

Reading Guide for Jeremiah 32-33

Chapters 32-33 make up the second half of what is often called the “Book of Consolation” (chs. 30-33), which centers around Judah’s eventual restoration and return from exile. These two chapters belong chronologically with chapters 37-38 (as noted in 32:1 and 33:1). Chapter 32 records the events surrounding Jeremiah’s purchase of a plot of land in Anathoth, followed by his prayer and the Lord’s response to that prayer. Chapter 33 consists almost entirely of divine oracles that further reveal the Lord’s plans for the future of His people.

INTRODUCTION (32:1-5)

Message-reception Formula with Chronological Note (32:1)

Historical Context (32:2-5)

The Babylonian Army Besieging Jerusalem (v. 2a)

Jeremiah Confined in the Court of the Guard on Account of His Prophecy (vv. 2b-3a)

Summary Oracle 1: Jerusalem will be Captured (v. 3b)

Summary Oracle 2: Zedekiah will See Nebuchadnezzar and be Exiled (vv. 4-5a)

Summary Oracle 3: The People of Jerusalem will not Prevail over Babylon (v. 5b)

THE PURCHASE OF A FIELD AND THE REASON FOR IT (32:6-44)

The Lord reveals to Jeremiah that his cousin Hanamel will come and ask him to purchase a field in Anathoth. The request appears unthinkable in light of the fact that Jerusalem was facing certain disaster and the land of Judah was seemingly going to be lost forever. When Hanamel comes with the request, though, Jeremiah knows it is the true word of the Lord. He then buys the field and gives Baruch the deed in the presence of witnesses, along with the two oracles. The first oracle is a command to store the deed in a way that it would be preserved for a long time; the second oracle provides the interpretation of the sign-act: houses and fields and vineyards will again be bought in the land.

Sign-act: Jeremiah Buys a Field (32:6-15)

Message-reception Formula (v. 6)

Command from the Lord to Buy a Field (v. 7)

The Word Comes to Pass (v. 8)

Jeremiah Buys the Field and Seals the Deed (vv. 9-12)

Divine Oracles Delivered to Baruch (vv. 13-15)

Introduction (v. 13)

Oracle 1: Command to Store the Deed (v. 14)

Oracle 2: Interpretation: The Land Will Be Restored (v. 15)

Upon the completion of the sale, Jeremiah prays to the Lord, recounting the history of Israel’s rebellion as the reason for their present judgment. In light of that, Jeremiah wonders why the Lord asked him to buy a field. The Lord responds first by affirming Jerusalem’s rebellion as a reason for the disaster (vv. 16-25). He then turns to the future, which reveals His plans to restore them through a new covenant (vv. 36-41). Finally, clarity is brought to the sign-act, where it revealed that Judah will not belong to Babylon indefinitely, but a time is coming when the land will be restored to the people of Judah (vv. 42-44).

Jeremiah’s Prayer: A Request for an Explanation (32:16-25)

Introduction to Jeremiah’s Prayer (v. 16)

Prayer (vv. 17-25)

Praise to the Lord for His Sovereignty and Power (vv. 17-20)

History of Israel’s Sins as the Reason for Judgment (vv. 21-23)

The Babylonian Siege as Present Judgment (v. 24)

Jeremiah Requests an Explanation for the Purchase of the Field (v. 25)

The Lord's Response (32:26-35)

Message-reception Formula (v. 26)

Response (vv. 27-35)

Statement on the Lord's Sovereign Power (v. 27)

Judgment and Reasons for the Judgment (vv. 28-35)

The Lord's Future Plans of Restoration (vv. 36-41)

The Interpretation of the Sign-Act (vv. 42-44)

THE LORD'S FUTURE PLANS FOR HIS PEOPLE (33:1-13)

As an introduction to what follows, the Lord affirms that He made all things, and therefore *knows* all things. If Jeremiah would but call on Him, the Lord will reveal things that were previously hidden.

Call for Jeremiah to Inquire of the Lord (33:1-3)

Message-reception Formula with Chronological Note (v. 1)

Quotation Formula (Expanded) (v. 2)

Call for Jeremiah to Inquire of the Lord (v. 3)

The Lord continues in this oracle promising the restoration of Jerusalem after its inevitable destruction. Forgiveness of sin and cleansing is also promised, which will produce a joy that will draw all nations to hear about the good that Yahweh has done.

Oracle: The Lord will Restore and Forgive (33:4-9)

Quotation Formula (with Audience) (vv. 4-5)

Promise of Restoration to Jerusalem and its Citizens (v. 6)

Promise of Restoration to Judah and Israel (v. 7)

Cleansing and Forgiveness (v. 8)

The People Respond with Praise and Reverence (v. 9)

The next two oracles are similar in theme and structure. Both contrast the current state of Judah (which was a desolate wasteland) and what it would eventually become again. In the first oracle, the voice of rejoicing and thankfulness will once again be heard. In the second, the land will again be full of teeming flocks.

Oracle: The People will Again Celebrate in the Land (33:10-11)

Oracle: Flocks will Again Graze in the Land (33:12-13)

THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY AND THE PRIESTHOOD (33:14-26)

The concluding oracles center around the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and the Levitical priesthood. After Zedekiah, no king in the line of David would ever reign over Judah again, and although the line of priests from Zadok continued for a time after the exile, that eventually ended as well. The expectation of the restoration of these offices continued throughout the exilic period, until they were fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Oracle: A Righteous King will Arise in the Land (33:14-18)

The Lord will Fulfill His Promise for Good (v. 14)

A Righteous Branch from David will Bring Salvation and Peace (vv. 15-16)

The Continuation Davidic Monarchy and the Levitical Priesthood (vv. 17-18)

Oracle: The Surety of the Lord's Covenant with David and the Priesthood (33:19-22)

Message-reception Formula (v. 19)

The Lord's Covenant is as Sure as the Day and Night (vv. 20-21)

The Promise to Multiply the Offspring of David (v. 22)

Oracle: The Lord Has Not Rejected the Davidic and Levitical Offices (33:23-26)

Message-reception Formula (v. 23)

The People Falsely Accuse the Lord of Rejecting the Two Families (v. 24)

The Lord's Covenant is as Sure as the Day and Night (vv. 25-26a)

The Lord's Affirmation that He Will Bring Restoration and Mercy (v. 26b)