

Message #36

Jeremiah 32:1-44

Have you ever made an illogical purchase of something and shortly after you make the purchase, you wonder why did I buy that? I asked that question at prayer breakfast last Friday and one of our men immediately responded yes. He one time bought a car and as soon as he got it thought what in the world did I buy. The same man also bought some land and later thought this land is no good. So it does happen. We all probably have done this in some way.

We don't feel bad if you have ever done that because the same kind of thing happened to Jeremiah. **But in his case the one telling him to buy something was God.** Even though God told him to make the purchase, clearly after Jeremiah did it, he had doubts.

What God does here is this:

GOD TELLS JEREMIAH TO TRUST HIM AND PURCHASE SOMETHING THAT APPEARS TOTALLY ILLOGICAL IN ORDER TO MAKE A PROPHETIC POINT ABOUT THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PROPHETIC PROGRAM.

Let's set the context for this. Jeremiah had just woke up from an amazing, positive revelatory dream that left him feeling pleasant and happy about everything pertaining to Israel (Jer. 31:26). It was an amazing futuristic dream he had. He saw a time when Israel was fully restored to a brand new relationship with God. But that joy and elation was short lived.

One would think that Jeremiah would be well received and honored as a prophet of God. He always told the truth of God, both the negative and the positive. He told everyone that if they would turn from their sin and turn to the LORD, God would bless them. But he also informed them that the reason why they were in captivity is because they refused to obey God.

Jeremiah did not make a lot of friends with the "clergy group." For nearly nine years, Jeremiah had been proclaiming truth and the people and leaders of Israel, whom Jeremiah called "stupid" (Jer. 4:22), did not like what Jeremiah was saying. But Jeremiah had always told the truth even when it was not popular.

As a result, he found himself in jail. But God was with Jeremiah and was protecting him, revealing things to him, preserving him and even prospering him.

Now there are three simple parts to this interesting chapter:

PART #1 – Jeremiah is imprisoned for proclaiming the truth of the word of God and while he is in prison his cousin comes and wants to sell him some land. **32:1-15**

According to **verse 1**, this revelatory word of God came to Jeremiah in the 10th year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, which was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar.

Zedekiah started his reign in 597 BC and he reigned until 586 BC. **The tenth year was 587 BC, just one year before the Babylonians would completely destroy Jerusalem.**

According to **verse 2**, as the Babylonians were coming against Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was locked up in prison. It was some kind of house prison that was located within the King's house. So this was obviously a place where prisoners could be locked up and guarded.

According to **verses 3-5**, the reason why he was in prison was because Zedekiah did not like Jeremiah's messages that he was proclaiming about the judgment of God coming against him and the city. The people did not like his message and neither did king Zedekiah.

Jeremiah predicted that Zedekiah would be taken captive by the Babylonians and if he tried to fight against the Babylonians he would not succeed. Zedekiah did not like that message so he put Jeremiah in jail.

In some respects, God was looking out for Jeremiah while in jail. He was in a relatively safe location and he was given food and drink every day. So God still cared for his faithful servant.

Now while he is in prison something odd happens. In **verses 6-16**, God told Jeremiah that his cousin, whose name was Hanamel, was coming to visit Jeremiah to sell him a field that was located in Jeremiah's hometown of Anathoth. He was the son of Shallum, who was Jeremiah's uncle.

The field was about to be in the hands of the Babylonians and Jeremiah was in jail, so selling the field to Jeremiah wouldn't seem to be a good investment for Jeremiah. When some area is threatened by war, property values go down. A few months ago it was advertised that Detroit had become such a slum area that you could buy a house for \$1-\$500.

Now according to **verses 7-8**, Jeremiah was a near relative who had the Jewish right of redemption. If you were a tribe in Israel, you could not just sell land to anyone. It had to stay in the family.

We may assume that Jeremiah's uncle and cousin needed money, but when the land is being taken by the Babylonians, it would not make much sense for Jeremiah to buy this land. But God told him to do it. At the end of **verse 8**, Jeremiah knew this was what God wanted him to do. But he sure had some major doubts.

So according to **verse 9**, Jeremiah bought the field and paid 17 shekels of silver for it. A shekel has a purchasing power today of \$320. So 17 shekels by today's standards is \$5440. For Jeremiah this was quite a bit of money for what appears to be some worthless real estate deal.

According to **verses 10-12**, Jeremiah signed the deed and sealed the deed and then called witnesses to weigh the money on scales. There was obviously a sealed copy and an open copy of the deed and he turned the deed over to Baruch. This is the first mention of Baruch.

In **verses 13-15**, Jeremiah told Baruch to take the legal documents and store them in a jar that will preserve them for a long time. These jars were well known because the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in these types of jars.

Now in **verse 15**, God reveals to Jeremiah that in the future, this land will be very important. It will be inhabited once again by God's people and will be blessed. There will be Jewish houses and fields and vineyards and this will be very valuable land.

So here is Jeremiah in jail and God is sending him land deals that God says will mean something down the road in the future. In other words, God was revealing to Jeremiah that this land will be worth something in the future, which means He will restore Israel to the land and Jeremiah will have his hands on a gold mine. **Jeremiah is not purchasing this land for a land speculation investment; he is purchasing this land as a symbolic prophetic action that Israel will have a future land (v. 44).**

It is one thing to invest for God when things look positive, but it is quite another to continue to move forward by faith when things don't seem to be so positive. Things for God's people were totally and completely depressing due to the chastising judgment of God. But that did not negate the fact that God's people still needed to take God's word seriously and by faith apply it and move forward.

PART #2 – Jeremiah prays to God concerning his situation. **32:16-25**

Now after Jeremiah purchased this land apparently he had some doubts. It appears to me that as he saw things taking shape with Babylon just taking over the land, he began to wonder if buying that land was a smart move. He must have been thinking did I actually do the right thing? So what he did was pray and talk to God.

He wanted some reassurance that he had done the right thing in buying the land. This is very important to see. When you want to know what God is doing in your life, pray and ask Him. As we analyze this prayer, the theology of the way Jeremiah prays is impressive. It is the kind of theology one would expect for a prophet:

(Acknowledgement #1) - He acknowledges that God is the God of all creation and has all power to do anything. **32:17**

The prayer starts by recognizing the Omnipotence of God in creation and by stating a critical theological point about God, "nothing is too difficult for you." Any prayer that will move God is prayer that exalts God and acknowledges His power and greatness.

(Acknowledgment #2) - He acknowledges that God is a God who shows mercy to thousands of people. **32:18a**

God has shown mercy to not only thousands of people but millions of people. Certainly he would have had in his mind the thousands that were in Israel. God is a merciful God and His loving kindness and mercy and grace is given to millions.

(Acknowledgement #3) - He acknowledges that God is a God who does repay iniquity. **32:18b**

God does deal justly with people. He does pay back evil to fathers and children. There is a national blindness on Israel because of the rejection of her forefathers.

(Acknowledgement #4) - He acknowledges that God is a God who is great and mighty. **32:18c**

God's greatness and might is seen in the fact that He is the LORD of hosts. What that means is He is the sovereign God over everything, including the angelic beings.

(Acknowledgement #5) - He acknowledges that God is a God who is great in counsel. **32:19a**

God is Omniscient. He has knowledge of everything. His all-knowing knowledge means He is in a position to give true, righteous counsel to people.

(Acknowledgement #6) - He acknowledges that God is a God who is mighty in deed. **32:19b**

A key theme of Jeremiah is the amazing power of God. God is Omnipotent and His power cannot be measured.

(Acknowledgement #7) - He acknowledges that God is a God who sees everything about everyone. **32:19c**

God sees everything about everyone. He is Omnipresent. His eyes are open to "all the ways" of every human being.

(Acknowledgement #8) - He acknowledges that God is a God who does reward according to actions. **32:19d**

God does reward people. He rewards faithfulness and he rewards unfaithfulness. According to what a person does, He determines His rewards accordingly.

(Acknowledgement #9) - He acknowledges that God is a God who made a perpetual name for Himself by what He did in delivering Israel from the Egyptians. **32:20-23a**

God brought Israel out of Egypt and took them to the Promised Land and gave them that land that He had promised before. God is a powerful Savior.

(Acknowledgement #10) - He acknowledges that God has sovereignly made calamity to hit His own people because they would not obey His word. **32:23b-24**

God had brought the Assyrians against Israel and now He was bringing the Babylonians against Israel and Judah and they were on the verge of completely destroying Israel and taking the land.

(Acknowledgement #11) - He acknowledges that God has told him to buy a field even though the field was in custody of the Babylonians. **32:25**

Now Jeremiah gets at the crux of this, he wonders why God would have him buy land. Jeremiah could not seem to understand what God was doing. He knew God told him to buy the land but he didn't completely understand why.

PART #3 – God answers Jeremiah's prayer. **32:26-35**

God answers Jeremiah's prayer:

(Answer #1) - God says He is the God of all flesh. **32:27a**

God reveals that He is the One who causes all people to exist and knows where they exist.

(Answer #2) - God says He is the God who can do anything. **32:27b**

Jeremiah acknowledged this about God and God affirms this about Himself. There is nothing too difficult for God, just as Jeremiah said (**32:17**).

(Answer #3) - God says that He is the One who is about to give Jerusalem to the Babylonians. **32:28-29a**

God reveals to Jeremiah that He will let the Babylonians take the city and burn it down.

(Answer #4) - God says the reason He is burning the city down is because His people were idolatrous and evil over a long period of time. **32:29b-31**

God said the reason I am doing this is because My own people have polluted this land and this sacred city. They were idolatrous and worshipped other gods. They provoked God to anger and it takes a lot to do that. God gives His people plenty of time to grow and repent.

(Answer #5) - God says His own people have turned their backs on Him. **32:32-35**

All of God's own people were involved in this defection from God. This included the kings, the leaders, the priests, the prophets, the men and all the people. They turned their backs on God again and again. **They would not respond to His word or teaching.**

They got involved in detestable things. They brought in detestable things into the sacred house of God (**v. 34**). They would not listen and would not receive instruction. They did abominable things in their worship services. They sacrificed their own children and burned them (**v. 35**). **God said it had not even entered into My mind that My people were capable of this.**

God says this is why I have allowed Babylon to come into this land and kill people and destroy everything (**v. 36**).

Now I am sure that about this time Jeremiah was saying that is exactly my point. Why am I buying this land?

(Answer #6) - God will completely restore all of His blessings to His people. **32:37-44**

In these verses, God makes an amazing futuristic prediction that to this point has not come true. Even though He would allow the Babylonians to come into Jerusalem and burn it down, He would one day re-gather His people and bring them back to this land, the very land Jeremiah just purchased with 17 shekels.

He would restore them and would be the God of His people.

He would give them a heart and mind that would fear Him and they would always want to do what was right and good. God says I will one day rejoice over these people with all My heart and My soul (**v. 41**).

God would make a new covenant with His people and would create in them a heart that would never again wander away from Him.

He would cause His people to rejoice in their land.

Just as God brought this disaster on them, so He would bring His blessings on them (**v. 42**).

According to **verse 43**, fields would again be purchased and all fortunes would be restored (**v. 43**).

That land Jeremiah purchased would one day be legally his. Now know this land is not his now.

PARTING THOUGHTS

- 1. God does not forgive until people face their own sin.**
- 2. When godless things are brought into God's sacred place of worship it angers God.**
- 3. Nothing is too difficult for God to do.**
- 4. God will always bless faithful people even when He is chastising those unfaithful.**
- 5. God literally will fulfill all prophecy.**
- 6. One day Israel will be in her Promised Land experiencing the Blessings of God.**