

Jer. 32:1-25: Jeremiah Makes a Strange Investment
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Overview

1. Point: Did you ever feel constrained by your conscience to do something that really didn't seem wise or prudent? Something that was right morally and biblically, but wrong by every practical standard? How did you decide? In this chapter, we see Jer faced with such a choice, and we can observe his faith in action.

2. Four major sections, interconnected by six features or characteristics:

	30-31a	31b	32	33
a) Sin	X		X	
b) Restoration	X			X
c) Covenant		X	X	
d) Creation		X		X
e) Poetry	X	X		
f) Prose			X	X

3. Overall structure of ch. 32

- a) 1, The point is a revelation from the Lord.
- b) 2-5, General setting.
- c) 6-25, Jer's own testimony (first person) about
 - 1) a strange set of events that sets the stage for the revelation, and
 - 2) a prayer he prayed for help in understanding them.
- d) 26-44, Finally we get to the revelation (next study).

4. Background Chronology (NOT IN SERMON)

- a) 39:1 Zed 9,10 Jan. 588 Siege begins
- b) Intervening details:

	Ref	Jer	Other
1)	34:1-7	Free	Capture Speech to Zed
2)	37:4-5	Free	siege lifted by Egypt
3)	37:12-13		Jer accused of treason
4)	37:15-16	Jon's house	
5)	37:17		interview with Zed
6)	37:20-21	court	
7)	38:4		princes ask for Jer's death
8)	38:6	cistern	
9)	38:8		Ebedmelech pleads for Jer's life
10)	38:13,28	court	
- c) 39:2 Zed 11,4 July 587 City falls

A. 2-5, Setting of the Chapter

We'll learn more details about this setting in chapters 34, 37, and 38, but for now, the following information will set the stage.

1. The siege mentioned in 32:2 lasted for 18 months (39:1-2), Jan. 588-July 587.

2. About half-way through, probably late summer 588, three things happened, in this order:
 - a) The Egyptians came to the rescue, and Neb lifted the siege for a short while.
 - b) Jer was imprisoned.
 - c) Neb reimposed the siege. The time statements of 1-2 indicate that the siege was imposed by the time the revelation of 27ff arrived, but the events of 6-25 must have happened during the brief window of openness (or at least 6-16; v.25 might suggest that the siege was back in force by the time Jer prayed, though then again, the reference to the mounts rather than to the army may reflect Neb's temporary absence.)
3. Reason for imprisonment: vv.3-5, quoting sermon in 34:1-7, earlier during the siege.
4. Alignment of historical events and portions of this chapter:
 - a) Siege began
 - b) Sermon quoted in 3-5
 - c) Siege lifted
 - d) Jer imprisoned (v.2)
 - e) Events of 6-15
 - f) Siege resumed (v.2)
 - g) Jer's prayer, 16-25 (cf. v.24)
 - h) The Lord's response, 26-44
 - i) Fall of Jerusalem

Now Jer begins to speak, as indicated by the IF and the first person forms.

B. 6-15, Jer's Purchase

Prompted by the Lord, Jer buys a field from his cousin.

1. 7, The Lord announces that his cousin will come and offer him a field. To understand what is going on, review the custom of redemption (Lev. 25:23-28):
 - a) If I become poor, I may have to sell my field.
 - b) Then a kinsman is bound to buy it back so that it does not pass out of the family.
 - c) Here, Hanamel seems to be inviting Jer to give him the money directly, avoiding the intermediate step of going through a stranger. The same process seems to have been used by Naomi in Ruth 4. During the first part of the siege, the village has no doubt been pillaged by the Babylonians. Now that the siege has lifted, Hanamel thinks the worst is over, and is looking for help wherever he can find it so that he can rebuild.
2. 8a, as the Lord promised, Hanamel arrives and offers the field. He is able to move in and out of the city freely because the siege has been temporarily lifted.
3. 8b-10, Jer buys the field. The deed (AV "evidence") is prepared in duplicate: one copy open for reference; the other sealed so

that if at some future time there is any question about whether the open version has been tampered with, a pristine copy is available.

Two things that we must remember about this purchase:

- a) Jer knows, as Hanamel may not, that the respite in the siege is only temporary. Jer knows that Neb will return and conquer the city, and send the people into exile. What value would the property be then? (Illustration: If I offered you some choice commercial property in downtown Kuwait, how eager would you be to buy it?) So we can expect that Jer is not enthusiastic about this purchase, and we'll see that confirmed in his prayer.
 - b) Still, Jer hardly has any choice in the matter. Redemption is a sacred responsibility, according to Lev. 25. Ruth 4 shows the shame that attaches to someone who refuses to fulfill such a duty. The fact that the Lord told him Hanamel was coming only deepens his obligation. So he does his duty.
4. 11-15, Jer commits the deeds to Baruch for safekeeping, and explains their meaning.
- a) This is the first time we meet Baruch, Jer's secretary. He is the person who took down Jer's prophecies by dictation. We will see much more of him in coming chapters. Probably a scribe at the court, whom Jer met while in prison, and whose heart the Lord touched, making him available not only to help Jer but also to preserve his teachings for us.
 - b) In giving Baruch the deeds, Jer gives him two instructions, both from the Lord. Jer is conscious that this whole transaction is intended by the Lord as a symbol.
 - 1) 14, Put the deeds in an earthen jar so that they will last a long time. (This is how the Dead Sea Scrolls were preserved for thousands of years.) That is: it will be a long time before these deeds will be useful to anyone. This corrects the error of Hanamel and others who assume that just because Neb has withdrawn for a short while, the judgment has been withdrawn.
 - 2) 15, Still, there will come a day when people once again buy and sell real estate. This is a promise that the judgment will indeed end someday.

Poor Jer. Deprived first of his freedom, now he must also give up his cash to redeem his impoverished cousin. He takes his despair where every believer should, to the Lord.

C. 16-25, quote p: Jer prays to God.

1. Introductory notes

- a) Note the time of his prayer. The Spirit of God has expressly noted for us that Jer prayed *after* he had concluded the deal with Hanamel.

Application: When faced with a question of conscience vs. pragmatics, we are likely to say, "I'll pray about it." But if the teaching of God's word is clear, no prayer is needed up front. We should do what's right without question; Balaam shows the danger of asking God for permission to evade his commands. In such a situation, the place of prayer is *after* we have obeyed.

- b) How he addresses the Lord: "Ah, Lord God." This formula is a favorite of Jer (1:6; 4:10; 14:13) and Ezekiel, and reflects confusion and despair on the part of the speaker. "Lord, I really don't understand what you're doing with me."

Application: It's OK to cast our burdens on the Lord. Godly prayer includes not only lofty praises, but also tears and frustrations.

2. The prayer itself has two main parts. Each provides a good model for our prayers.

- a) 17-24 consists of a series of descriptions of the Lord. starting with a very general high-level description and ending with the details of his interactions with Israel. In this section, Jer is recalling before the Lord what he knows of his attributes, and reminding the Lord of his own word.

- b) 25 is the point of his confusion and complaint. "How come you told me to buy this field, when the city is about to fall to the Babylonians?"

3. 17-24, Confessing the Lord

Jer's confession becomes more and more concrete in three steps from natural theology (the sort of thing one could learn from the heavens; Ps. 19 and Rom. 1:20), through biblical theology (a summary of the main attributes of God according to the Old Testament), to experiential theology (evidence of God's work in the events of human history).

- a) 17, Natural Theology.

From the grandeur of heaven and earth, we can conclude that God's power is infinite. Just the sort of conclusion that Rom. 1:20 authorizes, and that every person is held accountable for.

- b) 18-19a, Biblical Theology

Here Jer recalls bedrock attributes of God: his Passion, his Power, and his Plan. When our experience seems to be falling apart all around us, we need to be reminded of the basics, and that's where Jer goes for help.

1) 18a, God's Passion

Jer is hurting; the first thing he needs to remember about God is that God feels. God is not just a machine. He has a heart.

Illustration: This week, I had an exit interview with a staff member who is leaving ITI. I asked him to give me feedback on how I had functioned as his manager. He had good things to say, and some things that I could have done better. One of those was, "When I come in here with a problem, right away your problem solver starts up, when what I really need is for you to bleed with me a little first."

Jer here recalls what we know even more clearly from the NT, that we have not a god who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. God's feelings work in two directions, here recalled by Jer from Exod. 20:5,6, the second commandment.

a> God shows mercy, "works *xesed*," keeps his covenant toward thousands, those who love him and serve him. He is not unfeeling toward his children. So he cannot forget Jer's need.

b> God repays the sins of the fathers to the children. Exod. 20 says simply, "visits," but Jer brings in the notion of repayment (AV "recompense") because what is at issue for him is fairness and justice in the world. If his cousin has taken unfair advantage of him, the Lord will work that out. God is not cold and unfeeling toward those who violate his standards.

2) 18b, God's Power

Feelings are great, but they are worth little if the one who feels cannot act. So the next point that Jer recalls is that God is powerful. "Mighty" is the word that describes a hero, and "Lord of Hosts" recalls his position as the leader of the armies of heaven. By recalling God under a military metaphor, he remembers that this one who is feels with him is powerful to help.

3) 19a, God's Plan

Feeling and power alone are not enough; God needs to be able to formulate a coherent plan and carry it out. So Jer recalls that he is "great in counsel and mighty in work." God's counsel is his plan; the work refers to what results from the plan.

God sympathizes with his people, and hates those who oppose him (and thus them). He has the power to act on these feelings, and the sovereign consistency to carry out what he plans. This is a great step beyond just acknowledging God as

the creator of the heavens and the earth--but Jer will go one step further in his struggle.

c) 19b-24, Experiential Theology

Natural Theology draws from nature, and Biblical Theology from the pages of Scripture. Now Jer turns to experience in the ways of God with man for the most concrete encouragement, and also the most pointed evidence of his dilemma. He begins with a summary statement, which he then amplifies from the history of Israel.

Application: OT prayers (such as the Psalms) are full of examples of recalling God's past works. We should be more careful to acknowledge before God what he has already done for us, and what he has thus taught us.

1) 19b, the summary: God knows how we live, and deals with us accordingly. "Doings" is *ma(alaliym* "capricious, arbitrary deeds," so Jer is focusing here on sinful actions and the punishment that results from them.

2) 20-24, the amplification: the history of Israel

a> 20-22, God delivered Israel from Egypt. The emphasis here is on the good things that God did for Israel in bringing them out of Egypt and into the promised land. Thus the disobedience in the next paragraph becomes all the more serious.

Application: God's goodness to us always deepens our guilt if we do not respond by worshipping and serving him.

b> 23a, the people disobeyed, not just in isolated details, but in "all that you commanded them to do."

c> 23b,24, so God brings punishment. Again, summary with amplification.

1> 23b is the summary. The present disaster is simply an example of God "giving every one according to his way."

2> 24 is the amplification. He calls God's attention to the siege mound, the besieging army, and the sufferings of the seige. "Look, Lord, what you foretold has come to pass."

4. 25, Confronting the Lord

After this confession, Jer finally brings up the matter that's troubling him. In "thou hast said," "thou" is emphatic. "Lord, you're the one who brought the Babylonians here; you yourself can see that your prophecies have come to pass; in keeping with all of your attributes, the city is given into the hand of the

Babylonians--yet you yourself have me out buying real estate!"

The prayer is not asking for anything. It's just sharing with the Lord the confusion that Jer feels. He doesn't even ask the Lord for an explanation, but in the next section, the Lord graciously gives him one, which unfolds the full meaning of the symbol that consists of Jer's purchase of the field.

Summary

Every true believer must often stand for conscience and against what seems practical. Jer's example encourages us in such situations:

1. We must obey what God says, without question, even if others around us (like Hanamel) do not believe. "I'll pray about it" is the wrong response. If God's Word is clear, praying about whether or not to obey is Balaam's course, and leads to spiritual destruction.
2. But God does care for our perplexities. After we have obeyed, we should cast our cares on him--and as we shall see in our next study, he will comfort us.
3. When we do pray, Jer gives us a good model: focus our attention on what we know of God and his character; recall his mighty acts in the past, and don't be afraid to lay our deepest concerns before him. We can't hide our feelings anyway, and he wouldn't want us to.

Psalm:

Analysis

ch. 32, quote p: The Lord explains a strange purchase

A. 1-26, quote f: summary p

1. 1-25, text: temporal/circumstantial p

a) text: 32:1 HA/D.FBFR):A\$ER-HFYFH)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. M"/)"T
Y:HWFH

b) time:

1) {B.I/\$:IAT} [B.A/\$.FNFH] HF/(:A&IRIYT L:/CID:QIY.FHW.
MELEK: Y:HW.DFH

2) HIY) HA/\$.FNFH \$:MONEH-(E&:R"H \$FNFH LI/N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR

3) 32:2 W:/)FZ X"YL MELEK: B.FBEL CFRIYM (AL-Y:RW.\$FLFIM

4) W:/YIR:M:YFHW. HA/N.FBIY) HFYFH KFLW.) B.A/X:ACAR
HA/M.A+.FRFH):A\$ER B."YT-MELEK: Y:HW.DFH

c) 3-5, circumstantial p

1) text: 32:3):A\$ER K.:LF)/OW CID:QIY.FHW. MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH

2) circumstance: quote p

a> quote f: L"/)MOR MAD.W.(A)AT.FH NIB.F) L"/)MOR K.OH
)FMAR Y:HWFH

b> quote: summary of sermon in 34:2-5

1> HIN/:NIY NOT"N)ET-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T B.:/YAD
 MELEK:-B.FBEL
 2> W./L:KFD/FH.
 3> 32:4 W:/CID:QIY.FHW. MELEK: Y:HW.DFH LO) YIM.FL"+
 MI/Y.AD HA/K.A&:D.IYM
 4> K.IY HIN.FTON YIN.FT"N B.:/YAD MELEK:-B.FBEL
 5> W:/DIB.ER-P.IY/W (IM-P.IY/W
 6> W:/("YNFY/W)ET-{"YN/OW} [{"YNFY/W] T.IR:)EYNFH
 7> 32:5 W./BFBEL YOWLIK:)ET-CID:QIY.FHW.
 8> W:/\$FM YIH:YEH (AD-P.FQ:DIY)OT/OW N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 9> concession p
 a: concession: K.IY TIL.FX:AMW.)ET-HA/K.A&:D.IYM
 b: text: LO) TAC:LIYXW. P

d) 6-25, circumstantial p: quote p

1) quote f: 32:6 WA/Y.O)MER YIR:M:YFHW.

2) quote:

a> quote p: The Lord announced my kinsman's coming.

1> quote f: HFYFH D.:BAR-Y:HWFH)"L/AY L"/)MOR

2> quote:

a: 32:7 HIN."H X:ANAM:)"L B.EN-\$AL.UM D.OD/:KF B.F)
)"LEY/KF L"/)MOR

b: Q:N"H L/:KF)ET-&FDIY):A\$ER B.A/(:ANFTOWT

c: K.IY L/:KF MI\$:P.A+ HA/G.:)UL.FH LI/Q:NOWT

b> 8a, sequence p: The kinsman comes.

1> setting: 32:8 WA/Y.FBO))"L/AY X:ANAM:)"L

B.EN-D.OD/IY K.I/D:BAR Y:HWFH)EL-X:ACAR HA/M.A+.FRFH

2> bu-n: quote p

a: quote f: WA/Y.O)MER)"L/AY

b: quote: chiastic motivated command p

1: cmd: Q:N"H NF))ET-&FD/IY):A\$ER-B.A/(:ANFTOWT
):A\$ER B.:/)EREC B.IN:YFMIYN

2: motive: K.IY-L/:KF MI\$:P.A+ HA/Y:RU\$.FH

3: motive: W./L/:KF HA/G.:)UL.FH

4: cmd: Q:N"H-L/FK:

c> 8b-10, Jer buys the field

1> WF/)"DA(K.IY D:BAR-Y:HWFH HW.)

2> 32:9 WF/)EQ:NEH)ET-HA/&.FDEH M"/)"T X:ANAM:)"L

B.EN-D.OD/IY):A\$ER B.A/(:ANFTOWT

3> WF/)E\$:Q:ALFH-L./OW)ET-HA/K.ESEP \$IB:(FH \$:QFLIYM
 WA/(:A&FRFH HA/K.FSEP

4> 32:10 WF/)EK:T.OB B.A/S."PER

5> WF/)EX:T.OM

6> WF/)F("D ("DIYM

7> WF/)E\$:QOL HA/K.ESEP B.:/MO)Z:NFYIM

d> 11-15, Jer commits the deed to Baruch

1> 32:11 WF/)EQ.AX)ET-S"PER HA/M.IQ:NFH)ET-HE/XFTW.M
 HA/M.IC:WFH W:/HA/XUQ.IYM W:/)ET-HA/G.FLW.Y

2> 32:12 WF/)ET."N)ET-HA/S."PER HA/M.IQ:NFH

)EL-B.FRW.K: B.EN-N"RIY.FH B.EN-MAX:S"YFH L:/("YN"Y

X:ANAM:) "L D.OD/IY W./L:/ ("YN"Y HF/ ("DIYM
HA/K.OT:BIYM B./S"PER HA/M.IQ:NFH L:/ ("YN"Y
K.FL-HA/Y.:HW.DIYM HA/Y.O\$:BIYM B.A/X:ACAR
HA/M.A+.FRFH

3> quote p:

a: quote f 32:13 WF/):ACAW.EH)ET B.FRW.K:
L:/ ("YN"Y/HEM L"/)MOR

b: quote: coordinate p

1: quote p

A. quote f: 32:14 K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
) :ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L

B. quote:

1. LFQOWXA)ET-HA/S.:PFRIYM HF/)"L.EH)"T
S"PER HA/M.IQ:NFH HA/Z.EH W:/)"T
HE/XFTW.M W:/)"T S"PER HA/G.FLW.Y HA/Z.EH

2. text: W./N:TAT./FM B.I/K:LIY-XFRE&

3. purpose: L:MA(AN YA(AM:DW. YFMIYM RAB.IYM
S

2: quote p

A. quote f: 32:15 K.IY KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH
C:BF)OWT) :ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L

B. quote: (OWD YIQ.FNW. BFT.IYM W:/&FDOWT
W./K:RFMIYM B.F/)FREC HA/Z.O)T P

e> 16-25, quote p: Jer prays to God.

1> quote f: temporal p

a: text: 32:16 WF/):ET:P.AL."L)EL-Y:HWFH

b: time:)AX:AR"Y TIT.IY)ET-S"PER HA/M.IQ:NFH
)EL-B.FRW.K: B.EN-N"RIY.FH L"/)MOR

2> quote:

a: 32:17a) :AHFH.) :ADONFY Y:HWIH cf. 1:6; 4:10;
14:13; and Ezekiel uses; reflects confusion and
dispair on the part of the speaker.

b: 17b-24, refinement p: from general to specific

1: implication p: Natural Theology

A. evidence: HIN."H)AT.FH (F&IYTF
)ET-HA/\$.FMAYIM W:/)ET-HF/)FREC B./KOX/:AKF
HA/G.FDOWL W./BI/Z:RO(/:AKF HA/N.:+W.YFH

B. text: LO)-YIP.FL") MI/M./:KF K.FL-D.FBFR

2: attributes of God: Biblical Theology

A. just and forgiving

32:18 (O&EH XESD LA/):ALFPIYM W./M:\$AL."M
(:AWON)FBOWT)EL-X"YQ B.:N"Y/HEM
)AX:AR"Y/HEM

B. militant HF/)"L HA/G.FDOWL HA/G.IB.OWR
Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT \$:M/OW

C. counsel and works 32:19 G.:DOL HF/("CFH

W:/RAB HF/(:ALIYLIY.FH

3: ampl p: Experiential Theology

A. text: informed judge):A\$ER-("YNEY/KF
P:QUXOWT (AL-K.FL-D.AR:K"Y B.:N"Y)FDFM
LF/T" T L:/)IY\$ K.I/D:RFKFY/W W:/KI/P:RIY
MA(:ALFLFY/W

B. ampl: interchange p: history of Israel

1. God: delivered Israel from Egypt 32:20
) :A\$ER-

a) &AM:T.F)OT/OWT W./MOP:TIYM
B.:/) EREC-MIC:RAYIM (AD-HA/Y.OWM
HA/Z.EH W./B:/YI&:RF)"L W./BF/)FDFM

b) WA/T.A(:A&EH-L./:KF \$"M K.A/Y.OWM
HA/Z.EH

c) 32:21 WA/T.OC"))ET-(AM./:KF
)ET-YI&:RF)"L M"/) EREC MIC:RFYIM
B.:/) OTOWT W./B:/MOWP:TIYM W./B:/YFD
X:AZFQFH W./B:/)EZ:ROW(A N:+W.YFH
W./B:/MOWRF) G.FDOWL

d) comment p

1) text: 32:22 WA/T.IT."N L/FHEM
)ET-HF/)FREC HA/Z.O)T

2) comment <)REC>:):A\$ER-NI\$:B.A(:T.F
LA/):ABOWT/FM LF/T" T L/FHEM) EREC
ZFBAT XFLFB W./D:BF\$

2. people: disobeyed

a) 32:23 WA/Y.FBO)W.

b) WA/Y.IR:\$W.)OT/FH.

c) W:/LO)-\$FM:(W. B:/QOWL/EKF

d) {W./B:/TOROWT/EKF} [W./B:/TOWRFT/:KF]
LO)-HFLFKW.

e))"T K.FL-):A\$ER CIW.IYTFH L/FHEM
LA/(:A&OWT LO) (F&W.

3. ampl p: God: punishment

a) summary: WA/T.AQ:R"))OT/FM)"T
K.FL-HF/RF(FH HA/Z.O)T

b) ampl:

1) 32:24 HIN."H HA/S.OL:LOWT

2) B.F)W. HF/(IYR L:/LFK:D/FH.

3) W:/HF/(IYR NIT.:NFH B.:/YAD
HA/K.A&:D.IYM HA/N.IL:XFMIYM
(FLEY/HF MI/P.:N"Y HA/XEREB
W:/HF/RF(FB W:/HA/D.FBER

4) WA/):A\$ER D.IB.AR:T.F HFYFH

5) W:/HIN./:KF RO)EH

c: contrast p: Lord, you're contradicting yourself.

1: thesis: quote p

A. quote f: 32:25 W:/)AT.FH)FMAR:T.F)"L/AY
) :ADONFY Y:HWIH

B. quote: Q:N"H-L/:KF HA/&.FDEH B.A/K.ESEP
W:/HF("D ("DIYM

2: antithesis: W:/HF/(IYR NIT.:NFH B.:/YAD

HA/K.A&:D.IYM

2. summary: 32:26 WA/Y:HIY D.:BAR-Y:HWFH)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. L"/)MOR
(change of person; Jer is now 3rd instead of 2nd; suggests this
goes back to original long IF)

B. 27-44, quote (next study)