early anticipations of new covenant fear:
    - Gen. 22:1, 12. After these things God tested Abraham.... He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”
    - Exod. 20:20.
    - Deut. 5:29. Who will grant that they may have such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their sons forever? (DeRouchie’s translation)
    - Deut. 10:12. And now Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
  - (3) New covenant fear
    - Matt. 10:28. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
    - Rom. 3:18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
    - Phil. 2:12–13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

#### **D. Synthesis of Jeremiah’s New Covenant Vision**

1. The new covenant will be between Yahweh and a reunified Israel (Jer 3:18; 31:31, 33) and will be sparked by a new exodus out of exile and slavery climaxing in return to the promised land or Zion, the new Jerusalem (3:14, 17–18; 23:7–8; 32:37).
2. The salvation will be led by the new, hoped-for King David, who will reign in wisdom, righteousness, and justice and whose identity will be, “Yahweh is our righteousness” (23:5–6).
3. Godly shepherds will help oversee this restoration, and they will feed God’s people with knowledge and understanding and guard them from harm (3:15; 23:4).
4. This restoration will spark the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant promise of blessing to the nations (4:1–2), as Gentiles with new hearts will embrace God’s law, serve Yahweh their God and David their king, and be adopted into the one people of God, resulting in a new identity that distinguishes them from the

nations (3:17; 12:16; 30:9 with 30:11; cf. 16:19–21; 33:9[?]; 48:47; 49:6, 11[?], 39).

5. This restoration will also include a judgment on the wicked who remain hostile to God and refuse to surrender to his Word (12:17; 30:11).
6. Every member of this transformed, new covenant people of God will enjoy an eternal relationship with the Lord that will be grounded in God-wrought, blood-bought forgiveness and that will overflow in fearing God, knowing God, and obeying God, all to the glory of God (31:33–34; 32:39–40).

## VII. Summary of the New Covenant:

### A. Similarities between the Old and New Covenants:

1. *Same initiator and covenant Lord* (OC: Exod. 34:6–7; Ps. 86:15; NC: Jer. 31:31–32; Heb. 1:1; 8:8–9; Jas. 5:11).
2. *Same goal of relationship between God and his chosen people* (OC: Exod. 6:7; NC: Jer. 31:33; Rev. 21:3).
3. *Similar proclamation of good news that was to be responded to by faith* (Heb. 4:2, 6; cf. Rom. 9:30–32; Jude 5).
4. *Similar grounding in God's gracious redemption* (OC: Exod. 19:4; 20:2; NC: Deut. 30:1–5; Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:24–25; Eph. 2:4; Rom. 5:8).
5. *Similar expectation that, after redemption, heart-generated faith and fear would overflow in obedience to God's law* (OC: Exod. 19:5; 20:3–17; Num. 14:11; 20:12; Deut. 1:32; 6:4–6; 9:23; 10:12, 16; 11:18; 32:46; Prov. 1:7; 3:3; 7:3; 9:10; NC: Deut. 30:6, 8, 14; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19–20; 36:27; John 13:34; Rom. 1:5; 2:13–14, 26–29; 3:27, 31; 6:17; 8:4; 9:30–32; 13:8–10; 16:26; 1 Cor. 9:20–21; Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:12–13; Jas. 1:22–25; 2:8, 12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:7–8; 3:23; 4:11).
6. *Similar promises of blessing and curse designed to motivate Godly living in the present* (OC: Lev. 26; Deut. 28; NC: Matt. 5:1–12; 6:15; 25:31–46; Luke 6:20–26; Rom. 8:13; 11:22; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Gal. 5:4, 19–21; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 2:3; 6:4–6; 10:26–31; 12:15; Rev. 22:19).
7. *Similar participation of righteous ones who have the law stored in or inscribed on their hearts* (OC: Ps. 37:31; 40:8; 119:10–11; Isa. 51:7; cf. Pss. 25:10; 103:18; see also Jer. 17:1; NC: Jer. 31:33; Rom. 2:14–15, 25–29; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10).
8. *Similar missional role of law-obedience to show the world the worth and supremacy of God* (OC: Exod. 19:6; Deut. 4:5–8; 26:18–19; NC: Matt. 5:16; 28:18–20; 1 Pet. 2:9–10).
9. *Similar provision of a substitute sacrifice to atone for sins against God* (OC: Lev. 1–7, 16; NC: Isa. 53:5–6, 8, 11–12; Rom. 3:24–26; 5:9).
10. *Same call for guilt and confession of sins to enjoy reconciliation with God* (OC: Lev. 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:6; Ezek. 18:21, 26, 30; Ps. 24:3–5; 51:16–17; Prov. 28:13; NC: Matt. 4:17; Acts 17:30; 26:20; 1 John 1:9).
11. *Similar ratification in blood* (Heb. 9:6–10:18).

### B. Distinctions between the Old and New Covenants (a small portion of the following material is adapted from P. J. Gentry, “Course Notes for Introduction to the Old Testament—Part 1” [The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001]):

1. *The Sign of the New Covenant and the Distinct Makeup of the New Covenant Community.*
  - a. The old covenant included both a rebel majority and a remnant minority. While all male members received the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., physical circumcision, Gen. 17:10–14; Josh. 5:24) and every member participated in the sign of the Mosaic covenant (i.e., Sabbath, Exod 31:13, 16–17; Ezek. 20:12, 20), most were “uncircumcised of heart” (Jer. 9:25–26; Acts 7:51; cf. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4), having inscribed on their hearts not the law but sin (Jer. 17:1) and having no eyes to see, ears to hear, or hearts to understand (Deut. 29:4; Isa. 43:8; 44:18).
  - b. In contrast, God promised that in the new covenant, he would “circumcise the hearts” of *all* in the new covenant (Deut. 30:6; cf. Lev. 26:41), which is also portrayed as inscribing his law on the heart (Jer. 31:33) or performing a heart transplant accompanied by God’s indwelling Spirit (Ezek. 36:26–27). The result is that *all* will love him wholly, having a unified way, fearing him forever, knowing him rightly, and following him completely, so that they will never turn from him (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:34; 32:39–40, Ezek. 11:19; 36:27). The new covenant is made only with this “remnant” (Rom. 9:6–8; 11:5; Gal. 4:22–23, 28) who are identified with Christ (Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:25–29; Phil. 3:8–9) and have circumcised *hearts* (Rom. 2:28–29; Phil. 3:2–4); every member of the New Covenant knows Yahweh, because every member is reconciled to God (Jer. 31:33–34; cf. Isa. 54:13; John 6:45–46; 1 John 2:20–21, 27). Therefore, the new covenant sign of baptism is only given to this group, who are in Christ by faith (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12; 18:8; Col. 2:11–12) and repentance (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; 19:4).
2. *The Nature of New Covenant Grace.* While the priority and structure of grace are the same in the old and new covenants, the nature of grace is different. For the great majority, old covenant grace was only external, including only a physical redemption from slavery and a law giving without enablement. While the covenant had the capacity to address sin (in light of the coming of Christ), it did not effect a change in the majority of hearts and therefore did not deal with the sin problem; therefore the covenant was temporary, condemnatory, and resulted in death (2 Cor. 3:6–9). In contrast, the new covenant is grounded in spiritual redemption from sin and includes internalization of the law with Spirit-empowered enablement for *all* in the covenant. The result is an eternal covenant resulting in life. In relation to the old covenant, the new covenant enjoys a better mediator, better sacrifice, better provision, better results, and better promises.
  - a. *Better Mediator* (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)
  - b. *Better Sacrifice* (Heb. 9:6–10:18; cf. Isa. 42:6; 52:13–53:12)
  - c. *Better Provision:* impartation of a new heart with the internalization of the law and the enabling power of the Spirit (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19–20; 36:25–27; Rom. 2:13–15, 29; cf. Deut. 29:4[3]; Isa. 6:9–10)
    - (1) Two aspects of provision:
      - (a) Heart Change:
        - i. Heart Circumcision (Deut. 30:6)

- ii. Heart Inscription (Jer. 31:33; cf. Deut. 6:6; 11:18; 30:14; 32:46)
- iii. Heart Transplant (Ezek. 11:19–20; 36:26–27)
- iv. Heart Unification (Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 11:19–20)
- (b) God's indwelling Spirit (Ezek. 36:27; 37:14)
- (2) New covenant fulfillment:
  - John 3:5. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
  - John 6:63. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
  - Rom. 2:14–15, 29. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, ... they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.... But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.
  - Rom. 7:22–23, 25. I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.... I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.
  - Rom. 8:7–9, 13. The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.... If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (cf. 1 Cor. 2:12–15)
  - 2 Cor. 3:3, 6. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the human hearts.... [God] has made us ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- d. *Better Results:*
  - (1) *Covenant Keeping Ensured*. While some in the old covenant like Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Ruth, David, and Daniel were actually covenant keepers (i.e., saved sinners following God and looking to him for help; Pss. 25:10; 103:18), most were not and thus experienced eternal death. Because of the perfect faith-obedience of Christ (Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:8), which enabled him to satisfy fully God's wrath once for all (Rom. 2:25; 6:10; 8:1; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:10) and to secure justification, sanctification, and glorification for all in him (Rom. 5:1, 9, 19; 8:4, 30), everyone who is part of the new covenant is by nature a covenant keeper, both extrinsically in Christ and intrinsically through the power of Christ's Spirit.
  - (2) *Covenant Curses Avoided*. Because Christ has satisfied fully God's wrath, taking all condemnation upon himself and securing justification, sanctification, and glorification for all in him, new covenant curses are never experienced by those truly a part of the new covenant. While members of the new covenant on earth today still experience the battle with sin (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 7:22–23, 25), physical death (5:17; 6:23), and futility of the old age in the destruction of the body and toilsome work (8:20; 2 Cor. 4:16), the sting of these curses has been removed so that they are not punitive but

holiness-creating. The promised curses of the new covenant (see Deut. 30:9) still create a necessary and real dread of what could happen if one fails to persevere in the strength that God supplies, but all new covenant believers can rest securely, knowing that the faithful God will complete the work he started (Phil. 1:6), will sanctify us completely (1 Thess. 5:23–24), and will “fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified” in us (2 Thess. 1:11–12).

- e. *Better Promises*: lasting peace (Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; Isa. 54:10) and the eternality of the covenant (Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Isa. 55:3; cf. 24:5).

### VIII. Excursus: The Makeup of the New Covenant Community in Hebrews and 2 Peter

**A. Introduction.** Does Hebrews 10:28–29 and 2 Peter 1:9; 2:1, 20–21 suggest that new covenant membership includes both remnant and rebel, just like the old covenant? If so, then babies of believers should be baptized into the covenant, for covenant membership is not to be equated with salvation.

- Heb 10:28–29: Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witness.<sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and *has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified*, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?
- 2 Pet 1:9; 2:1, 20–21. For whoever lacks these qualities [i.e., faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love] is so nearsighted that he is blind, *having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins*. . . .<sup>21</sup> But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, *even denying the Master who bought them*, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. . . .<sup>20</sup> For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.<sup>21</sup> For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

#### **B. Response to the Hebrew passage:**

1. In Hebrews, Christ’s atoning work is directly identified with his new covenant mediation (Heb 8:6–7, 13): “But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant that he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. . . . [[Quote of Jer 31:31–34.]] In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Furthermore, Christ’s mediatory work secures an eternal inheritance for all covenant members (9:15): “Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”
2. In “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ,” those connected with Christ in Jeremiah’s new covenant “have been sanctified . . . once for all” (Heb 10:10), so that “by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (10:14). That is, those truly righteous in Christ will be made perfect (12:23), and the proof of this is that Jeremiah prophesied not only the

internalization of Yahweh's law but also eternal forgiveness (10:17–18; cf. Jer 31:33–34).

3. In Hebrews, perseverance in faith and obedience is what clarifies whether one is truly in Christ, which is shorthand for in the new covenant (Heb 3:12–14): “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you and evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>*For* we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”
4. The context for our passage includes a parallel challenge (Heb 10:23–27): “Let us hold fast our confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. <sup>26</sup>*For* if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” When paralleled with Heb 3:12–14, it becomes clear that those who refuse to repent (10:26), failing to persevere, have *not* actually come to share in Christ (3:14). And if, as argued above, sharing in Christ must mean in Hebrews sharing in the new covenant, those who did not persevere were never part of the new covenant, even though they tasted benefits of it, being part of the visible church. (An analogy could be non-relational guests enjoying a Thanksgiving meal with your family; the guests participation did not make them family. In contrast, an adopted child's first participation of a Thanksgiving meal is experienced with a new identity, where he/she is family.)
5. Because vv. 29–30 are merely an explanation of the reason judgment should be expected for one who did not persevere, vv. 29–30 speak of someone who was *not* truly part of the new covenant. Any relation with the Son they experienced, any “sanctification” they enjoyed, any benefits received from the Spirit of grace, where not true evidences of covenant participation, for they were not among the covenant members who were “perfected for all time” in light of the internalized law and eternal forgiveness (10:14–17). This fact appears to be highlighted at the end of v. 30 with the citation “Vengeance is mine; I will repay” from Deut 32:35, where this declaration is against God's enemies in order to bring hope to covenant members (32:36). That is, the citation itself suggests any who truly “fall away” from the visible church would be among God's enemies and not among the actual covenant members.
6. Significantly, the writer of Hebrews was convinced that he and his audience were “not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls” (10:39). In short, he was convinced that they were truly part of the New Covenant.

### C. Response to the 2 Peter passage:

1. The parallels with the Hebrews text are obvious. Here we have some who were once set apart from the world's defilements and part of the visible church. However, their later rebellion, lack of fruit, and departure has heaped up even greater judgment on them than if they had never identified themselves with the



covenant community (cf. Rom 2:2–5). Were they truly part of the new covenant? Two texts in 2 Peter would suggest not.

2. First, 2 Pet 1:10 states that one's calling and election are confirmed only when one practices the aforementioned qualities. That is, as was the case in Heb 3:12–14, perseverance is the clarifying marker that one is indeed in covenant relationship with God in Christ.
3. Second, in 2 Pet 2:22, the apostle writes: "What the true proverb says has happened to them: 'The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.'" Unlike the readers of Hebrews whom the writer was convinced were true covenant members, having gained new identity in Christ, Peter's conviction about those who had fallen away was that they never really saw their identities changed. They were dogs and pigs before, and they remain so still. As John said in 1 John 2:19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us." Or as Paul said, in the context of his discussion about a church's participation in the Lord's new covenant supper (1 Cor 11:25), the divisions in the church are necessary "in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized" (11:19). The mention of Judas' betrayal in this very context (11:23) stresses what genuine covenant relationship with Jesus actually means.

## IX. Guided Reading for Jeremiah:

**A. Key chapters:** 1; 7–9; 11:1–13; 23:1–8; 31–33; 36; 39

**B. Questions:**

1. What was Jeremiah's vocation, along with being a prophet of God? What prophets were contemporaries of Jeremiah and which of these also stressed "individual responsibility"?
2. Who was Jeremiah's closest companion and what role did he play in Jeremiah's life, ministry, and in the writing of the book (see Jer. 36:6, 17–18, 32; 45:1–5)?
3. According to Jeremiah 1, what message was the prophet commissioned to proclaim to Judah? (The answer is summarized in a single verse.)
4. Was Jeremiah primarily a prophet of doom or hope? According to Jeremiah 7–9 (esp. 7:4–11; 8:8–12; 9:23–24), where did Jeremiah's audience put their hope, and why was this hope misplaced? According to 11:1–13, why should Israel expect receive the covenant curses?
5. What drastic thing did King Jehoiakim do to the scroll of Jeremiah when it was read to him? What did God promise would happen to Jehoiakim and his descendants for their actions?
6. Who was reigning in Jerusalem when the Babylonians subdued it in 586 B.C.? What Babylonian king plundered the city and destroyed the temple?
7. "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Yahweh: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." In what chapter is this promise found?

8. “I will make them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.” In what chapter is this promise found?
9. “If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.” In what chapter is this promise found?
10. ESSAY: Characterize Jeremiah’s view of the new covenant, clarifying in your response what is *new* about it and noting the place of Israel and the nations in it.