

Year B 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Oct. 28, 2012
Jer 31:7-9; Ps 126; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

Israel was led out of Egypt by the Lord around 1250 B.C. They conquered the land of Canaan but through sin lost it: they were led to exile in Babylon. During this exile, they, under the guidance of tremendous leaders like the prophet priest Ezekiel, they rethought their whole history. They realized that they had sinned from the beginning, when even at Sinai, at the making of the covenant, they made and worshipped golden calves, Ex 32:4. Thus, around 550 B.C., they could look at their history as “700 years of sinning;” Moses, speaking in God’s name, tells them in Dt 9:24, “You have rebellious since the day I knew you.”

The first covenant made in Sinai had thus been broken from the beginning, and Moses had symbolically smashed the tablets which witnessed to it, Ex 32:15-19. In his last words to Israel, contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, set in Moab as the “waiting room” for entry into the Promised Land, spoken all in one day, “today,” before he died, Moses prophesies that Israel will sin and be driven from its land and go into exile, under an “iron yoke,” Dt 28:49, an expression the prophet Jeremiah used for the Babylonians, Jr 28:14. In exile, Israel will be humbled, only a remnant will remain, a people “lowly and poor,” Zep 3:12. The first reading from Jeremiah describes them as “blind and lame.” These people have learned their lesson, the Lord had circumcised their heart, so that they could love the Lord with all their heart, Dt 30:6. This “heart surgery” (Ezekiel will rather speak of a heart transplant, Ez 36:24-29) is the Law of God written in their hearts, which will be the condition for the New Covenant, Jr 31:31-34. We call this the “New Testament” because the word for covenant was translated *testamentum* by Jerome in the Vulgate. This is the new covenant made with Jesus’ blood, Lk 22:20; Heb 8:8-13; 9:15-17; 12:18-24.

Bartimaeus was a specific blind man healed by Jesus, whom he acclaimed as Messiah (“Son of David”) on the road to Jerusalem from Jericho, and who began to follow Jesus. Jesus is the new high priest who will build God’s new temple, in which all, including the blind and the lame barred from the old temple, will find a place: Mt 21:14; cf. Lv 21:16-21. The reading from Hebrews speaks of Jesus’ ordination as high priest as his “glorification” by God, who had sworn as much in Ps 110. Now Jesus was “glorified” on the cross, Jn 12:23-33. It is through his sacrifice that he became high priest, Heb 5:7-10. Now Isaiah had prophesied this. In the Greek

version of Is 52:13, it says that “my servant shall be lifted up and glorified exceedingly.” See Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-33.