

The Field at Anathoth

Jeremiah 32

WHAT WE FOUND

With siege ramps against the walls and the prophet in custody, God told Jeremiah to buy a field, in his hostile hometown, behind enemy lines, in the worst real estate market in Judah's history. And Jeremiah did it properly: seventeen shekels weighed, deed signed, sealed, witnessed, archived in a clay jar to last (32:9-14). Hope in Scripture is not a mood; it files paperwork. The sermon over the deed was one sentence: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land" (32:15). Hope does not deny the disaster; it purchases what lies beyond it.

Jeremiah obeyed first and prayed his confusion second: "Nothing is too hard for thee... yet thou hast said to me, Buy the field" (32:17, 25). God answered with the prophet's own words: "Is anything too hard for me?" (32:27). Obedience may precede understanding; it never has to precede honesty. And the promise grew: an everlasting covenant, reverence written on hearts, and the most extravagant line in the book: "I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul" (32:41). The God of the Shema loves back with everything He asked of us.

Then we found the price of our own redemption, in the currencies it did not cost: "you were ransomed... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). In that deed the Church has always seen the figure of Christ, the Redeemer-Kinsman who exercised the right on our behalf. And God's packaging habit holds from Anathoth to Corinth: "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Cyprian of Carthage · *On Mortality*

Preaching while plague emptied Carthage, St. Cyprian in *On Mortality* urged Christians not to grieve as those who have no hope, for the dying depart to God's promises: the believer faces the same catastrophe as everyone else, steadied by what God has pledged beyond it.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas More · *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation, written in the Tower*

Imprisoned in the Tower, St. Thomas More wrote a book on comfort in tribulation: suffering borne with trust in God becomes the soil of consolation. He wrote it from custody, like Jeremiah's deed: a

work composed for a future he would not see in this life.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux · *Her letters*

St. Thérèse wrote that it is confidence, and confidence alone, that should lead us to Love (Letter 197). Seventeen shekels of silver, paid against all visible evidence, is confidence of exactly that kind.

Live It This Week

- Name your field, then take one irreversible step toward buying it this week: the application submitted, the account opened, the apology delivered, the commitment made in front of witnesses. Hope files paperwork.
- Pray Jeremiah's pattern once: begin with "Nothing is too hard for You," then tell God plainly the thing you have obeyed without understanding.
- Write "not with silver or gold" on a card and put it where you keep your money, as a one-week reminder of what you cost and what you are worth.

Memory Verse

"Ah Lord GOD! It is thou who hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thy outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for thee." (Jeremiah 32:17, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Jeremiah 36.

Catechism References

CCC 1817 · CCC 1821