

Family Bible Series for Feb. 26: Have faith that God knows what he's doing

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Have faith that God knows what he's doing

• *Jeremiah 32:6-9, 27-30, 37-41*

By Donald Raney

Westlake Chapel, Graham

Serving God involves participating in God's plans to draw the world back into a proper relationship with him. By nature, these plans are vast in scope.

Often as individuals serve in the ministries to which they feel called, they cannot see how their seemingly small part fits into or contributes to the greater purpose. Our vision is limited to our particular situation and surroundings.

Sometimes God may call us to do something that seems to contradict our perception of the circumstances. To some, it may even seem God simply does not know what is going on, or he would not make such a request.

It is at these times we need to remember God stands in a position to have

an infinitely more panoramic view of what he is doing. Although we may not understand why, we simply need to carry through with our part, knowing that it will fit into God's overall plan—a plan we will understand one day.

Jeremiah 32:6-9

The situation was desperate for the Israelites. The Babylonians were coming to destroy Jerusalem and take the remaining citizens into exile.

Jeremiah remained under house arrest. For years, he had declared the message of God's coming judgment on the people. The people stubbornly had refused to listen to him, choosing instead to believe the false prophets who said God never would allow Jerusalem to be conquered. Now the opportunity for repentance had passed, and God was sending his judgment.

In Jeremiah 32:1-5, Jeremiah tells the king the Babylonians are coming and resisting them will mean death. God had determined the king would stand before the king of Babylon soon.

God then instructs Jeremiah to do something that might well seem futile or foolish in light of this coming destruction. God tells Jeremiah his cousin is coming to ask Jeremiah to buy a piece of land so it might stay in the family.

Two questions immediately come to mind. First, why would the cousin assume Jeremiah had the means to purchase land? As a very unpopular prophet, Jeremiah likely had not had any source of income. We are left to assume that perhaps his father had left him a substantial inheritance. Second, why would Jeremiah buy land if the Babylonians were about to conquer and take the people into exile? Such an act certainly would seem to run contrary to the message Jeremiah had been delivering.

Why would God make such a request of his prophet? Although these questions were running through his mind, Jeremiah obeyed God's call and

purchased the property from his cousin.

Jeremiah 32:27-30

Jeremiah 32:10-14 describes the process Jeremiah went through in purchasing his cousin's land. These proceedings follow closely the legal requirements for making the sale of land a legally binding agreement. Jeremiah is carrying out this transaction in a business-as-usual manner.

Someone viewing this scene might easily forget the Babylonian army was on the horizon. Yet this fact could not escape Jeremiah's constant thoughts. Jeremiah could not avoid the nagging question of why God would ask him to do this.

Thus in verses 16-25, Jeremiah prays to God. He recounts the history of the people that has brought them to this time of judgment and then, without asking a question, requests that God explain why he has just bought property soon to be under Babylonian control.

God responds to Jeremiah by first addressing any unexpressed questions or concerns Jeremiah might harbor. In verse 27, God, in the form of a question, reminds his prophet nothing is too difficult for God to handle. God is aware of the circumstances and how his request might appear. What might be seen as an unusual or illogical request based on circumstances is well within God's ability to work out within his plans.

God then continues by reaffirming the truthfulness and immanent fulfillment of the judgment Jeremiah has been proclaiming for almost 40 years. God is indeed preparing to hand over Jerusalem and all of its inhabitants to the Babylonians. God's anger had been provoked because the people had not done as God instructed. They had not done their part in fulfilling their divine calling.

Jeremiah 32:37-41

Seeing that Jeremiah still had questions, God revealed to him the reason for telling Jeremiah to buy the family land. The day would come when God's anger would be satisfied, and he would gather his people back to himself in the Promised Land. God would again establish them in the land as his people, and he would be their God. God would renew an everlasting covenant with them and would rejoice over them.

Jeremiah's act of purchasing the land was a sign this return would happen. Just as Jeremiah had faith the judgment would come, his purchase of land demonstrated his confidence in God's promise of a return. Although the land would be controlled by the Babylonians for a time, the land one day again would be the possession of the restored nation of Israel.

The lesson God taught Jeremiah so many years ago still holds true for us today. Although we may not understand why God calls us to certain actions or see his greater plan, the faith we have that God holds an intentional view of time and space should motivate us to move ahead in carrying out God's call and to do our part in fulfilling his greater purposes.

Discussion questions

- *Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed to be unusual or illogical? What happened?*
- *How can we go about seeing the "big picture" of God's plans and our part in them?*
- *What lessons can we learn about prayer in Jeremiah 32?*



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