

Jeremiah 32:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

Analysis

And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. This verse describes Jeremiah's purchase of a field in Anathoth during Jerusalem's siege by Babylon—a prophetic sign-act demonstrating God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. The Hebrew *kahtov basefer* (כָּתוּב בַּסֵּפֶר, "subscribed the evidence") refers to signing the legal deed. *Va'echtom* (וַאֲעִתּוֹם, "sealed it") involved pressing a clay seal to authenticate the document, protecting it from tampering.

"Took witnesses" (*va'a'id edim*) follows ancient Near Eastern legal protocols requiring multiple witnesses for property transactions. "Weighed him the money in the balances" reflects pre-coinage economies where silver was measured by weight (*shekel* literally means "weight"). This meticulous legal process authenticated Jeremiah's purchase before God and man.

The theological significance is profound: while Jerusalem faced imminent destruction and exile, God commanded Jeremiah to purchase land—an act of faith in God's promise of restoration. This purchase declared that "houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (Jeremiah 32:15). It demonstrates that true faith trusts God's promises even when circumstances seem hopeless. For believers, this models confident hope in God's ultimate restoration despite present difficulties, pointing forward to Christ's securing our eternal inheritance.

Historical Context

This event occurred in 587 BC during Nebuchadnezzar's final siege of Jerusalem, months before the city's destruction. Jeremiah was imprisoned in the court of the guard for prophesying Jerusalem's fall—considered treasonous by King Zedekiah. The purchase of family land in Anathoth (Jeremiah's hometown, about 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem) exercised his right of redemption as nearest kinsman (go'el), based on Levitical law (Leviticus 25:25).

Ancient Near Eastern property transactions followed strict legal protocols. Archaeological discoveries of clay tablets from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Elephantine show similar procedures: written contracts, sealed copies, witnesses, and measured payment. The "evidence" likely consisted of two copies—one sealed (for safekeeping) and one open (for reference), stored in earthen jars for preservation (Jeremiah 32:14), as confirmed by Dead Sea Scroll discoveries.

The historical context makes Jeremiah's purchase remarkable: Jerusalem was besieged, famine ravaged the city, Babylonian victory was certain, and the land would soon be worthless. Yet Jeremiah's obedience to God's command demonstrated faith that exceeded rational calculation. The Babylonian exile lasted 70 years, after which Judeans did indeed return and repossess their ancestral lands, fulfilling this prophetic sign.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's purchase of land during a siege demonstrate radical faith in God's promises despite contrary circumstances?
2. What does this legal transaction reveal about God's character—His faithfulness to keep covenant promises?

3. In what ways does this passage challenge believers to make costly, faith-based decisions that seem foolish by worldly standards?
4. How does Jeremiah's role as *go'el* (redeemer) prefigure Christ's work as our Kinsman-Redeemer?
5. What hope does this passage offer believers facing seemingly hopeless situations—whether personal, ecclesial, or cultural?

Interlinear Text

וְאָכַתְּ ב	בִּסְפָּר	וְאָחַתְּ מ	וְאָעַד	עֵדֵי י	וְאָשָׁקַל ל
And I subscribed	the evidence	and sealed	it and took	witnesses	and weighed
H3789	H5612	H2856	H5749	H5707	H8254

הֵן סָף	בְּמֵאזְנַיִם:
him the money	in the balances
H3701	H3976

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 32:44 (Witness): Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 32:12 (Witness): And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

Isaiah 44:5 (Parallel theme): One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

Job 14:17 (Parallel theme): My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

Jeremiah 32:25 (Witness): And thou hast said unto me, O Lord GOD, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Deuteronomy 32:34 (Parallel theme): Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?

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