

Aim of lesson

To show God's clear promise of the restoration of Israel from the prophecy of Jeremiah and to increase our confidence in God by seeing its fulfilment.

Bible background

Jeremiah 32.

Outline of lesson

The transaction

Read together or summarise Jeremiah 32:1-16. Note the following:

- v1 – The tenth year of Zedekiah was almost the end of the nation of Judah. It was captured and destroyed within a year.
- v2 – The rest of the land was already occupied by the Babylonian troops. Only Jerusalem remained.
- v3 – Jeremiah was in prison in Jerusalem for prophesying that the city would be captured by the Babylonians.
- v6-8 – God told Jeremiah that his cousin Hanamel (Hanameel in the AV) would come and ask him to buy his field at Anathoth. Note that Anathoth in Benjamin, like the rest of the country, was already captured by the Babylonians. It was apparently a very foolish thing to buy it. It would be considered worthless.
- v9 – Jeremiah pays the full price for the land.
- v10-11 – He is careful to have the deeds to the property signed, witnessed and sealed.
- v12-15 – He gives the deeds to Baruch with the instruction for them to be kept safe in a clay jar so that they will last a long time. Many of the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard must have thought he was mad.

The workbook

Use the first part to help the class clarify the details of the transaction. The picture on the right should be filled in with what the class think would be the words of Jeremiah and the thoughts of those around.

Jeremiah's prayer

Having done what God asked of him, Jeremiah then asks why. The class can either read the prayer, discuss it and put it into their own words in the workbook, or they can write the first and last verses of the prayer in the space.

In his prayer, Jeremiah acknowledges that God can do anything and that he is righteous in bringing the punishment which he had foretold – the armies which now surrounded the city. However, even to Jeremiah, buying a field in occupied territory must have been difficult to understand.

God's reply

In his reply God makes it clear that the destruction of the city and of the nation will go ahead. The buying of a field did not mean a change of plan. Verses 36-44 tell of its meaning. God will bring back his people to their land from all the countries to which they are banished, and once again his people will own fields there.

This lesson teaches us that our God is a redeemer. He can redeem useless property, and he can redeem our otherwise useless lives.

The restoration of Israel

The next section of the workbook looks at seven references in the book of Jeremiah to bring together details of what is prophesied in each reference. For example:

1. Jeremiah 16:13 – They will be thrown out of the land.
2. Jeremiah 15:4 (AV) and 29:18 – They will be scattered to all nations of the world.
3. Jeremiah 30:10,11 – God will not let them be destroyed.
4. Jeremiah 32:37 – They will be gathered back to the land of Israel.
5. Jeremiah 31:17 – They will own the land – not merely be allowed to live there.
6. Jeremiah 31:11,12 – They will return to Jerusalem (Zion).
7. Jeremiah 33:14-16 – They will have a king over them from David's line.

At the end of each line in this section, there is a space for the class either to put a tick to indicate that this has been fulfilled, or to put a date on each of the seven lines as follows:

1. 587 B.C
2. 70 AD
3. for 2,500 years
4. 20th century
5. 1948
6. 1967?
7. One day soon

Although there was a return of Jews to live in the land and some of it was rebuilt seventy years later, nevertheless the Jews did not again own the land until 1948 and not until that time was the regathering from all nations.

Digging deeper

Good king, Bad king

The students can find out how long each of the kings of Judah reigned, and whether they were good or bad, and compare this with the kings of Israel, which they may have looked at in lesson 52.

Relevance to our lives

The fulfilment of these prophecies after more than 2,500 years should make us keenly aware of the importance of being ready for Christ's return and of the certainty of the fulfilment of the rest of the prophecy.

Prayer

What prayer do the class think Jeremiah would say if he were here today?

Other suggestions for activities

- The events of Jeremiah buying the field from his cousin could be dramatised.
- The newspaper of the time of Jeremiah could be continued.
- A television news broadcast could be planned for May 1948 or June 1967 giving the Bible background to the events happening at that time.
- In preparation for next week's lesson a large map or individual maps could be made showing where the people of Judah were taken. Revise where the people of Israel had been taken. Mark Egypt where Jeremiah ended up. Individual maps can be overlaid with maps on tracing paper showing what countries are in these places today.