

A New Future

Key Verse: *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.”*
—*Jeremiah 32:15*

Selected Scripture:
*Jeremiah 32:2-9,
14,15*

THE SETTING FOR TODAY’S

lesson is a sad one indeed. Jeremiah, a faithful Israelite and prophet of the Lord, had been shut up in prison by none other than Zedekiah, the king of Judah—Israel’s two-tribe division. Zedekiah was dismayed because Jeremiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would be besieged and defeated by the king of Babylon. He had further prophesied that Zedekiah’s kingdom would be taken away, and he would be taken captive to Babylon. (Jer. 32:2-5) Although now a prisoner at the hands of his own king, Jeremiah’s words were true. Indeed, everything he had foretold concerning Jerusalem, Zedekiah, and his kingdom came true. The Israelites were now slaves to Babylon. No longer did they own houses, fields, or vineyards.

While in prison, “the word of the LORD” came to Jeremiah in a very interesting way. (vss. 6-14) Paraphrasing the account, God informed Jeremiah that a field in his native town of Anathoth which had previously belonged to his uncle could remain under family ownership if he would buy it. “The right of redemption is thine to buy it,” God told Jeremiah. The son of Jeremiah’s uncle then came to him in prison and confirmed the Lord’s words, saying, “the right of inheritance is thine, and the

redemption is thine; buy it for thyself.” Jeremiah then “knew that this was the word of the LORD.” He bought the field, gave the money to his uncle’s son, and secured the evidence of purchase with the appropriate documents, sealing them in an earthen vessel in case it would ever be necessary in the future to substantiate the transaction.

Although the account of Jeremiah’s purchase of his uncle’s field is no doubt true, the Lord used it to illustrate something of great importance concerning Israel. Immediately following the foregoing account, we find the words of our Key Verse, which promises that “houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.” Just as Jeremiah had reclaimed ownership of his uncle’s property by paying the price for its redemption, Jesus paid the price—his perfect human life—for Adam’s redemption.—I Tim. 2:5,6

As recorded in the narrative of our lesson, Israel was at this time in bondage to Babylon. Mankind, too, has been in bondage to “sin and death” since Adam’s fall. (Rom. 8:2) In the case of Israel, the purchase by Jeremiah of his uncle’s field was accomplished while he was in prison, and while the nation was in captivity. The redemptive purchase of Adam and his race by Jesus was accomplished nearly two thousand years ago, during the midst of mankind’s captivity to sin and its awful results. Indeed, even today this bondage continues.

God is true to his promises, however, both to Israel and to the entire world. All mankind has been “redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ,” and are under his “ownership.” (I Pet. 1:18,19) In cooperation with the Heavenly Father, Christ will bless mankind whom he has purchased. All those who obey the righteous laws of Messiah’s kingdom will once again possess the beautiful Edenic paradise lost so long ago. Indeed, “Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land” of earth, man’s eternal and perfect dwelling place. What a glorious future is in store for the human race! ■