

Jer. 32:27-44, The Lord Explains the Purchase
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Overview

1. Recall that while the deal with Hanamel was during the Egyptian holiday, acc. to v.2 the siege has resumed by the time the Lord's answer arrives.
2. Outline: an initial statement (27), followed by three occurrences of "Thus saith the Lord" (28, 36, 42). Thus four sections in all.

Note that 27 is practically a quote of the first item of Jer's prayer (17) from natural theology. Jer's prayer also had four sections. Could it be that God's response deals item by item with Jer's prayer? We will find that it does, though the order of items 2 and 3 is reversed.

- a) 27 (cf. 17). Jer concluded the Lord's power from natural theology. The Lord affirms his ability to act, but shows that it is even stronger than Jer originally suggested.
- b) 28-35 (cf. 19b-24). From experiential theology, Jer traced God's work with the nation, and concluded his observation of Neb's siege by drawing God's attention to it. The Lord says, "I not only see it, I'm carrying it through."
- c) 36-41 (cf. 18-19a). Jer quoted extensively from the covenant of Sinai concerning the Lord's covenant faithfulness. The Lord shows that he is still a covenant God by reiterating the promise of the New Covenant, previously made in ch. 31.
- d) 42-44 (cf. 25). Jer's main question was, "Why did you have me buy this field?" The Lord specifically addresses this question after commenting on Jer's other items.

Application: Prayer ought to be a conversation with God. We should expect to ask him things and get specific answers. It is not a one-way expression of our feelings to him, much less the mindless meditation of the New Age, but an intimate conversation with the closest of all Friends.

A. 27, Nothing is Too Difficult for the Lord

The Lord begins his response where Jer began his question. Jer prayed, "Lord, there is nothing too hard for you." And the Lord responds, "That's right." But note that the evidence for the Lord's strength is different in the two cases.

1. Jer invokes the evidence of physical creation--brute power, yet in some ways far simpler than the kinds of human problems that beset Jer. Cf. my experience at ITI: it's easier to find people who can handle the hard science than it is to find good people skills.

2. The Lord reminds Jer that he is "the God of all flesh." He is able not only to keep the stars in their places, but also to handle the human problems.
3. *Application:* We ought not to limit God's sovereignty to the inanimate. There are many who gladly grant him control over the sun and moon, but who insist that man's free will is beyond his control. And even those who understand his sovereign election sometimes fret about the actions of others. But our God does whatever he pleases, among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. We can trust him even with the human side of our problem, knowing that if the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, how much more the mind of the commoner.

How does God use his great power? The rest of the prayer shows that it appears first in judgment, but then in salvation.

B. 28-35, The Lord will Judge the Land for sin

In the "experiential theology" part of his prayer, Jer called the Lord's attention to the Babylonian siege and how it corresponded to the Lord's prophecies of judgment. The Lord responds by affirming that the announced judgment will indeed fall, because of the peoples' sin.

1. 28-29, the judgment will fall. Note the irony of v.29. The people have burned incense on the roofs of their houses to Baal; now the entire city will be consumed in a conflagration.

"to provoke me to anger," as though this was the purpose for which they did it. Whether they thought of it this way or not, that's how seriously God takes the offense.

Application: Do not be tempted to think that God can't be bothered with our sin. He not only knows what we do, but also is pleased or angered according as we obey him or rebel against him. When we go after other gods--put other things in his place--his anger burns most fiercely. In ancient times these were idols. Today they may be education, money, or prestige. Whatever they are, we must never think that God is indifferent. He takes our sin as a deliberate slap in the face, and responds accordingly.

2. 30-35, the reason: the sin of the nation. The emphasis here is what the theologian calls "total depravity:" unbelievers can do *only* evil in God's eyes. God develops this lesson in three steps, starting with generalizations and then zeroing in with progressively more detail to show how heinous their rebellion has become.
 - a) 30, the broadest level of generalization. Note the repetition of "only": the only thing the nation has done is to do evil and anger the Lord. Such a sweeping condemnation seems extreme, until we realize that the unsaved person is incapable of doing any good at all. Even the things we think are

righteous are just filthy rags before God, because they represent our effort, our pride. Only what he produces in us is of any value in his eyes. "God saw what HE had made, and it was very good."

- b) 31-32 support the "only" of 30 with three statements about how universal their sin has been.
 - 1) 31, it has pervaded *the entire history of the city of Jerusalem*, from the day it was constructed (as a pagan fortress) to the time of Jer.
 - 2) 32a, "all the evil of the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah." The nation has engaged in *all kinds of offense*. Sin is not an isolated experience for them, but the very rhythm of their lives.
 - 3) 32b, *every social level* is guilty. This rebellion is not an unfortunate problem of the lower classes or the unchurched. Even the king and the religious leaders are implicated.
- c) At the level of greatest detail, 33-35 draws our attention to three specific sins, at the level of the individual, the church, and the family. Lest we grow complacent, we should contemplate how easily we can become guilty of these very sins.
 - 1) 33, Individually, they have refused to learn from God, in spite of his patient and repeated efforts to teach and warn them.

Application: It is a wonderful thing to learn God's word, but the privilege brings with it tremendous responsibility. The Lord indicated that the wicked, pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon would have an easier time in the day of judgment than would Capernaum, the hometown of Peter and Andrew, because the latter city had more opportunity to hear his word (Matt. 11:21-24). So it is with us. It is a wonderful privilege for us to study God's word together each week, but that study greatly increases our responsibility.

- 2) 34, As a congregation of God's people, they have defiled the temple itself with their abominations. They erected pagan altars even within the holy courts, and turned the worship of God into idolatry.

Application: The Lord's name now rests upon his people, the church, which Paul calls "the house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15). Over and over during the last 2000 years, the pure church has been defiled with men's abominations, so that virtually every organized form of Christianity has departed from the truth of Scripture. That's why we're where we are--but lest we grow proud in our separation, let's remember that the dangers that beset those before us continue to dog our

heels. When we gather for worship, are our minds on the Lord, or on the events of the world? Do we come together for what we can give to the Lord and to one another, or for what we can get? Are we really governed by God's word, or do we lapse into our own traditions?

- 3) 35, Most terribly, they have perverted the family by sacrificing their children to pagan deities.

Application: How is your faith reflected in your family? Are your evenings occupied with reading the Bible and prayer, or with TV? Husbands, do we love our wives as Christ loved the church, making personal sacrifices so that they can grow? Wives, are you truly subject to your husbands in all things, as unto the Lord? Parents, do you instruct your children in spiritual things, or leave them to pass unguarded through the fires of secular education? Children, do you honor and obey your parents, giving them the respect that God requires? If we do not do these things, we are little better than Israelites of old who perverted their families by sacrificing their children to the pagan god Moloch.

These judgments are weighty, but we have heard them before. What earns this episode a place in the Book of Consolation is what follows, the promise that God will follow his judgment with restoration, both physical (undoing the chastisement through Nebuchadnezzar) and spiritual (repairing the sin that led to that chastisement).

C. **36-41, The Lord will bring Physical and Spiritual Restoration**

In 18-19a, Jer drew attention to God's covenant commitments with allusions to the Covenant of Sinai. God responds by describing the benefits of the New Covenant, which we have seen already in ch.31.

This section is chiastic: 37 and 41 deal with physical restoration to the land, while 38-40 focuses on the spiritual benefits of the new covenant. As we have already seen, the OT promises of the covenant bind geographic and spiritual restoration inextricably together. The NT makes the church the heir of the spiritual blessings, but the geographic ones await their fulfillment in the coming kingdom.

In fact, the introduction to this paragraph says that it concerns "this city." Even the spiritual portion in the middle should be understood in its relation to the encircling geographic promises.

1. 37, God will gather them from all the lands of their dispersion, and will cause them to dwell securely in their own land. Some did return after the captivity, and even more have returned in our own day, but the "safely" part has never yet been realized. Since before the time of Jer, the nation has been a political hot-potato, and has never yet dwelt safely. But when this restoration takes place, it will.

2. 38-40, the spiritual aspects of the New Covenant.

- a) 38, They will enjoy that special relation with himself that has been his objective through all ages. This is the great New Covenant phrase that we saw in 30:22; 31:1,33.
- b) 39, He will enable them to live the righteous life that he requires and that they have never before been able to live. In ch.31, we saw that the mechanism of this is the indwelling Holy Spirit. Here, it is expressed as "one heart and one way." The expression is an explicit contrast with 18:11,12. Before, each did according to the imaginations of his own evil heart; now God will give them a common purpose and desire in line with his. Before, every one followed his evil way; now they will have a common, righteous way of life. The two ideas of the guiding heart and the resulting walk are combined in the common condemnation, "they walk after the imagination of their own heart" (cf. 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12).

It is not coincidental that our Lord calls himself "The Way" in John 14:6. The one way in which our new heart leads us is the way of Christlikeness.

- c) 40, God guarantees these blessings in the form of a covenant. It is called "everlasting:" once it is instituted, it will continue forever, unlike Sinai (cf. 31:32). Its contents can be summed up in two provisions:
 - 1) God will never again turn from doing them good. Once this covenant is in place, they will never again feel his wrath.
 - 2) He will so work in their hearts that they will never turn from him.
3. 41, Jer returns to the physical restoration that is the central theme of the paragraph. Now the emphasis is not the facts of the return, as in v.41, but God's attitude toward it. It is a time of great joy for Him. Note particularly the words, "with all my heart and with all my soul." This is the only time in the OT that these words are said of God, but they are prominent in Deut. 6:5, which to the Jew is the most sacred of all verses, inscribed on the posts of his gate.

Under the Old Covenant, people were commanded to love the Lord unreservedly, with all their heart and all their soul. Now the Lord promises that when he finally restores his people, he will do so without reservation.

The Lord's blessings under the Old Covenant were not without reservation. We have already seen how the very sufferings of the captivity were foretold in detail in Lev. 26. God knew that the people would fail, and he warned them of the consequences. Under the New Covenant, his sovereign plan for the nation includes no

more warfare, siege, famine, pestilence, or captivity. The fullest sense of Prov. 10:22 can finally be realized: The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.

4. *Application*: The particular form in which the New Covenant appears here directly addresses two common doctrinal errors, both concerning whether believers can turn into unbelievers.
- a) The first error teaches that some believers might lose their salvation and go to hell. But God promises that he will never turn away from those under this covenant, that he will love them with all his heart and all his soul. No one who is truly one of God's people (38) will ever suffer God's wrath.
 - b) The second error, reacting to the first, teaches that no matter how sinful someone is, if they have received Christ, they are safe forever. But God promises to give his people one heart leading them in one godly way. He will put his fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from him. Those who walk in sin cannot claim to be God's children. By their very conduct they show that they are not under the New Covenant, and must fear God's judgment.

The geographic aspects of the New Covenant form the basis for God's response to Jer's central question, which forms the final paragraph of the Lord's answer to Jer's prayer.

D. 42-44, The Lord will bring Physical Restoration

The whole point of Jer's prayer was to seek reassurance that his purchase was not as irregular as it seemed. Even when he sold the field, he knew the future blessing of which his action was a promise (v.15), but the Lord's response greatly strengthens his hope for the future.

The Lord's salvation is as certain as the judgment (42). In evidence of this, he promises that real estate transactions will again take place, just like the one that Jer has concluded with Hanameel.

Compare 43-44 with the meager comment that Jer made to Baruch in v.15, "houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." That's rather vacuous; whoever governs the land must make provision for ownership of real estate. But the Lord's words call for the same mechanisms that Jer used in his transaction. That is, the society will be restored. Jer's transaction will be recognized as legally binding.

The last clause should be read with its full meaning. It deals not just with captivity, but with their fortunes in general: "I will turn their fortunes," make right everything that has gone wrong.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of rich prophetic information here--so much so that we need to be careful not to miss the lesson that comes from the larger structure of the chapter. That lesson is that God wants

to interact with us in prayer. He wants us to bring all of our concerns to him. When we worship him, he wants to show us, as he showed Jer in 27, that he is even greater than we expected. When we notice sorrow, he wants to reminds us of its roots in man's sin. When we ask for reassurance in our stumbling steps of faith--when we "sell our fields" in the face of seeming absurdity--he wants to encourage us that we have indeed done what is right.

Psalm: 34:1-10

Analysis

A. 1-26, quote f: (previous study)

B. 27-44, quote:

1. induction p: cf. v.17, and note difference in evidence.
 - a) evidence: 32:27 HIN."H):ANIY Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y K.FL-B.F&FR
 - b) conclusion: H:A/MI/M./EN.IY YIP.FL") K.FL-D.FBFR

 2. 32:28-35, quote p: Judgment for sin
 - a) quote f: 32:28 LF/K"N K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - b) quote: reason p

The comment in 29b, about their sin on the roofs of the houses, is a linked keyword comment to the reason portion of the overall quote.

 - 1) text: causal p: I will enable Neb. to conquer the city.
 - a> cause: HIN/:NIY NOT"N)ET-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T B.:/YAD HA/K.A&:D.IYM W./B:/YAD N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL
 - b> effect: ampl p
 - 1> text: W./L:KFD/FH.
 - 2> ampl: sequence p
 - a: 32:29 W./BF)W. HA/K.A&:D.IYM HA/N.IL:XFMIYM (AL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T
 - b: comment p
 - 1: text: W./&:RFPW./HF W:/)"T HA/B.FT.IYM
 - 2: comment <BFTIYM>:):A\$ER : purpose p
 - A. text:
 1. QI+.:RW. (AL-G.AG.OWT"Y/HEM LA/B.A(AL
 2. W:/HIS.IKW. N:SFKIYM L"/)LOHIYM):AX"RIYM
 - B. purpose: L:MA(AN HAK:(IS/"NIY
- 2) reason: successive ampl p: the sin of the nation.
 - a> text: the only thing they have done is do evil and anger me.
 - 1> 32:30 K.IY-HFYW. B:N"Y-YI&:RF)"L W./B:N"Y Y:HW.DFH)AK: (O&IYM HF/RA(B.:/("YNAY MI/N.:(UROT"Y/HEM
 - 2> K.IY B:N"Y-YI&:RF)"L)AK: MAK:(ISIYM)OT/IY B.:/MA(:A&"H Y:D"Y/HEM N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - b> ampl-1: three universals support the "only"
 - 1> the entire life of the city
 - 32:31 K.IY (AL-)AP./IY W:/(AL-X:AMFT/IY HFY:TFH L./IY HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T L:/MIN-HA/Y.OWM):A\$ER B.FNW.)OWT/FH. W:/(AD HA/Y.OWM HA/Z.EH LA/H:ASIYR/FH. M"/(AL P.FNFY

2> the entire conduct of the people
32:32 (AL K.FL-RF(AT B.:N"Y-YI&:RF)"L W./B:N"Y
Y:HW.DFH):A\$ER (F&W. L:/HAK:(IS/"NIY

3> every social level
H"M.FH MAL:K"Y/HEM &FR"Y/HEM K.OH:AN"Y/HEM
W./N:BIY)"Y/HEM W:/)IY\$ Y:HW.DFH W:/YO\$:B"Y
Y:RW.\$FLFIM

c> ampl-2: details on their sin
1> ampl p: refusal to learn from God.
a: text: 32:33 WA/Y.IP:NW.)"L/AY (OREP W:/LO)
PFNIYM
b: ampl: interchange p
1: W:/LAM."D)OT/FM HA\$:K."M W:/LAM."D
2: W:/)"YN/FM \$OM:(IYM LF/QAXAT MW.SFR

2> defiled the temple
32:34 WA/Y.F&IYMW. \$IQ.W.C"Y/HEM B.A/B.AYIT
):A\$ER-NIQ:RF)-\$:M/IY (FLFY/W L:/+AM.:)/OW

3> comment p: infant sacrifice
a: text: 32:35 WA/Y.IB:NW.)ET-B.FMOWT HA/B.A(AL
):A\$ER B.:/G"Y) BEN-HIN.OM L:/HA(:ABIYR
)ET-B.:N"Y/HEM W:/)ET-B.:NOWT"Y/HEM LA/M.OLEK:
b: comment:):A\$ER
1: LO)-CIW.IYTIY/M
2: W:/LO) (FL:TFH (AL-LIB./IY
A. LA/(:A&OWT HA/T.OW("BFH HA/Z.O)T
1. L:MA(AN {HAX:A+IY} [HAX:A+IY])
)ET-Y:HW.DFH S

3. 32:36-41, quote p: promise of restoration: everlasting covenant
a) quote f: 32:36 W:/(AT.FH LF/K"N K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y
YI&:RF)"L)EL-HF/(IYR HA/Z.O)T):A\$ER)AT.EM)OM:RIYM NIT.:NFH
B.:/YAD MELEK:-B.FBEL B.A/XEREB W./BF/RF(FB W./BA/D.FBER

b) quote:
1) physical: seq p
a> 32:37 HIN/:NIY M:QAB.:C/FM MI/K.FL-HF/):ARFCOWT):A\$ER
HID.AX:T.IY/M \$FM B.:/)AP./IY W./BA/X:AMFTIY W./B:/QECEP
G.FDOWL
b> WA/H:A\$IBOTIY/M)EL-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH
c> W:/HO\$AB:T.IY/M LF/BE+AX

2) spiritual
a> 32:38 W:/HFYW. L/IY L:/(FM WA/):ANIY)EH:YEH L/FHEM
L"/)LOHIYM (cf. 30:22; 31:33)
b> 32:39 W:/NFTAT.IY L/FHEM L"B)EXFD W:/DEREK:)EXFD
L:/YIR:)FH)OWT/IY K.FL-HA/Y.FMIYM L:/+OWB L/FHEM
W:/LI/B:N"Y/HEM)AX:AR"Y/HEM
c> quote p: the new covenant
1> quote f: 32:40 W:/KFRAT.IY L/FHEM B.:RIYT (OWLFM
2> quote:):A\$ER
a: LO)-)F\$W.B M"/)AX:AR"Y/HEM L:/H"Y+IYBIY)OWT/FM
b: W:/)ET-YIR:)FT/IY)ET."N B.I/L:BFB/FM L:/BIL:T.IY
SW.R M"/(FL/FY

3) physical
a> 32:41 W:/&A&:T.IY (:AL"Y/HEM L:/H"+IYB)OWT/FM
b> W./N:+A(:T.IY/M B.F/)FREC HA/Z.O)T B.E/):EMET

B.:/KFL-LIB./IY W./B:/KFL-NAP:\$/IY S

4. 32:42-44, quote p: return to the land; fields again bought and sold (extracts and develops the physical portion of the previous paragraph)
- a) quote f: 32:42 K.IY-KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - b) quote: summary p
 - 1) text: evidence p
 - a> text: comparison p
 - 1> summary of 28-35
K.A/):A\$ER H"B")TIY)EL-HF/(FM HA/Z.EH)"T
K.FL-HF/RF(FH HA/G.:DOWLFH HA/Z.O)T
 - 2> summary of 36-41
K."N)FNOKIY M"BIY) (:AL"Y/HEM)ET-K.FL-HA/+.OWBFH
)A\$ER)FNOKIY D.OB"R (:AL"Y/HEM
 - b> evidence: ampl p
 - 1> text: 32:43 W:/NIQ:NFH HA/&.FDEH B.F/)FREC HA/Z.O)T
)A\$ER)AT.EM)OM:RIYM \$:MFMFH HIY) M"/)"YN)FDFM
W./B:H"MFH NIT.:NFH B.:/YAD HA/K.A&:D.IYM
 - 2> ampl: 32:44 &FDOWT B.A/K.ESEP YIQ:NW. W:/KFTOWB
B.A/S."PER W:/XFTOWM W:/HF("D ("DIYM B.:/)EREC
B.IN:YFMIN W./BI/S:BIYB"Y Y:RW.\$FLAIM W./B:/(FR"Y
Y:HW.DFH W./B:/(FR"Y HF/HFR W./B:/(FR"Y HA/\$.:P"LFH
W./B:/(FR"Y HA/N.EGEB
 - 2) summary: K.IY-)F\$IYB)ET-\$:BW.T/FM N:)UM-Y:HWFH P