

## JEREMIAH 32

## JEREMIAH BUYS A FIELD

The events in this chapter transpired in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King Zedekiah – about one year before the city of Jerusalem finally fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. At this time, Jeremiah was shut up in the court of the prison. And yet it was at this time and place that he received a Divine intimation that his cousin Hanameel would shortly come to him with a request for him to purchase the family property at Anathoth. This greatly startled the prophet, for he had a very clear God-given conviction of the approaching overthrow and desolation of the land of Judah. His one incessant message to his people for nearly forty years had been that the land must undergo a period of desolation, as a judgment for the sins of the people; and now it seemed conflicting and inconsistent for him to be told to purchase a field at Anathoth, as if it were needed for cultivation. However, when his uncle's son entered the prison-courtyard with his request, the prophet immediately assented to the proposal and purchased the property for 17 silver shekels (about 6.8 ounces, or 193 grams, worth around \$166\*).

Jeremiah took care to have the details of this land purchase recorded and witnessed with the same elaborate pains as if he were ready to begin occupying the property. Two deeds of contract were prepared – one of them sealed with the more private details of price; while the other remained open, bearing the signatures of the witnesses. And these were deposited in the care of Baruch the scribe, with the injunction to put them in a clay vessel and preserve them. The purpose of making this bargain was to signify that although Jerusalem was now besieged, and the whole country was likely to be laid waste; yet the time would come when houses, fields, and vineyards would again be possessed in the land (verse 15). Just as God appointed Jeremiah to confirm his predictions of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, by his own practice of living unmarried; so also, he now appointed him to confirm his predictions of the future restoration of Jerusalem, by his own practice of purchasing this field.

After this transaction was completed, Jeremiah took himself to his knees in prayer (verses 16-25). He adores the Lord and His infinite perfections. God is the Fountain of all power and life; with Him, there is no difficulty that cannot be overcome. He is a God of boundless mercy and strict justice, and He directs everything for the best. Jeremiah acknowledges that the Lord was righteous in causing evil to come upon his people; for whatever trouble we are in, we may be comforted with the assurance that the Lord sees it and knows how to remedy it.

Jehovah's answer to the prophet's prayer (verses 26-44) confirmed the purposes of His wrath against that generation of the Jews, but it also gave assur-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Jeremiah buys a field in Anathoth from his cousin Hanameel – verses 1-15
- ❖ He prays to God after the purchase of this property – verses 16-25
- ❖ The Lord's reply to the prophet's prayer – verses 26-44

ance of the purposes of His grace concerning future generations. It was indeed the people's sin, and nothing else, that ruined them and sent them into captivity; nevertheless, the future return and restoration of Judah and Jerusalem is also promised. In order that the people might not be brought to despair, God here gives hope of the mercy which He had in store for them afterwards; He would restore them to their own land, and they would buy and sell fields and vineyards and homes – just as Jeremiah had done now.

And doubtless, the Lord's promises are sure to all believers! God will acknowledge them as His own people, and He will prove Himself to be theirs. He will give them a heart to love Him



and to love each other. Although they may have different views about lesser things, they shall all be united in love concerning the great things of God – concerning their views of the evil of sin, the low estate of fallen man, the way of salvation through the Savior, the nature of true holiness, the vanity of the world, and the importance of eternal things. Those whom the Lord loves, He loves forever. We have no reason to distrust His faithfulness and constancy, but only our own hearts. He promised to settle His people in the land of Canaan again, and those promises were surely performed! Jeremiah's land-purchase was the pledge and promise of many such purchases that would be made after the return from captivity; and those inheritances are only very faint resemblances of our possessions of inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, which are kept securely for all those who have God's love in their hearts!

To very few men, besides Jeremiah, has been given the privilege of walking so closely along the path which the Redeemer trod during His earthly life. He was stripped of almost every blessing in life that people prize most. But amidst it all, he derived solace and support in prayer. Take this extract from his own diary: "Now after I had delivered the deed of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the Lord, saying, Ah, Lord God!" And he was encouraged in this holy exercise – for shortly after this incident, when his heart was more dismayed than ever (chapter 33:1-5), the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will show thee great and secret things, which thou knowest not." There is no help for the troubled soul like that which comes through prayer! You may have no clear vision of God; you may only be able to grope your way in the direction where He sits enshrouded from your view in the thick darkness; you may be able to do little more than recite things which God and you know perfectly well – ending your prayer as Jeremiah did, with the words, "Behold, thou seest it" (verse 24). Nevertheless, pray – and the peace of God will come down and enwrap your weary, troubled soul!

*Lord, thank You for bestowing upon us the gift of a new heart to love You forever, and thank You also for the blessing of being able to come to You in prayer! Amen.*