

The Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 17: Buying a Field in Hope; the Great and Mighty God

Jeremiah 32:1–33:26

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson sets God's limitless power and faithfulness against the backdrop of deserved judgment. The field at Anathoth and the great prayer (chapter 32) teach that the God who judges sin is the same God who keeps covenant and brings His people home; "nothing is too hard" for Him. The teacher should let the historical hope of return from Babylon stand, but press through it to its deeper fulfillment: God's promise to give His people "one heart and one way" and an "everlasting covenant" reaches its goal in the new covenant in Christ and the church, the true and spiritual Israel (Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 6:16), not merely in a national restoration.

The heaviest doctrinal care falls on 33:14–26, the righteous Branch and the everlasting covenant with David and the Levites. The teacher must present this as fulfilled in Christ, the promised Branch, who reigns now at God's right hand as King and serves as our eternal High Priest (Hebrews 7). The promise that David will never lack a man to reign is kept in Christ's endless reign (Luke 1:32–33; Acts 2:30–36), not in a future earthly Davidic political kingdom. The promise that the Levitical priests will never lack a man to offer is fulfilled in the better and permanent priesthood of Christ and in the spiritual sacrifices of His people (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15), not in a rebuilt temple with restored animal sacrifices, which would deny Christ's once-for-all offering (Hebrews 10:1–18). Avoid all premillennial and dispensational readings.

Beyond doctrine, the lesson aims at faith that acts. Jeremiah did not merely believe God's promise; he signed the deed and paid the silver. The teacher's goal is that students leave not only assured that nothing is too hard for God, but moved to obey Him concretely in some place where the outcome is still unseen, trusting the God who keeps every word He speaks.

Question 1

Student Question:

Read 32:6–15. While Jerusalem is besieged and Jeremiah is imprisoned, God commands him to buy a field at Anathoth as a sign that "houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land" (32:15). What does this strange purchase reveal about God's purposes beyond judgment, and about the kind of hope He gives His people?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Set the scene vividly before touching the doctrine. The Babylonian siege is tightening, the city is doomed, and Jeremiah is a prisoner for telling the truth (32:1–5). Into that hopeless moment

God gives the oddest of commands: buy a field. The right of redemption (32:7) means Jeremiah, as the nearest kinsman, has the duty to keep the land in the family. When his cousin Hanamel actually arrives, just as God said, Jeremiah knows this is the word of the Lord.

The whole transaction is deliberate and public: the silver weighed out, the deed signed and sealed, witnesses called, the documents stored in a jar (32:9–14). God is teaching through a sign-act. The carefully preserved deed says, in effect, this land will be worth something again. “Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land” (32:15).

The doctrine here is the hope that lies on the far side of God’s judgment. God’s discipline of His people is severe but never the end of the story. He wounds in order to heal, scatters in order to gather. The same God who is bringing Babylon is already planning the homecoming.

Press the application gently. Hope in God is not wishful thinking; it is grounded in His character and His word. Jeremiah could invest in a buried future because he trusted the One who promised it. We who know the empty tomb have even greater reason to hope past every ruin.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s purposes reach beyond judgment to restoration (32:15).
- The sign-act of buying the field as a visible promise of homecoming.
- Hope rooted in God’s character and word, not in circumstances.
- The right of redemption and the seriousness with which Jeremiah obeyed.
- The danger of reducing biblical hope to mere optimism untethered from God’s promises.

Discussion Prompts

- Why would God command something that looked so foolish in the moment?
- How is biblical hope different from simply hoping for the best?
- What does the carefully preserved deed teach us about the certainty of God’s promises?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jeremiah weighed out the silver, signed the deed, and sealed it in a jar to last “many days,” staking his own money on God’s promise (32:9–14). Where is God asking you to act on His word in a tangible way, before you can see the outcome?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question turns the field at Anathoth toward our own obedience. Jeremiah did not just nod at God’s promise; he weighed out seventeen shekels of silver and signed his name. Faith that costs nothing and does nothing is not the faith of the Bible. Real trust eventually shows up in our calendars and checkbooks and choices.

Help students see that obedience often runs ahead of evidence. Jeremiah bought land he might never walk again, in a country about to fall. Yet he acted because God had spoken. We are called to the same: to take the step God has made clear before we can see how it will turn out.

Invite specifics. Where has God's word already made a duty plain, a relationship to mend, a giving to begin, a sin to forsake, a witness to share, and we are waiting for guarantees before we move? The deed gets signed by those who obey first and understand later.

Keep it warm and free of guilt. The point is not frantic activity but trusting action, one concrete step laid on the promise of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faith expressed in tangible, costly action (James 2:17).
- Obedience that runs ahead of visible evidence.
- The difference between believing a promise and acting on it.
- Trusting God's word more than guaranteed outcomes.

Discussion Prompts

- What has God already made clear that you are waiting to 'see' before you obey?
- What would 'signing the deed' look like in your situation this week?
- Why does real faith eventually cost us something?

Question 3

Student Question:

Read 32:17–25. Jeremiah's great prayer begins with God's power in creation and history: "Nothing is too hard for you." Why does he ground his prayer in who God is before he brings his confusion to God, and what does this teach us about how to pray?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Jeremiah's prayer (32:17–25) is a model of how to bring confusion to God. He does not begin with his problem; he begins with God. "It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power... Nothing is too hard for you." He rehearses God's creation, His steadfast love, His mighty acts in Egypt, His justice. Only after worship does he voice his bewilderment about the field.

This order matters. When we lead with our fears, the fears grow large and God grows small. When we lead with who God is, our troubles are set in their true proportion. Jeremiah preaches truth to his own heart before he wrestles with the puzzle.

Notice the honesty within the reverence. Jeremiah essentially says, Lord, the city is falling, and yet you told me to buy a field (32:24–25). Reverent prayer is not pretending. It holds firmly to God’s greatness while bringing real questions to Him.

Apply it practically. Teach students to begin prayer with the character of God, His power, faithfulness, holiness, and mercy, before pouring out the need. The God who made the heavens is big enough for whatever they carry.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Grounding prayer in the character and works of God (32:17).
- Worship before petition as a way of seeing trouble truly.
- Reverent honesty: bringing real questions without irreverence.
- Preaching truth to our own hearts in prayer.
- God’s power in creation as the foundation of confidence.

Discussion Prompts

- How does beginning with who God is reshape the way you pray?
- What attributes of God most steady your heart when you are afraid?
- How can prayer be both deeply reverent and deeply honest?

Question 4

Student Question:

Jeremiah honestly told God the situation looked hopeless, even as he obeyed (32:24–25). How do you hold together honest lament and real obedience, telling God the truth about your fears while still trusting and obeying Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question presses the honesty of Jeremiah’s prayer into the student’s life. Even as he obeyed, Jeremiah told God plainly, “the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans” (32:24). He did not paper over the hard facts. Yet he had still bought the field. Lament and obedience walked together.

Many believers think faith means never admitting fear or confusion. Scripture says otherwise. The Psalms, Job, and Jeremiah all show saints pouring out raw distress to God while still trusting Him. Honesty is not the enemy of faith; pretending is.

Help students distinguish faithful lament from faithless grumbling. Lament speaks the hard truth to God and stays in His presence; grumbling speaks against God and turns away. Jeremiah obeyed while he wept.

Move toward something concrete. Invite each person to name one fear they have been hiding from God, and to bring it honestly to Him this week while continuing to obey in that area.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Honest lament and real obedience held together (Psalm 13).
- Faith does not require pretending we are unafraid.
- The difference between faithful lament and faithless grumbling.
- Staying in God's presence with our hard questions.

Discussion Prompts

- What fear have you been afraid to say honestly to God?
- How is lament different from grumbling against God?
- How can you keep obeying in an area even while you bring God your fears?

Question 5

Student Question:

Read 32:26–35. God answers, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” and then names the very real sins for which the city will fall. How does this passage hold together God’s limitless power and His holy justice against sin?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

God answers Jeremiah with His own question: “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” (32:27). It echoes the word to Abraham (Genesis 18:14). God's power is not abstract; it is the settled ground under every promise He makes. He can bring the city down and He can raise the people up.

But notice that God's answer does not leap straight to comfort. He first names the sin in sober detail (32:28–35): the idolatry, the high places of Baal, even the burning of their children to Molech. God's limitless power never floats free of His holiness. He is mighty, and He is just.

Teach both together. A God of power without holiness would be a tyrant; a God of holiness without power could not save. The God of Scripture is both, and so His judgments are real and His salvation is sure. The same omnipotence that judges sin is the omnipotence that redeems sinners.

Apply it honestly. We love to claim “nothing is too hard for God” over our wishes, but the same God takes our sin with deadly seriousness. The right response to His power is not presumption but reverent trust and repentance.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's limitless power as the ground of His promises (32:27).
- God's power held together with His holiness and justice (32:30–35).
- Judgment as God's righteous response to real, chosen sin.
- The danger of claiming God's power for our wishes while ignoring His holiness.
- Reverent trust and repentance as the right response to omnipotence.

Discussion Prompts

- Why must we hold God's power and His holiness together?
- How does naming specific sin guard us from a sentimental view of God?
- What does it mean to respond to God's power with repentance and not presumption?

Question 6

Student Question:

God's question, "Is anything too hard for me?" has steadied trembling believers for centuries. What situation in your life have you quietly filed under "impossible," and what would change if you brought it under that question?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question takes God's great question, "Is anything too hard for me?", and aims it at the student's personal "impossible" file. We all keep one: the marriage that seems past mending, the prodigal who will never come home, the addiction that owns us, the besetting fear that will not lift. We have quietly decided these are hopeless.

Help students see what they have actually done. By filing something under impossible, we have, without meaning to, drawn a line God may not cross. God's question invites us to erase that line and lay even our hardest case at His feet.

Be careful and tender. Trusting God's power is not a guarantee that He will do exactly what we want, when we want. It is the confidence that nothing is beyond Him, and that He is good. Some answers come on the far side of long waiting, as Jeremiah's field shows.

Move to a concrete step. Invite each person to name one 'impossible' situation and to begin bringing it to God under His own question, refusing to treat it as finally hopeless.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Bringing our 'impossible' situations under God's question (32:27).
- How despair quietly sets limits on God.
- Trust in God's power held together with submission to His will.
- Hope that endures long waiting, as with the buried deed.

Discussion Prompts

- What have you quietly filed under 'impossible'?
- How does 'Is anything too hard for me?' challenge that conclusion?
- How do we trust God's power without demanding our own outcome?

Question 7

Student Question:

Read 32:36–44. After the warnings of wrath, God promises to gather His people, give them “one heart and one way,” make “an everlasting covenant” with them, and rejoice over them “with all my heart and all my soul.” What does this reveal about God’s ultimate aim even in His judgment, and how is this renewed people fulfilled in the church under the new covenant?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

After the warnings, God turns to sheer grace (32:36–44). He will gather His scattered people, bring them back in safety, and, most wonderfully, change them: “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever.” He will make “an everlasting covenant” and will not turn away from doing them good. Then comes the astonishing line: He will “rejoice in doing them good... with all my heart and all my soul.”

This is the heart of God laid bare. Even His judgment serves a saving purpose. He disciplines in order to restore, scatters in order to gather, wounds in order to heal. The aim of God is not merely to punish sin but to win and renew a people for Himself.

Teach the fulfillment carefully. The historical return from Babylon was real, but it was only a shadow. The promise of one heart, an everlasting covenant, and God’s law within reaches its goal in the new covenant in Christ (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 8). The renewed people is the church, made up of Jew and Gentile, the true and spiritual Israel (Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 6:16), not a future national restoration of ethnic Israel.

Apply it with wonder. The God who could righteously have left us in our ruin instead delights to do us good. If you have ever doubted whether God truly wants your good, hear Him say He will do it “with all my heart and all my soul.”

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s saving aim even within His judgment (32:37–41).
- The inward gift of “one heart and one way” pointing to the new covenant.
- The “everlasting covenant” fulfilled in Christ and the church (Hebrews 8).
- The church as the true and spiritual Israel, not a future national restoration (Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 6:16).
- God’s delight in doing good to His people “with all my heart and all my soul.”

Discussion Prompts

- How does this passage reveal God's ultimate aim even in His discipline?
- What does it mean that the renewed people finds its fulfillment in the church?
- How does it change you to know God delights to do you good with His whole heart?

Question 8

Student Question:

God promised to put His fear in His people's hearts so they would not turn from Him (32:40), an inward work, not mere outward rule-keeping. Where do you long for God to change you from the inside rather than just patch your behavior?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question fastens on the inward promise of 32:40: God will put His fear in their hearts so they will not turn from Him. The trouble with Judah was never merely outward; it was a heart bent away from God. So God promises a heart-level change, not just better behavior.

Help students name the difference. We are often skilled at managing our outsides while the inside stays unchanged, the temper still simmering, the lust still lurking, the pride still ruling. God's new-covenant work goes deeper, writing His law on the heart (Hebrews 8:10).

Connect it to the gospel honestly. This inward transformation is exactly what Christ works in those who come to Him, dying and rising with Him in baptism (Romans 6:3-4) and walking in newness of life by His Spirit. We cannot manufacture a new heart; we can yield to the God who gives one.

Move to a concrete area. Invite each person to name one place where they are tired of merely patching behavior and long for God to change them from the inside, and to ask Him for that deep work.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's promise of inward transformation, not mere outward conformity (32:40).
- The new heart written by God under the new covenant (Hebrews 8:10).
- The difference between managing behavior and being changed within.
- Yielding to God's transforming work rather than self-improvement.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tired of merely patching behavior?
- What is the difference between outward conformity and a changed heart?
- How do we cooperate with God's inward work rather than just try harder?

Question 9

Student Question:

Read 33:14–26. God promises to raise up “a righteous Branch” for David who will “execute justice and righteousness,” and binds Himself by covenant that David will never lack a man to reign and the priests will never lack a man to offer. How is this promise fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal King and Priest, rather than in a future restored earthly dynasty, rebuilt temple, and renewed animal sacrifices?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest block of the lesson, and it must be handled with care, for here premillennial and dispensational readings go badly astray. God promises that “the days are coming” when He will cause “a righteous Branch to spring up for David,” One who “shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (33:14–16). The Branch is a royal title for the Messiah, and the New Testament names Him plainly: Jesus, the son of David. He is the King in whom this promise is kept.

God then binds Himself with a covenant as fixed as day and night (33:19–22): David will never lack a man to sit on the throne, and the Levitical priests will never lack a man to offer. With Jerusalem falling and the throne about to be vacated, this looked impossible. But God keeps it, not by restoring an earthly political dynasty, but by raising up the Son of David who reigns forever. The angel told Mary, “the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and... of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32–33). Peter preached at Pentecost that God had raised Jesus to sit on David’s throne (Acts 2:30–36). The throne of David is occupied now, by Christ, at the right hand of God. We must not look for a future earthly Davidic kingdom; the kingdom has come (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13), and Christ reigns now.

The promise about the priests offering offerings forever (33:18) is fulfilled, not in a rebuilt temple with renewed animal sacrifices, but in the better and permanent priesthood of Christ. Hebrews is emphatic: Christ holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever, and “he always lives to make intercession” (Hebrews 7:23–25). The old sacrifices, repeated daily, could never take away sins; Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down (Hebrews 10:11–14). To expect a literal restoration of Levitical animal sacrifice would deny the once-for-all sufficiency of Christ’s cross. The continuing “offerings” are now the spiritual sacrifices of God’s people: a holy priesthood offering praise, thanksgiving, and surrendered lives (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15; Romans 12:1).

So the unbreakable covenant with David and the Levites is gloriously kept, but kept in Christ. He is the righteous Branch who reigns, and He is the eternal Priest who offers. The line of David could not be cut off, because it was always heading toward Him. Help students see the wonder: at the very moment the throne seemed lost, God was pledging the Throne that can never be shaken.

Land it pastorally. Because the Branch already reigns and our Priest ever lives, our hope does not hang on the rise or fall of any earthly nation. It rests on a King and Priest who cannot die. As surely as God keeps day and night in their courses, He keeps His covenant in Christ.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The “righteous Branch” as the Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus the Son of David (33:15).
- David’s throne occupied now by the reigning Christ, not a future earthly dynasty (Luke 1:32–33; Acts 2:30–36).
- The kingdom as present in Christ and His church, not a future thousand-year reign (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13).
- The Levitical priests’ offerings fulfilled in Christ’s eternal priesthood (Hebrews 7:23–25).
- Christ’s one, once-for-all sacrifice, which ends and excludes any restored animal sacrifice (Hebrews 10:11–18).
- The continuing offerings as the spiritual sacrifices of God’s holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15).
- The certainty of God’s covenant, as fixed as the order of day and night (33:20–21).

Discussion Prompts

- Who is the ‘righteous Branch,’ and where does He reign now?
- Why would a literal restored animal sacrifice deny what Christ accomplished on the cross?
- What are the ‘offerings’ God’s people bring under the new covenant?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over these two chapters, from the field at Anathoth to the great prayer to the righteous Branch. Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using this passage to deepen your trust that nothing is too hard for Him.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone calls students from study to surrender. Look back across these two chapters: the field bought in hope, the great prayer, God’s mighty question, the promise of a renewed people, and the reigning Branch. Every thread says the same thing: nothing is too hard for our God, and He keeps His word.

Press for one specific thing. Where is the Lord Jesus inviting deeper trust this week, a fear to release under His question, a deed to sign in obedience, an impossible case to lay at His feet, a hope to anchor in the King who reigns?

Tie it explicitly to Christ. Jeremiah bought a field in hope of a homecoming he might never see; we live in the era of the homecoming, with the Branch already on the throne and our Priest ever interceding. We are formed not by gritting our teeth but by trusting Him.

Invite each person to name their 'one thing' aloud or on paper and carry it into the week as a matter of prayer and obedient action.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Moving from knowledge to trust and obedience (James 1:22).
- Christ the reigning Branch as the anchor of our hope.
- Faith that acts, signing the deed on God's promise.
- Formation as trusting Christ rather than self-effort.

Discussion Prompts

- Which theme of these chapters is the Lord pressing on you most?
- What is one concrete step of trust or obedience you will take this week?
- How does the reign of the risen Branch steady your hope today?