
JEREMIAH 32: 1 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.

Jeremiah, now confined for his faithful admonitions, foretells the fate of the king and city, Jer 32:1-5. According to the direction of God, he buys of his cousin Hanameel a field in Anathoth; the contract, or deed of sale, being subscribed, sealed, and witnessed, and delivered to Baruch, together with a duplicate not sealed, who is commanded to put them into an earthen vessel that they may remain there for many days, Jer 32:6-14. This transaction of the prophet, which is entered and subscribed in the public register, God constitutes a sign or pledge of the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, and of their again possessing houses, fields, and vineyards, in their own land, and by their own right, according to their tribes and families, Jer 32:15. Jeremiah's prayer, in which he recounts God's marvellous acts towards the children of Israel, and deeply deplores the lamentable state of the country, and the numerous provocations which have led to it, Jer 32:16-25. After which God is introduced declaring his purpose of giving up his people into the hands of their enemies, Jer 32:26-35; promising, however, to restore them in due time to their ancient possessions, and to make with them an everlasting covenant, Jer 32:36-44.

Verse 1

The word that came - This prophecy bears its own date: it was delivered in the tenth year of Zedekiah, which answered to the eighteenth of Nebuchadnezzar. It appears from 2Kgs 25:8, that the eleventh year of Zedekiah was the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar; and consequently, that the eighteenth of that monarch must have been the tenth of the Jewish king.

JEREMIAH 32: 2 Now at that time the king of Babylon's army was besieging Jerusalem; and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard, which was in the king of Judah's house.

Verse 2

Then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem - The siege had commenced the year before, and continued a year after ending in the fifth month of the following year; consequently, the siege must have lasted about eighteen months and twenty-seven days. See 2Kgs 25:18.

JEREMIAH 32: 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;

JEREMIAH 32: 4 and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall see his eyes;

Verse 4

And shall speak with him mouth to mouth - He shall be reduced to a state of the most abject servitude. The slave was obliged to fix his eyes on every motion of the master whilst giving his orders, who often condescended to give them only by dumb signs.

JEREMIAH 32: 5 and he shall bring Zedekiah to Babylon, and he shall be there until I visit him, says the LORD: though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not prosper?

JEREMIAH 32: 6 Jeremiah said, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

JEREMIAH 32: 7 Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle shall come to you, saying, Buy my field that is in Anathoth; for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.

Verse 7

The right of redemption is thine - The law had established that the estates of a family should never be alienated. If, therefore, a man through poverty was obliged to sell his patrimony, the nearest relative had a right to purchase it before all others, and even to redeem it, if it had been sold to another. This is what is called the right of goel, or kinsman, Lev 25:25. And in the year of jubilee the whole reverted to its ancient master Lev 25:13.

JEREMIAH 32: 8 So Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the guard according to the LORD's word, and said to me, Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption is yours; buy it for yourself. Then I knew that this was the LORD's word.

Verse 8

This was the word of the Lord - It was by his appointment that I was to make this purchase. The whole was designed as a symbolical act, to show the people that there would be a return from Babylon, that each family should re-enter on its former possessions, and that a man might safely purchase on the certainty of this event.

JEREMIAH 32: 9 I bought the field that was in Anathoth of Hanamel my uncle's son, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.

Verse 9

Weighed him the money - It does not appear that there was any coined or stamped money among the Jews before the captivity; the Scripture, therefore, never speaks of counting money, but of weighing it.

Seventeen shekels of silver - The shekel at this time must have been a nominal coin; it was a thing of a certain weight, or a certain worth. Seventeen shekels was the weight of the silver paid: but it might have been in one ingot, or piece. The shekel has been valued at from two shillings and threepence to

two shillings and sixpence, and even at three shillings; taking the purchase-money at a medium of the value of the shekel, it would amount only to about two pounds two shillings and sixpence. But as estates bore value only in proportion to the number of years before the jubilee, and the field in question was then in the hands of the Chaldeans, and this cousin of Jeremiah was not likely to come back to enjoy it after seventy years, (nor could he then have it, as a jubilee would intervene and restore it to the original family), and money must now be very scarce and high in its value, the seventeen shekels might have been a sufficient sum for a field in those circumstances, and one probably not large in its dimensions.

JEREMIAH 32: 10 I subscribed the deed, and sealed it, and called witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

Verse 10

I subscribed the evidence - We have here all the circumstances of this legal act:

1. An offer is made of the reversion of the ground, till the jubilee, to him who would then of right come into possession.
2. The price is agreed on, and the silver weighed in the balances.
3. A contract or deed of sale is drawn up, to which both parties agreeing,
4. Witnesses are brought forward to see it signed and sealed; for the contract was both subscribed and sealed.
5. A duplicate of the deed was drawn, which was not to be sealed, but to lie open for the inspection of those concerned in some public place where it might be safe and always to be seen.
6. The original, which was sealed up, was put in an earthen pitcher in order to be preserved from accidents.
7. This was delivered by the purchaser into the hands of a third party, to be preserved for the use of the purchaser, and witnesses were called to attest this delivery.
8. They subscribed the book of the purchase, perhaps a town book, or register, where such purchases were entered. Baruch was a scribe by profession; and the deeds were delivered into his hands, before witnesses, to be preserved as above.

Perhaps the law, in this case, required that the instrument should be thus lodged. But, in the present case, both the deeds, the original and the duplicate, were put into the earthen pitcher because the city was about to be burnt; and if lodged as usual, they would be destroyed in the general conflagration. See Jer 32:14.

JEREMIAH 32: 11 So I took the deed of the purchase, both that which was sealed, containing the terms and conditions, and that which was open;

JEREMIAH 32: 12 and I delivered the deed of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who subscribed the deed of the purchase, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the guard.

JEREMIAH 32: 13 I commanded Baruch before them, saying,

JEREMIAH 32: 14 Thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, this deed of the purchase which is sealed, and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel; that they may continue many days.

JEREMIAH 32: 15 For thus says the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land.

Verse 15

Houses and fields - shall be possessed again - That is, this is an evidence that the captivity shall not last long: houses, etc., shall here be possessed again, either by their present owners or immediate descendants.

The young might return; at least, all under ten years of age: there was no natural impossibility that they should not live till they should be fourscore.

JEREMIAH 32: 16 Now after I had delivered the deed of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying,

Verse 16

I prayed unto the Lord - And what a prayer! What weight of matter, sublimity of expression, profound veneration, just conception, Divine unction, powerful pleading, and strength of faith! Historical, without flatness; condensed, without obscurity; confessing the greatest of crimes against the most righteous of Beings, without despairing of his mercy, or presuming on his goodness: a confession that, in fact, acknowledges that God's justice should smite and destroy, had not his infinite goodness said, I will pardon and spare.

JEREMIAH 32: 17 Ah Lord GOD! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm; there is nothing too hard for you,

JEREMIAH 32: 18 who show loving kindness to thousands, and recompense the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them; the great, the mighty God, the LORD of Armies is his name;

JEREMIAH 32: 19 great in counsel, and mighty in work; whose 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:

Verse 19

Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of - men - Thou art omniscient, and knowest all things; thou art omnipresent, and seest all things.

JEREMIAH 32: 20 who performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even to this day, both in Israel and among other men; and made yourself a name, as in this day;

JEREMIAH 32: 21 and brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror;

JEREMIAH 32: 22 and gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;

JEREMIAH 32: 23 and they came in, and possessed it, but they didn't obey your voice, neither walked in your law; they have done nothing of all that you commanded them to do: therefore you have caused all this evil to come upon them.

JEREMIAH 32: 24 Behold, the mounds, they have come to the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence; and what you have spoken has happened; and behold, you see it.

Verse 24

Behold the mounts - The huge terraces raised up to plant their engines on, that they might throw darts, stones, etc., into the city.

Because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence - The city was now reduced to extreme necessity; and from the siege continuing nearly a year longer, we may conclude that the besieged made a noble defense.

JEREMIAH 32: 25 You have said to me, Lord GOD, Buy the field for money, and call witnesses; whereas the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

JEREMIAH 32: 26 Then the LORD's word came to Jeremiah, saying,

JEREMIAH 32: 27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?

JEREMIAH 32: 28 Therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:

JEREMIAH 32: 29 and the Chaldeans, who fight against this city, shall come and set this city on fire, 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.

Verse 29

With the houses, upon whose roofs - As it is most probable that Baal was the sun, they might have chosen the tops of the houses, which were always flat, with battlements around, to offer incense and sacrifice to him at his rising, and while he was in sight above the horizon.

JEREMIAH 32: 30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only that which was evil in my sight from their youth; for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, says the LORD.

Verse 30

For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil - They have all been transgressors from their earliest history.

For the children of Israel - The ten tribes.

Have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands - They have been sinners beyond all others, being excessive idolaters. Their hands have formed the objects of their worship.

JEREMIAH 32: 31 For this city has been to me a provocation of my anger and of my wrath from the day that they built it even to this day; that I should remove it from before my face,

JEREMIAH 32: 32 because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

JEREMIAH 32: 33 They have turned to me the back, and not the face: and though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction.

Verse 33

Though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them - From the frequent reference to this, we may naturally conclude that morning preaching prevailed much in Judea.

JEREMIAH 32: 34 But they set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.

JEREMIAH 32: 35 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 fire to Molech; which I didn't command them, neither did it come into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

JEREMIAH 32: 36 Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, about which you say, It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence:

JEREMIAH 32: 37 Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries, where I have driven them in my anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

Verse 37

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries - A promise often repeated. See Jer 29:14, and the notes on Jer 31:8 (note), etc.

JEREMIAH 32: 38 and they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

JEREMIAH 32: 39 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their good, and of their children after them:

Verse 39

I will give them one heart - And that a clean one.

And one way - And that a holy and safe one: and to have this clean heart, and to walk in this good way, will be for the good of them and their children after them. God's blessing is a profitable inheritance. They shall have but one object of worship, and one way of salvation; and being saved from sin, idolatry, and destruction, they must necessarily be happy within and happy without.

JEREMIAH 32: 40 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from following them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me.

JEREMIAH 32: 41 Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

Verse 41

Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good - Nothing can please God better than our coming to him to receive the good which, with his whole heart and his whole soul, he is ready to impart. How exceedingly condescending are these words of God!

JEREMIAH 32: 42 For thus says the LORD: Like as I have brought all this great evil on this people, so will I bring on them all the good that I have promised them.

Verse 42

Will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised - God's word cannot fail. The Jews have never yet received the good that God has promised. Nothing like the fulfillment of these promises took place after their return from Babylon; therefore there remaineth yet a rest for these ancient people of God; and it is under the Christian dispensation that they are to have it.

JEREMIAH 32: 43 Fields shall be bought in this land, about which you say, It is desolate, without man or animal; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

JEREMIAH 32: 44 Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe the deeds, and seal them, and call witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the hill country, and in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South: for I will cause their captivity to return, says the LORD.

Verse 44

Men shall buy fields for money - This is a reference to the symbolical purchase mentioned at the beginning of the chapter; that may be considered by them as a sure sign of their restoration, not only to the same land, but to their respective inheritances in that land. This the power of God could alone perform.