

The Purchase of the Field

Jeremiah 32

Jeremiah 32:1-15 – *“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² For then the king of Babylon’s army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah’s house. ³ For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, ‘Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; ⁴ and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face, and see him eye to eye; ⁵ then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him,’ says the Lord; ‘though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed’?”*

⁶ And Jeremiah said, “The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ⁷ ‘Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, ‘Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.’” ⁸ Then Hanamel my uncle’s son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, ‘Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.’ Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. ⁹ So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money—seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. ¹¹ So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; ¹² and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

¹³ “Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, ¹⁴ ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days.” ¹⁵ For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.””

Background Notes

The events of this chapter took place in 587 BC, the 10th year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, and the 18th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jerusalem was already under siege by the Babylonian (Chaldean) army. Jeremiah was a prisoner in the court of the royal guard at this time, because King Zedekiah didn’t like his prophecies that predicted the fall of Jerusalem to Babylonian armies (v3), and the king’s capture and exile (v4-5).

Is there a contradiction between verse 4, which says that King Zedekiah would see and speak with the king of Babylon, and Ezekiel 12:13, which says that Zedekiah would not see Babylon even though he would die there? No contradiction! 2 Kings 25:6-7 harmonized these verses. Zedekiah saw King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, a staging area for prisoners before they were taken to Babylon. Zedekiah’s eyes were put out in Riblah, and he was transported as a blind captive to Babylon. Thus he never saw Babylon.

While Jeremiah was confined to the court of the guard, and while Jerusalem was under siege, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah about redeeming a piece of property for his cousin, Hanamel. Under the Law, a near relative was to redeem family property that had been lost or sold for one reason or another (Leviticus 25). This was the background to the story of Ruth and Boaz. In this case, however, the unusual circumstance was that this property was already in enemy hands. Who would be so foolish as to buy back a piece of property that might never again be available for possession and ownership?

Doctrinal Points

1. God's promises to Israel were fulfilled in the past.

Jeremiah 32:16-25 - *"Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying: ¹⁷ 'Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. ¹⁸ You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them — the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. ¹⁹ You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. ²⁰ You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. ²¹ You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; ²² You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them — "a land flowing with milk and honey." ²³ And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore, You have caused all this calamity to come upon them."*

²⁴ 'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it! ²⁵ And You have said to me, O Lord God, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses"! Yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'"

Jeremiah followed through with the directions from the Lord to buy back the piece of property for his cousin. The property was in Anathoth, Jeremiah's hometown (v8-9).

The cousin apparently thought that the property was no longer of any value since it was in enemy hands, so he turned it over to Jeremiah for a price - and kept the money!

Jeremiah made this legal proceeding public because he was using it as an object lesson in faith and trust in God's promises. God had promised that while the people of Judah would go into captivity because of their sins, He would also bring them back to their land. *"And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:11).* And, *"For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10).* Buying the piece of land that was already under enemy

control was evidence of Jeremiah's faith in God's promises. I wonder - would we have shown such faith in the midst of enemy siege?

In verses 16-25, Jeremiah seemed to have second thought about buying the piece of property. He wanted some confirmation from the Lord that he had done the right thing. On the one hand, Jeremiah knew that nothing was too hard for the Lord (v17). After all, the Lord created the universe, and He had brought His people out of Egypt and into the Land (v20-22). On the other hand, Israel had sinned, and the siege surrounding the city was certainly an indication that the nation was reaping what it had sown (v23-24). So he wondered, "Lord, are you sure I did the right thing in buying this piece of property?"

The Lord affirmed and reassured Jeremiah in the rest of the chapter. And God did indeed fulfill His promises to Israel. He brought them back to their Land after His discipline of the 70-year Babylonian captivity. God's promises to Israel were fulfilled in the past.

2. God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled in the future.

Jeremiah 32:26-44 - *"Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁷ 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? ²⁸ Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the*

Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. ²⁹ And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger; ³⁰ because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,' says the Lord. ³¹ 'For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face ³² because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger — they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³³ And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. ³⁴ But they set their abominations in the house that is called by My name, to defile it. ³⁵ And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'

³⁶ *"Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence': ³⁷ Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. ³⁸ They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹ then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. ⁴⁰ And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. ⁴¹ Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'*

⁴² *"For thus says the Lord: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. ⁴³ And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'" ⁴⁴ Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the Lord."*

The Lord reassured Jeremiah that “nothing is too difficult for God!” *“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”* (v27). Although God would allow the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem because of Judah’s sins (v28-35), in the future God would bring the people back to the Land and back to Himself (v36-44). The promises to Israel in these verses certainly went beyond the return of the Jewish people from their Babylonian captivity. In verse 37 God promised that He would **gather them out of all the countries** where He had driven them - not just Babylon. This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. However, the Jewish people are returning to the Land today from all around the world, so this prophecy’s fulfillment has begun. In addition, God promised that the people would be restored spiritually to Him (v38-39). That did not take place after the Babylonian captivity - but it will take place in the future!

In verse 40, an *“everlasting covenant”* was promised – once again, the promise of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31). This promise was not fulfilled when the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity, but it will be completely fulfilled with Israel in the future. The promises of the restoration of all the Land of Israel in (v43-44) have not yet taken place, but God’s promises to Israel will be fulfilled in the future.

Practical Application

Step out in faith with your money!

When Jeremiah stepped out in faith and bought property that was in enemy hands, it involved more than words. It involved 17 shekels of silver - more than a “token amount”!

Too often we get away with showing our faith by mere words. We don’t back it up with our money, except in “token” amounts. Money is the real test of our Christian faith. As the Lord said in Matthew 6:21, *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* How much of our money is going into **what really counts forever?** The way we use our money is a measure and true description of our faith.

Step out in faith with your money!