

Jeremiah 32:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah— Baruch (ברוך, Barukh, meaning "blessed") served as Jeremiah's faithful scribe and secretary. This transaction witnessed by edim (עדים, witnesses) followed ancient Near Eastern legal protocols requiring multiple witnesses for land transfers. The sefer hammiqnah (ספר המקנה, deed of purchase) was given **before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison**, emphasizing the public, legal nature of this transaction.

The meticulous legal documentation—witnesses, sealed and open copies, public testimony—establishes this as genuine property purchase, not symbolic gesture. Yet the context makes it absurd: Jerusalem was under siege, Babylon would soon destroy the city, and Jeremiah was imprisoned for prophesying doom. Buying land destined for enemy occupation was economically insane unless God's promise of future restoration (v. 15) was trustworthy. This act embodied radical faith in God's covenant faithfulness—the same faith Hebrews 11 celebrates as substance of things hoped for. Abraham bought a burial plot in Canaan as his only possession (Genesis 23), staking claim to God's future promise; Jeremiah's purchase similarly testified that **houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.**

Historical Context

This occurred in 588/587 BC during Nebuchadnezzar's final siege of Jerusalem, shortly before the city's destruction. Jeremiah was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard (chatser hammattarah) by King Zedekiah for prophesying Judah's defeat (Jeremiah 32:2-5). Ancient legal documents from Mesopotamia confirm the practice of creating two copies of contracts—one sealed for security and one open for reference—stored in clay vessels for preservation. Baruch ben Neriah is well-attested historically; bullae (clay seals) bearing his name have been discovered by archaeologists. The public nature of this transaction before Jewish witnesses served dual purposes: legal validity and prophetic sign. Within months, Babylon would destroy Jerusalem, burn the temple, and deport survivors. Yet Jeremiah's field purchase declared that God's purposes would outlast the judgment. Seventy years later, exiles returned to rebuild Jerusalem, vindicating both Jeremiah's warnings of destruction and his promises of restoration.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's purchase of land during a siege demonstrate the relationship between faith and action?
2. What 'fields' might God be calling you to invest in that seem economically or practically foolish but align with His promises?
3. How does this passage challenge the prosperity gospel that expects immediate returns on faith investments?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן
the son	of Maaseiah	before	of Hanameel	mine uncle's	before	before
H1121	H4271	H5869	H2601	H1730	H5869	H5374
בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן
the son	that subscribed	the book	of the purchase	before	before	before
H5707	H3789	H5612	H4736	H5869	H5869	H3605
בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן	בֶּן
the son	that sat	in the court	of the prison	before	before	before
H3064	H3427	H2691	H4307	H5869	H5869	H3605

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 32:16 (Parallel theme): Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying,

Jeremiah 51:59 (Parallel theme): The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.

Jeremiah 36:26 (Parallel theme): But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.