

## Jeremiah buys the Field (Jer 32-33)



- I. This is the second part of the 'book of consolation' (Ch 30-33) with another one of Jeremiah's prophetic acts – the most costly one! (c.f. 16:1-4; 18:1-12; 19:1-2, 10-11; 27:128:17; 43:8-13; 51:59-64). This takes place in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah's reign around 587BC, a year before Jerusalem fell.
- II. Jerusalem was shut in by the Babylonian siege, and Jeremiah was shut in prison in Jerusalem. The siege that started in Dec 589BC lasted around 30 months. The city fell to the Babylonians halfway into the siege. In Jerusalem, inflation soared (hyperinflation) especially food prices due to famine. Diseases were spreading because they could not get rid of sewage (32:24). All the surrounding land by now was captured by the Babylonian armies. There was no selling or buying of real estate.
- III. Jeremiah was in the 'eye of the storm' inside the palace prison. He was imprisoned because of his prophecies, that Nebuchadnezzar will take the city and Zedekiah will not escape (32:3-5). But the word of God was not bound in prison. Remember that many saints of God throughout the ages wrote timeless pieces in prison - Apostle Paul, John Bunyan (12 years in prison), Madam Guyon, Watchman Nee, etc.
- IV. The city was about to fall but what shines through these two chapters is powerful hope. Even as Jerusalem was hopelessly getting destroyed before his eyes, Jeremiah saw that one day it will become a city of praise and joy again. In Ch 32 Jeremiah buys the field. Ch 33 is about Jerusalem's fortunes being restored. These chapters contrast what faith sees and how faith acts versus what flesh sees and acts in a crisis. Flesh says, 'how can I make the most money and spend it before it crashes and becomes worthless?' But what does a man of faith do in a crisis as they were being surrounded by an occupying army? That is Jeremiah's story.

### A. Field Recovered (Jer 32)

#### 1. Redeeming Property (32:1-15)

- a. The Lord told Jeremiah that his cousin Hanamel would come and offer to sell him a property in Anathoth. Hanamel did come just as the Lord said. In those days food and clothing were not provided for prisoners. They or their relatives had to provide for basic needs (c.f. 2 Tim 4:13). Jeremiah needed to buy food with his money. Hanamel brought Jeremiah no food or clothing, but only to sell him a useless property! It was offensive and insensitive. (C.f. 11:19-23; 12:6)
- b. Hanamel saw the handwriting on the wall. His property will soon become worthless. So Hanamel tried to sell his imprisoned cousin the 'battlefield' land for full price. What was he thinking? Jeremiah didn't know what was happening? He was 'spiritual but not streetwise'? Jeremiah was very much aware! (c.f. 32:25) *In Israel's law of redemption (Lev 25:25-31, c.f. Ruth 4:1-12) the closest relative had the right to redeem the property before it was sold outside of the family. This law burst property bubbles.*
- c. The Lord wanted Jeremiah to buy the 'worthless field' and invest in the future of Jerusalem though he would never set his foot in it! Jeremiah weighed out 17 shekels of silver and gave the title deeds to Baruch, sealed and unsealed copies, to be put in a jar for later generations. Note the 'Dead Sea scrolls' lasted centuries. Archaeologists have unearthed similar duplicate deeds in the ANE, one sealed and the other unsealed, in fairly good condition. With this purchase of the land, Jeremiah prophesied, '*Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.*' (33:15) What a faith of a man he was!

#### 2. Realistic Prayer (32:16-25)

- a. After giving the title deed to Baruch, Jeremiah went to prayer. At first, it sounds like a tremendous prayer of faith, but when you listen carefully it sounds more like a prayer of struggle - a desperate prayer to convince himself that he did the right thing. Jeremiah seems to be asking, 'What have I done?' At the end of the tremendous prayer of God's power and Israel's history, he asks the question buried in his heart: '*And You 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.'* (32:25) Jeremiah might go hungry, he just spent all his money on the field he will not get to enjoy. 'Lord, why did you tell me to do this? Have I been misled?' Did Jeremiah doubt God's power? No. But Jeremiah may be questioning God's justice. 'God, they rebelled against you, and You will give back to them the field and all the blessings? I don't get it. I must have made a huge mistake!'

- b. God repeats all His promises (32:26-44) and restates Jeremiah's prayer back to him as a question, *'Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?'* (32:17) I.e. 'Jeremiah, do you really believe what you just said about Me?' God freely acknowledges He will judge Judah for their sin and rebellion: (a) the killing of the babies; (b) the idolatry, burning incense to other gods. *'They have turned to Me the back, and not the face,'* so God will in return show them His back, not His face (32:33).
- c. But there is a turnaround in the second half of God's reply to Jeremiah. He says, *'Just as I have brought all this calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.'* (32:42) God says, *'I will marry them again.'* He gives tremendous promises with 'I will' 12 times (32:37-44).  
*(1) I will gather them; (2) I will bring them back; (3) I will cause them to dwell safely; (4) they shall be My people and I will be their God; (5) I will give them one heart and one way; (6) I will make an everlasting covenant with them; (7) I will not turn away from doing them good; (8) I will put My fear in their hearts; (9) I will rejoice over them to do them good; (10) I will assuredly plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul; (11) I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them; (12) I will cause their captives to return.*
- Jeremiah's heart began to leap again with hope. God says emphatically, *'Fields will again be bought and sold. Title deeds will be useful all over the land again.'* (32:44) I.e. 'Jeremiah, you did not make a mistake.' After war, people could come with pre-war title deeds and say, 'That heap of rubble is mine.' It would have become a goldmine post-war! Jeremiah's jar could one day be dug up and the land claimed again! What if this gets discovered today?

### 3. Christian Application

(a) All the patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph - made the same kind of investment with eternity in view. In tremendous faith for their eternal inheritance, they all died without an inch of the promised land under their name (except their own burial ground). Why? They were looking for a city whose builder and architect is God. Man of flesh is myopic, he can only see what is directly ahead. They can't see an inch beyond this lifetime.

(b) Man of faith sees his life in the light of eternity. They see 'value' very differently. The truth is, our life is an investment we can make only once. Jeremiah's investment was a prophecy. It was a living testimony of God's future work. Our life and investment too can be a prophecy of new heaven and new earth that is to come!

(c) We can invest in 'heavenly Jerusalem' by the way we spend our lives. The investment we make shows if we truly believe what we say. We only invest in what we have faith in. Jesus said, 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' Where you put your capital is where your faith is. We are living in turbulent days. 30-40% of the USD was printed in the last 12 months! What is ahead? 'The Great Reset'? Inflation? Hyperinflation? So what do we do? How do we protect ourselves?

If God speaks to you like He spoke to Jeremiah, would you do it? Where is your future? Are you laying up your treasure in heaven? *'You cannot take it with you, but you can settle it in advance.'*

### B. Fortunes Restored - True Prosperity (Jer 31)

- Ch 33 is all about the restoration of Israel's fortunes – *'abundance of peace and truth'* (v6), *'prosperity and security'* (ESV). This is true prosperity according to Almighty God. While Jeremiah was in prison, the word of the Lord came to him a second time. God boldly invites, *'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'* (Jer 33:3) This is God's telephone number. In Hebrew 'besuroth' is something that is fortified and guarded, the 'secrets of God.' God is inviting His people to call out to Him (Heb: 'qara'), then God would let them into His secrets! What would you give for an accurate forecast of the future? Of the stock market?

There is nothing God doesn't know about the future. God can direct your investment to be most profitable. So God is saying, *'Cry out to Me and I will let you in on My secrets that had been guarded against outsiders.'* It will bring you 'true prosperity'. *We are the stewards of God's resources: 'Time'; 'Talent'; 'Treasure' (3 T's).* We need to ask God's help to direct the investment of our life into the future.

## 2. Five Steps towards True Prosperity (34:1-13)

- i) Man's wisdom is futile in protecting his fortune. Jews dug trenches to defend against the onslaught of the Babylonian invasion. But it was useless labour because God saw that the Babylonians would later simply fill these trenches with their corpses and use them as mass graves (34:5). Jews were literally digging their own graves while thinking they were defending themselves. What truly matters is what God does for us, not what we do for ourselves.
- ii) Healing must come before wealth. 'Behold, I will bring it health and healing.' (34:6) Who would want wealth over health? God is saying, 'You are a sick society, and therefore you need healing to retain God's blessing.' If our lifestyle is not healthy, then that must be fixed first.
- iii) Forgiveness comes before prosperity. 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me...' (34:7) Your spiritual health comes before material wealth.
- iv) 'Life of resounding praise' (34:9, 11) Continual thanksgiving, praise, and worship must be in the centre of life. Only then can God's prosperity on a nation continue.
- v) 'Continuing in the fear of God.' 'They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.' (34:9) No nation ever achieved peace and prosperity, then continued to walk in the fear of the Lord for long. What will it take for us to get to this place? History repeats the cycle of blessing, compromise, crisis (cry out to God) and deliverance. We are challenged in our personal lives.

## 3. How can God achieve this with us? When He installs the right leader over His people (34:14-25).

- i) 'Days are coming' (v14-16). God will keep the promise He has made with the 'fallen stump of Jesse.' God will bring out a new shoot, i.e. a righteous king out of what has been razed to the ground.
- ii) The reason our society is unable to maintain prosperity for long is because of corruption in the government. Corrupt governments promote corrupt economic systems.
- iii) When the 'Son of David' comes, He will straighten out corruption in the governments of the world and purify worship. Then the city of Jerusalem will be saved, and she will dwell securely.
- iv) Then Jerusalem will be called, 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' (33:16). This is the core of the gospel, and how God's people will receive healing and forgiveness. It is Messiah's name who would come (23:6). Now it is the name of the city of Jerusalem. The Lord imparts His name into the city of Jerusalem and to His people! (Rev 3:12). Jerusalem will be characterised by her name.
- v) How can God assure us of such a bright future? (34:19-26) He will surely send this King who will execute justice and righteousness on earth because God has already made a promise that David will never lack a man to sit on the throne. God promises, *'If you can stop the day and night from coming, then I will stop the descendants of David. If you can reorder the planets, then I will stop Me from fulfilling My words.'*

4. The promise is about the son of David who will sit on the throne forever, and the Levites who will serve the Lord continually. How does this get fulfilled? David and Levi come together in one person, Jesus Christ. Christ is the King and the Priest in one person. How about God's promise to bring forth the descendants of David and the priests as many as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore? God has made us kings and priests in Christ, and we shall reign with Him. We are part of the fulfillment of Jer 33 promise! In Christ we are the royal priesthood, like the stars in heaven and the sands of the sea.

5. Apostle John was imprisoned on the island of Patmos. One Sunday morning he saw the glorified Christ. He saw the door open in heaven, and he went up to the throne of God. He saw what will surely come to pass in the future, and recorded a much clearer vision of the new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven.

Jeremiah was in prison and saw the future of Jerusalem. And he put all his future hope, all his strength, time and resources into that future. He is not regretting it now! He made the right investment in prison although it didn't make sense to the natural mind.

So did the patriarchs, the apostles, and many saints throughout the ages. We too can make the decision today. And we pay the price in daily instalments of picking up our cross and following Jesus.