



The Fiery Bones

Jeremiah 20:9

Text

Jeremiah 32:1-44

Topic

Jeremiah questions God when he is asked
to buy a seemingly worthless field

Title

"Tell God How You Field"

Introduction

"I have some prime swampland in Florida to sell you" is an expression people once used whenever someone was swindled on a purchase of so-called lucrative land that turned out to be worthless.

No one has really used the expression much since the 1960's and 1970's when Walt Disney did purchase worthless swampland in Florida and transformed it into Walt Disney World.

In our text Jeremiah is told by God to purchase a plot of land in his hometown of Anathoth. It was currently worthless in that the invading armies of King Nebuchadnezzar were already occupying it. Its value would decline even more when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and deported the population of Judah.

It seemed by all natural indicators to be downright foolish to buy land in Anathoth... *But that is exactly what Jeremiah did.*

When Jeremiah questioned Him, God declared how He was going to transform the land in the future into something wonderful.

God asks His followers to do a lot of seemingly foolish things that He transforms into something wonderful in the future.

- Noah was asked to build the ark even though the rain was a thing "not yet seen" (Hebrews 11:7).
- Abraham was asked to set out for the Promised Land "not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

Fools for Christ - that's what they were *and that's who we are supposed to be.*

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Are You Foolish Enough To Buy A Worthless Field For Jesus?, and #2 Is Jesus Faithful Enough To Bless A Worthless Field For You?

#1 Are You Foolish Enough To Buy A Worthless Field For Jesus?

(v1-25)

Perhaps it would be better to ask, "Are you willing to *seem* foolish for Jesus?" What He asks of you is never truly foolish; it only *seems* that way at the time - like building a boat when it had never rained or starting out on a journey not knowing your destination.

You answer the question when God asks **you** to do something that seems foolish - like buying a worthless field.

Jeremiah 32:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD - in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

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.

Jeremiah 32:3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Jeremiah 32:4 and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face, and see him eye to eye;

Jeremiah 32:5 then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him," says the LORD; "though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed" '?"

Jeremiah was under a sort of house arrest. Jerusalem was already under siege. Anathoth had already been deserted by its inhabitants and was in the possession of Babylonian troops. The last thing on your mind was buying 'swampland' in Anathoth.

Unless you were God.

Jeremiah 32:6 And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 32:7 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it." '

Jeremiah 32:8 Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

Jeremiah may have initially thought he was making this up; that it wasn't really from The Lord. I'm sure he was hoping it was a bad dream. That's how outrageous an idea it was. It wasn't until Hanamel came that Jeremiah knew "this was the Word of The Lord."

Hanamel doesn't come across as being very spiritual. Shrewd, by worldly standards, but not spiritual. Cash, in the form of silver, might prove valuable during a captivity, but not real estate. He must have thought that cousin Jeremiah was just foolish enough to buy the land.

You see the worldly, shrewd man; and you see the heavenly, spiritual man. It's clear which one we want to be, but which one are we most of the time?

For example. How much am I investing in the work of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ? I'm not talking about throwing money at something that seems foolish. I'm talking about investing in the kingdom by regular, sacrificial giving that God has promised to bless both now and in eternity. The majority of believers give very little money to the work of The Lord. I think the national average is less than 3% of their income. And that's among those who give regularly. Quite a lot of believers give nothing of their money to God's work.

If you're not already giving when it makes sense, out of love, to further godly projects you can see with your own eyes, then it's going to be a hard sell for you to give when it may seem foolish.

Jeremiah 32:9 So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money - seventeen shekels of silver.

Jeremiah 32:10 And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales.

Jeremiah 32:11 So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open;

Jeremiah 32:12 and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

Jeremiah 32:13 "Then I charged Baruch before them, saying,
Jeremiah 32:14 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:
"Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and
this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that
they may last many days."

There is a lot of interesting legal and historical information in these verses. For our purposes I would note that Jeremiah made a big deal out of this transaction. It wasn't something he tried to keep quiet. He went through all the normal channels and involved lots of other folks - who must have thought him a fool being taken advantage of.

One thing about being a fool for Jesus. God let's people know; He puts you on display.

Jeremiah 32:15 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." '

It seemed foolish but it had a spiritual spin. It was symbolic. Because God was promising the eventual return to the land, what seemed worthless was actually a steal.

If he believed his own prophecies, that God would one day restore the Jews to the land, then Jeremiah should be willing to buy the field for his descendants.

We like to say, "Your walk needs to match your talk." It's a nicer way of saying, "Put up or shut up." Or, in this case, "Put your money where your mouth is."

We are never going to be perfect this side of Heaven but we *are* called upon to have integrity and to be consistent between what we say we believe and how we behave.

Jeremiah 32:16 "Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying:

Jeremiah 32:17 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

Jeremiah 32:18 You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them - the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

Jeremiah 32:19 You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 32:20 You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day.

Jeremiah 32:21 You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror;

We like to say, "Your walk needs to match your talk." It's a nicer way of saying, "Put up or shut up." We are never going to be perfect this side of Heaven but we are called upon to have integrity and to be consistent between what we say we believe and how we behave.

Jeremiah 32:22 You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them - "a land flowing with milk and honey."

Jeremiah 32:23 And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them.

What a great read that was. What an awesome God we serve. Jeremiah seemed to be on a spiritual high - *until you realize this was a preface to him saying "But..." and wondering why he was being asked to act like a fool.*

He said,

Jeremiah 32:24 'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it!

Jeremiah 32:25 And You have 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.' "

Jeremiah knew it was God's will he buy the field; he was willing to be a fool for The Lord. Still, he struggled with it all.

It's hard to look foolish. To be building a boat when it had never rained. To be headed toward a promised land and not know where you were going.

Or, in our cases, to hold on to biblical values of marriage and family while the rest of the country is immersed in immorality. Or any number of other things that constitute the normal Christian life that seem foolish by the world's lowered standards.

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia on April 9, 1996, addressed a prayer breakfast in Jackson, Michigan, sponsored by the Southern Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College School of Law's Christian Legal Society. Justice Scalia told the audience that Christians must proclaim their biblical faith and belief in miracles and ignore the scorn of the "worldly wise."

Summing up, Justice Scalia declared, "We must pray for the courage to endure the scorn of the sophisticated world. We are fools for Christ's sake."

If you never do anything for the Lord that makes you look foolish, then you're passing on the fields He is asking you to buy - because every one of His followers must be a fool for Christ.

<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/isreport/fools.html>

We must therefore ask, "Is there a field Jesus has shown me that I ought to buy but would look foolish doing so?"

I can't even begin to guess what field The Lord might be showing you. It's a very personal question.

I can say this. If you **never** do anything for the Lord that makes you look foolish, then you're passing on the fields He is asking you to buy - **because every one of His followers must be a fool for Christ.**

#2 Is Jesus Faithful Enough To Bless A Worthless Field For You?

(v26-44)

The field Jeremiah bought was only worthless from a temporary, worldly perspective. From God's vantage point it was priceless and the Babylonian invasion was the perfect time to invest in His promises.

I can say this. If you **never** do anything for the Lord that makes you look foolish, then you're passing on the fields He is asking you to buy - **because every one of His followers must be a fool for Christ.**

Jeremiah 32:26 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah 32:27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?

Ah... No. God is not just powerful, however. He is faithful - and He will keep His promises.

Jeremiah 32:28 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

Jeremiah 32:29 And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger;

Jeremiah 32:30 because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,' says the LORD.

Jeremiah 32:31 'For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face

Jeremiah 32:32 because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger - they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 32:33 And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction.

Jeremiah 32:34 But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.

Jeremiah 32:35 And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'

God again reiterated exactly what was happening and why. It was discipline on His children. When you are a nation then discipline takes on the form of being conquered by another nation.

They certainly deserved the captivity that was coming. Which is worse - God allowing Jerusalem to be burned, or the Jews offering children as sacrifices in the fires of the god Molech?

Jeremiah 32:36 "Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:

Jeremiah 32:37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.

Jeremiah 32:38 They shall be My people, and I will be their God; Jeremiah 32:39 then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.

Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.

Jeremiah 32:41 Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'

If you are God you can skip over huge periods of time when you are talking. The things God promises in these verses have still not yet happened. Enough has occurred to know that He is God and that He will perform what He has promised. Israel is a nation again, in her promised land, never to again be displaced.

But as a nation they have not embraced Jesus as their Savior so they are still awaiting the fulfillment of the New Covenant alluded to in these verses.

The New Covenant was a major focus of our last study so I won't go over it again. Only I will say that today, as we await the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, Jews and Gentiles who trust Jesus for salvation are partaking of the New Covenant - having their sins forgiven once and for all, with immediate access to God's throne, and with the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah 32:42 "For thus says the LORD: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.

Jeremiah 32:43 And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans."

Jeremiah 32:44 Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the LORD."

Yes, Jeremiah; you look foolish now. But there is coming a time when the investment you made in the field in Anathoth will pay off. It will be the beachfront property of its day when Jesus returns in His Second Coming to establish God's kingdom on the earth. In that day all the Hanamel's who seemed so shrewd will be exposed as worldly men who lived for today rather than for eternity.

When Walt Disney started buying swampland in Florida he did so under different names so no one would realize what he was doing. He knew that land values would skyrocket once folks understood he wanted the land. Don't you wish you had had bought a few acres to resell to Disney?

Well, that opportunity has passed, but any investment you make for The Lord will, in the future, be the Orlando of its time. You can't go wrong investing with The Lord.

I asked, "Is Jesus faithful enough to bless a worthless field for you?" Yes; of course; without question.

His promised blessing may not come today... or tomorrow... or this year... or in your lifetime.

The foundation of your life is His faithfulness - ultimately. The only variable is your willingness or unwillingness to look foolish as various fields are offered to you.

Buy the field; build the boat; take the journey. You'll be in great company.