

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Jeremiah 32:2-9, 14-15

New American Standard Bible

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, September 21, 2014

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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) Now at that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard, which *was in* the house of the king of Judah,

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) because Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, "Why do you prophesy, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am about to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will 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 will not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but he will surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye;

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 will take Zedekiah to Babylon, and he will be there until I visit him," declares the LORD. "If you fight against the Chaldeans, you will not succeed"?"

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 to 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, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you, saying, "Buy for yourself my field which is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption 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) “Then Hanamel my uncle’s son came to me in the court of the guard according to the word of the LORD and said to me, ‘Buy my field, please, that is at Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for you have the right of possession and the redemption is yours; buy *it* for yourself.’ 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) “I bought the field which was at Anathoth from Hanamel my uncle’s son, and I weighed out the silver for him, 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 says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Take these deeds, this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last a long time.”

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 last a long time.” 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 says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Houses and fields and vineyards will again be bought 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*.

— © Copyright 2014 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.