

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Jeremiah 32:2-9, 14-15

King James Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, September 21, 2014

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 21, 2014**, is from **Jeremiah 32:2-9, 14-15**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Jeremiah 32:2-9, 14-15

(Jeremiah 32:2) For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house.

The time was the tenth year of King Zedekiah's reign as the king of Judah, and the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign as king of Babylon. This word of the LORD or prophecy came to Jeremiah when Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Babylon and King Zedekiah had imprisoned Jeremiah, accusing Jeremiah unjustly of deserting to the enemies of Israel. Jeremiah remained imprisoned until Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar freed him from captivity.

(Jeremiah 32:3) For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

King Zedekiah had listened to and believed the false prophets who had predicted that God would save Jerusalem from destruction and those previously sent into exile in 597 BC would soon be released. King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah why he gave a different message from God and was predicting the opposite of what the false prophets predicted; prophets that he did not recognize as false prophets.

(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 behold his eyes;

King Zedekiah displayed some fear for his own life. He had encouraged the Judeans to side with Egypt and rebel with them against the Babylonians, which was a mistake. Egypt had proven an unreliable and weak ally that the Babylonians quickly defeated. Jeremiah had warned King Zedekiah not to trust in Egypt, but to trust in God; however, King Zedekiah had ignored Jeremiah's warnings. Now, the Babylonians were about to destroy the city of Jerusalem and capture King Zedekiah. Even though Jeremiah spoke God's words of comfort and hope to God's people, he had to warn King Zedekiah that this specific judgment would fall upon him as part of God's punishment for his sins and rebellion against God. King Zedekiah should have eventually come to believe that Jeremiah was a true prophet of God as he suffered exactly the punishment of God that Jeremiah said he would experience.

(Jeremiah 32:5) And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

King Zedekiah locked Jeremiah in prison because he did not want the people to hear God's just judgment against him and his kingdom. He did not want Jeremiah to

undermine his kingship or discourage the people from fighting and resisting the Babylonians, for Jeremiah had encouraged the people to surrender to the Babylonians and save their lives. Everything Jeremiah foretold happened exactly as God told him.

(Jeremiah 32:6) And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jeremiah told the king that the word of the LORD came to him directly from the LORD. He also had an example to give the king. What God foretold him about the coming of his cousin happened exactly as God foretold him. Even though God intended to punish King Zedekiah and all the rebellious idolaters in his kingdom, God gave the nation and those who would be sent into exile a message of hope through Jeremiah for the kingdom's future and the future of the children who would be born to them in exile in Babylon. The word of the LORD was a message that Jeremiah should take a symbolic action to substantiate his message of hope.

(Jeremiah 32:7) Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth: for the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*.

God told Jeremiah to expect a visit while he was in prison from the son of his uncle, who would say that he did not

intend to buy a field after a relative's death that belonged in the family. So the field could stay in the family, Jeremiah as the next of kin in line had the opportunity to buy the field which was occupied by the Babylonian army that had captured it along with the town of Anathoth. It would take hope in God to buy the field.

(Jeremiah 32:8) So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine; buy *it* for thyself. Then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD.

Jeremiah knew and wanted others to know that he was taking this symbolic action because what God said would happen had happened when his nephew came to him. His nephew's appearance confirmed that God had indeed spoken to him. Jeremiah had the right of redemption and possession as an inheritance because he was next in line after his uncle had refused to buy a field occupied by an enemy of Judah. The Book of Ruth gives a good example of this practice. From a merely human point of view, Jeremiah would have been a fool to buy a field occupied by the enemies of Judah. Jeremiah bought the field only because God told him to buy the field as a way of

demonstrating God's faithfulness to future generations of His people.

(Jeremiah 32:9) And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver.

Jeremiah's symbolic action affirmed that the land would not remain in the possession of the Babylonians forever. God would save His people after He had sufficiently punished them. Someday the people would return to their land and if he bought the family's property it would remain in the possession of his returning family – even though Jeremiah would die before they returned from exile. Jeremiah put his money behind what the LORD had told him to tell the people.

(Jeremiah 32:14) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.

Since Jeremiah was in prison, he had Baruch handle the deeds to his land. What Jeremiah ordered to be done was a practice common at that time, and such documents and deeds written from that time period and later have been

found in earthenware jars; such as, the jars that contained the Dead Sea scrolls. These documents would need to be preserved for at least 70 years, “that they may continue many days.” A person would read the open scroll to know what was inside of the sealed scroll that would only be opened when another business or financial transaction was carried out.

(Jeremiah 32:15) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

Jeremiah also told the king, the people, and Baruch the reason he was taking this symbolic action, which Baruch included in the Book of Jeremiah at Jeremiah’s dictation. Jeremiah had acted on the promise of God that financially and materially speaking the land would return to normal commerce and trade and what he bought would remain a part of his family. Those who trusted God would someday return from exile and the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt again with help from the LORD. What Jeremiah predicted influenced the prayers of Daniel (see Daniel 9:2).

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What might you think about a person who claimed to be a prophet of God that the government locked in a prison?

2. How do you think most people would respond to someone if they said that God was going to have their enemies defeat their country in battle and God would not protect them from their enemies?
3. Did King Zedekiah know what Jeremiah was saying about him? What was Jeremiah saying about King Zedekiah?
4. Did King Zedekiah repent of his sins? Did the people repent of their sins after Jeremiah preached to them? Why did they do what they did?
5. What did Jeremiah say and do to give the people hope?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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