

## Aim of lesson

To show God's determination to use all methods available to teach his people his ways.

## Bible background

Ezekiel 4 and 5.

## Outline of lesson

### The siege of Jerusalem

In these two chapters Ezekiel is told to act out, in an elaborate way, the siege and taking of Jerusalem. Though the class have considered the destruction of Jerusalem (in Lesson 59) Ezekiel begins his preaching before that happens. You could read chapters 4 and 5 together, stopping to identify the illustrations of the various items in the workbook. Alternatively, you could give different groups of the class sections of the chapter to look up and write about under the appropriate illustration as follows:

- (a) Ezekiel 4:1      The clay tile with Jerusalem drawn on it.
- (b) Ezekiel 4:2-3    The siege works, ramp, camp, battering ram and iron pan, all used to depict the laying of siege against Jerusalem.
- (c) Ezekiel 4:9-17    The meagre rations of bread and water Ezekiel was allowed during his siege.
- (d) Ezekiel 5:1-2    The sharp sword Ezekiel used to shave his head and beard and to strike at a third of the hair.
- (e) Ezekiel 5:1      The scales used to divide the hair into three parts, giving the idea of God's judgement.
- (f) Ezekiel 5:3      Ezekiel's garment, used to fold a few hairs safely away.

### The Impact

In order for the class to appreciate the effect of this drama on the people watching, it would be helpful if the class could mime the scenes that Ezekiel acted out. The effect of Ezekiel burning on the tile of Jerusalem a third of his hair, attacking another third with the sword and throwing the last third to the winds, must have shown clearly and dramatically what would happen to the people of Jerusalem. The fact that Ezekiel's is used is significant. Since Ezekiel is acting out God's judgement, the use of his hair to represent the people, shows that God considered the people as part of himself – something very close to him. Although God was cutting off the people and giving them up to such judgement, he was deeply concerned and saves the few who trust in him. This is symbolised by the few hairs kept safe in the fold of Ezekiel's garment.

### Why drama?

Ask the class to consider why God asked Ezekiel to use such strange methods to convey his message. Encourage the class to see that God had, for centuries, been warning his people and, now that destruction was near, he was prepared to use all methods to reach the minds of his people with his message. Ezekiel is speaking to those already in captivity. Encourage the class to imagine what the people would think if they were not warned that Jerusalem would be taken. What might they have thought about God's power, about God's care for them, about the importance of worshipping God? What would the people around them say?

## Digging deeper

### God speaks

This section considers some of the ways God has spoken through the ages:

- 'Let there be light'
- God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden
- God spoke to Abraham (through an angel)
- The holy spirit spoke through men, apostles, prophets.
- Through Jesus
- and through those he has sent

### Relevance to our lives

Ask the class what lessons they can see for us as we consider preaching to other people. They could compile a list of different ways of preaching today, e.g. Sunday Evenings, Sunday School, Bible Exhibitions, leaflets, individual preaching, drama etc. They could perhaps do a survey to find out which methods had first attracted people to the gospel.

## Prayer

The class might like to consider what Ezekiel might have prayed during his long siege or after the dramatic end to it.

## Other suggestions for activities

The newspaper of the exiles could be continued.

The class could make a series of pictures on a roll of paper to move through a cardboard box 'television screen'. They could write the script for the commentary on the scenes of Ezekiel's acts.

The members of the class could each be given a slip of paper on which is written the reference for one of Ezekiel's signs. They could then act or mime the sign for the others to guess what it is. (a) Eating the scroll; (b) drawing on the tile; (c) lying on the right side and left; (d) dividing his hair; (e) going into captivity; (f) eating and drinking with fear; (g) not mourning for his wife. If they feel stupid think how Ezekiel felt!