

Jeremiah 32 "If We Really Believe the Lord, It Shows"^{**}

Main Idea: Like Jeremiah in Jeremiah 32, if we really believe the Lord, it will show, and it will show in four ways.

I. We show we believe the Lord through our preaching (1-5).

A. Jeremiah paid a price for the message he preached (1-2).

B. Jeremiah said exactly what the Lord told him to say, even though it sounded unpatriotic (3-5).

II. We show we believe the Lord through our spending (6-15).

A. The Lord told Jeremiah to buy a field (6-7).

B. Jeremiah bought the field even though he would never enjoy it (8-15).

1. He spent his money in submission to the Word of God.
2. He spent his money with the future in mind.
3. He spent his money to bring honor to the One who gave it to him.

III. We show we believe the Lord through our praying (16-25).

A. Jeremiah brought his praise to the Lord (16-23).

1. He called attention to His power (17).
2. He called attention to His loving involvement in people's lives (18-19).
3. He called attention to His past work in redemption (20-22).
4. He called attention to His present work in bringing destruction (23).

B. Jeremiah brought his predicament to the Lord (24-25).

1. We're about to lose our country.
2. You told me to buy a field.

IV. We show we believe the Lord through our listening (26-44).

A. The Lord announced that He was going to judge His people (26-35).

1. He clarified how it would happen (27-29).
2. He clarified why it would happen (30-35).

B. The Lord announced that He was going to restore His people (36-44).

1. I'm going to restore them to this land (37).

2. I'm going to restore them to Me (38).
3. I'm going to restore them to My ways (39-41).
4. I'm going to restore them to prosperity (42-44).

Make It Personal: Two questions in light of Jeremiah's example...

1. How am I treating the word of the Lord?
2. What is the Lord asking me to do today to show that I really believe Him?

It's called easy-believism, and I hadn't been a Christian for very long when I first confronted it. His name was Richard, and I met him on the school bus in the sixth grade. He told me he was a Christian, just like I'd just become the previous year. I was glad to meet another follower of Jesus, since it was all so new to me and since I didn't really know any other Christians in my new school.

But then I noticed something. Richard's talk didn't match Richard's walk. I mean, when Richard was talking with me, he said he was a Christian. But when I saw how he interacted with the other kids on the bus and at school, I saw a different Richard, a Richard who used the name of Jesus Christ in a way that would make a sailor blush.

Have you ever met anybody like that? Oh, they believe in Jesus, at least they say they do. But there seems to be very little connection between their beliefs and their behavior. It's an easy-believism.

What's the Lord's assessment of easy-believism? Quite frankly, it's so prevalent in our world today that we may falsely presume that it's acceptable. We've even created labels to justify it. "Oh, he's just *backslidden*." Or, "she's a *carnal* Christian."

Let's be clear about it. God's Word doesn't endorse easy-believism. It condemns it (see Matt. 7:22-23, 24-27). But our purpose this morning isn't to expose the problem of easy-believism. Just the opposite. I want us to ponder the beauty of living faith.

For the past five weeks we've explored the book of Lamentations together. There's living faith there, for sure! The writer penned five poems to help his people respond in a God-honoring way to the destruction of life and land that took place in Judah in the sixth century B.C. I intended to leave the sixth century and launch a new series this morning in John's Gospel, but I just can't, not yet. There's a question that I feel compelled to address, namely, *What made Jeremiah tick?*

Jeremiah ministered during one of the most difficult situations ever faced by a man of God. He not only watched his country slide into a spiritual cesspool, but he had to tell them that as a consequence of their sin God's judgment was coming. To make it worse, he too had to endure the judgment when it came. And yet he didn't just endure it, but actually ministered to his hurting people by writing lamentations to help them grieve properly, through confession, repentance, and returning to the Lord.

When I'm hurting, my tendency is to turn inward and become self-absorbed. Not Jeremiah. He turned upward and outward out of his love for God and his people. He demonstrated a *living faith*.

I want that, don't you? I want to know what made Jeremiah tick, and I want that in my life and yours. To find out what made him tick, I want us to go back into the book that bears his name. It's in the book of Jeremiah that we find a window into the soul of this amazing man of God. We're not going to study the whole book, but I'd like for us to take three weeks or so to examine some key events recorded in that book that reveal Jeremiah's heart to us.

I've entitled our mini-series, *"Living By Faith When Times Are Tough."* That's precisely what Jeremiah did. He lived by faith, not sight, and he did it during the toughest of times. And I believe there's much we

can learn from him.

By the way, can I prove that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations? The answer is, no, I can't prove he wrote the book of Lamentations, for it's anonymous. But I know he wrote laments to help his people, for 2 Chronicles 35:25 says he "composed laments." And while I personally believe he is the author of Lamentations, it doesn't really matter as far as the point goes. Whether he wrote the book itself or only some other laments, Jeremiah was a remarkable man who loved God and his people so much that in the midst of his own pain he reached out to help them.

I want to know what made him tick for I want to glorify God as he did. By looking at his example I want us to learn together how to live by faith in the tough times. Here's the tentative schedule for the upcoming weeks:

"A Visit to the Potter's House" Jeremiah 18

"A Letter to the Exiles" Jeremiah 29

"A Conversation with Baruch" Jeremiah 45

But to begin our investigation I want us to explore a most intriguing event in Jeremiah 32. The year is 587 B.C., that's just months away from the fall of Jerusalem. The capital city is under siege and food is scarce. Jeremiah is in prison with the charge of treason hanging over his head. And what did he do? *He bought a field from his cousin.*

You say, "Why in the world would he do that?" Good question! I'll give you my answer and then I'll try to show it to you in the text. The answer is, according to Jeremiah 32, *if we really believe the Lord, it shows.* That's why Jeremiah did what he did, because he possessed real faith, living faith, and when that's the case, *it shows!* How specifically does it show? In our lives, as in Jeremiah's, it ought to show in at least four ways.

I. We show we believe the Lord through our preaching (1-5).

And preaching is what the prophet Jeremiah did. Notice verses 1-2, "This is 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. The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah."

Not everyone is called to be a preacher (although in a sense all of us who know Christ are commanded to "preach" and give a verbal witness for Him; Acts 1:8). But what if the Lord has called you to preach? Then if you truly believe Him, you'll show it by preaching.

Jeremiah did, and it wasn't easy. The text makes it clear that...

A. Jeremiah paid a price for the message he preached (1-2). In fact, he ended up behind bars for it.

Chronologically, chapter 32 seems to follow chapters 37-38 which explain how Jeremiah ended up incarcerated. According to chapter 37, the Babylonians surrounded Jerusalem for about a year. A reprieve came when the Babylonians heard of an Egyptian threat and temporarily lifted the siege and left town. Jeremiah also tried to leave Jerusalem to go to his home town in Benjamin and set things in order. But Jewish soldiers accused him of defecting to the Babylonians, arrested him, and threw him in a dungeon where he almost died. Later he was moved by King Zedekiah to confinement in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace, where we find him as chapter 32 begins.

Yes, Jeremiah paid a price for the message he preached, but that's what you do if you really believe the Lord. If you're called to preach, you show it by preaching. In the prophet's case...

B. Jeremiah said exactly what the Lord told him to say, even though it sounded unpatriotic (3-5). And unpatriotic is exactly how Jeremiah's message sounded to his fellow Jews, as verses 3-5 indicate: "Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, 'Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape out of the hands of the Babylonians but will certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him, declares the LORD. If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed.'"

Can you imagine preaching that message? It would be like being a pastor in Washington DC and announcing, "The Russian subs are off the Atlantic coast and our president says we're safe, but it's not true. The Lord is offended by our nation's sin, and we're going into captivity, all of us, including our president. There's no use trying to fight. It's a done deal." That kind of message will get you thrown into prison! Why say it then? Jeremiah said it because *the Lord told to say it*, no matter how it sounded, and no matter what it cost him.

Beloved, anybody can say they believe in the Lord, but actions prove it. As Jeremiah demonstrated, if we really believe, it will show. And it will show, first of all, through our preaching.

It's true. We are called to proclaim an unpopular message, are we not? We are called to announce to the world that the Creator God is offended by our sin, and that judgment is coming. That's not a popular message. Good people don't want to be told that they are "sinners" heading for judgment. Nor do they like hearing that they need a Savior, and that there is only one Savior whose name is Jesus Christ. But this is the truth, and if we really believe it, we'll show it...by our preaching.

II. We show we believe the Lord through our spending (6-15).

Or as the saying goes, "You put your money where your mouth is." When you really believe the Lord, it's going to show up in your bank statement. It did for Jeremiah, and here's how...

A. The Lord told Jeremiah to buy a field (6-7). "Jeremiah said, 'The word of the LORD came to me: Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.'"

That's interesting. *Your cousin's coming, says the Lord. He's going to try to sell you his field.*

We chuckle when someone says, "I've got some prime underwater property in the everglades I'll sell you." Everyone knows the fitting response is, "What kind of fool do you think I am, to pay good money for land that I'll never enjoy."

In a very real sense, that was Jeremiah's situation. Almost certainly the field he was asked to buy had already been captured by the invading Babylonians. And if not yet, they certainly would occupy it soon, and for the next seven decades.

Does that sound like a good business venture to you? If you're in the business of doing God's will, it should, for reasons we'll discuss in a moment. Notice what happened next in verses 8-12...

"Then, just as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.' I knew that this was the word of the LORD; so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy— and I gave this deed to Baruch^[1] son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard."

Did you catch that?

B. Jeremiah bought the field even though he would never enjoy it (8-15). Hold on! He did *what?! What's going on here? What's going on is that Jeremiah's faith is showing up in his life again, this time in his spending.*

We don't know how big the property was, where Jeremiah got his money, where he secured it while in prison, and why he had money while his cousin didn't. But these details aren't important, as far as the point of the text goes. What's important is what Jeremiah did with his money, and why. I want you to notice three things about Jeremiah's spending in this passage.

1. *He spent his money in submission to the Word of God.* Apparently, due to the invasion, Jeremiah's cousin was having financial problems, as was the case with nearly every Jewish citizen. It seems that Hanamel was childless, so he took advantage of a legal provision the Lord Himself established (see Lev. 25:25; Ruth 4:1-6). In the Mosaic law the Lord gave instructions about what should happen if a Hebrew couldn't afford to keep a piece of property. He authorized a near kinsman to buy the land in order to keep it in the family, and thus secure the future of God's chosen nation and purposes for that nation.

Does God's Word apply only when it's convenient? For instance, His Word says that we are to give Him the first-fruits of our income (Prov. 3:9; Malachi 3:10; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7). We're to do this as an act of worship which shows that He means more to us than the things He gives us. So do those verses apply when times are tough? You say, "I can't afford to obey God's Word right now, not with the way the economy is." Really? Jeremiah did. Jeremiah spent his money in submission to the Word of God.

It boils down to who we're going to believe. Are we going to believe the Lord, or the economists? The issue isn't the amount, either. The issue is are we going to believe God's Word enough to give Him the first portion of every paycheck, and then trust Him to meet our needs with what remains?

2. *He spent his money with the future in mind.* Put yourself in Jeremiah's shoes. Talk about a no-brainer economically speaking! *You're asking me to do what, Hanamel? Buy your field? Now? Haven't you been listening to my preaching? I've been prophesying for years now that we're going to lose this land to foreigners. And in case you haven't noticed, they're here! Okay Hanamel...I'll buy it.*

What?! Why did he do that? Why did Jeremiah buy that property if he knew he was going to lose it? And the simple answer is, he spent his money with the future in mind. You see, destruction wasn't the only prophecy that Jeremiah had been preaching. So was restoration. In fact, if you'll look back at chapters 30 and 31, you'll see Jeremiah proclaiming that after the Babylonian exile ended, the Lord was going to restore His people Israel to their land (see 30:3). That was quite a bold prediction. Do you really believe it, Jeremiah? It's so easy to say you believe things, but in chapter 32 Jeremiah put his faith on display.

He reached for his money bag and started counting. In the Hebrew it reads literally "seven shekels and ten" rather than "seventeen shekels." Keil and Delitzsch speculate that perhaps this was a law form, or possibly saying that the price was "seven shekels of gold and ten shekels of silver."^[2]

I read one commentator who pointed out that the price was quite small for land, but that's relative, isn't it? Who throws money away, whether it's seventeen shekels or seventy shekels, on a business venture like this?^[3] Only a man who sees what others fail to see. In this case, Jeremiah knows his people are coming back home, and whether he's going to enjoy the fruit of this land or not isn't the issue. This purchase is about God, and showing his people that he believes in God.

So he signed the deed, then sealed it, and gave it to his friend, Baruch, with these public instructions in verses 13-15, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. For this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land."^[4]

Now there's a man who spent his money with the future in mind! And not just his own future, but the

future of his nation, and more specifically, the future of God's plan for his nation.

Last week I received a newsletter from Social Security. It told me how much I can expect to receive when I retire. But what caught my eye was this statement, "The Social Security system is facing serious financial problems...In 2016 we will begin paying more in benefits than we collect in taxes. Without changes, by 2037 the Social Security Trust Fund will be exhausted..."^[5]

What? In just six years there will be more going out than coming in? How did that happen? I'm not an economist, but it's not hard to figure it out. As a nation we haven't been spending our money with the future in mind. My grandmother wouldn't talk on the telephone more than five minutes in order to save money. I think I'm being frugal if I don't touch my rollover minutes. Something's happened to us, my friends, and we would do well to pay attention to Jeremiah. The future is coming, and we ought to live like it.

You say, "Okay, how? Give me a simple principle to follow." Here it is, one that Jeremiah put into practice...

3. *He spent his money to bring honor to the One who gave it to him.* Quite frankly, sometimes the Lord asks you to do things that don't make sense to the secular mind. "Abraham, offer your son, Isaac." "Moses, go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go." "Jeremiah, buy the field." But these men did what they did because they had one consuming passion, and that was to bring honor to the One who gave them their lives and everything else they possessed. Is that true of you? Is it true of your spending? Think of what would happen if all of us made a conscious decision to spend our money in the way that would maximize glory to the One who gave it to us. If we did that, we'd be able to help send more missionaries to the field this year, and meet the needs of some of our currently under-supported missionaries. We'd also be able to ramp up some of our local ministries, including moving Pastor Matt from part time to full time status.

But the principle applies at home, too. Before pulling out the credit card this week, ask yourself, "Is this the best way I can use the money God has entrusted to me for His honor?" It's true. If we really believe the Lord, *it shows*. It will show in our preaching, yes, but also in our spending. Thirdly, according to Jeremiah's example...

III. We show we believe the Lord through our praying (16-25).

Take note of verse 16, "After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD." Did you catch that? Apparently, based on what Jeremiah prayed, he began to have second thoughts. That's not unusual, for even people of great faith have doubts from time to time. Which means they have to do something with their doubts, like Jeremiah did, namely *pray*.

Jeremiah brought two things to the Lord in this prayer, and the order is significant.

A. Jeremiah brought his praise to the Lord (16-23). In his praise he called attention to four things pertaining to the Lord.

1. *He called attention to His power (17).* "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you." Perhaps it goes without saying, but Jeremiah said it. If you can make the heavens and the earth, then nothing is too hard for you! Such is the power of God!

2. *He called attention to His loving involvement in people's lives (18-19).* "You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the LORD Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve."

During the tough times, it's easy to lose sight of the obvious, but Jeremiah verbalized it. Lord, You're involved in our lives. *Your eyes are open to all the ways of men.*

3. *He called attention to His past work in redemption (20-22).* "You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. You gave them this land you had sworn to give their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey."

We must never take for granted where we used to be. We used to be slaves in Egypt, says Jeremiah. But then you brought us out of bondage and gave us a new life in the promised land. That's my testimony, too, how about you? I used to be a slave to sin, but the Lord God brought me out of bondage and gave me new life. That's what redemption is all about. God takes action to set slaves free! It's why He sent His Son into the world, who died on a cross to pay the ransom payment for sin. Three days later Jesus Christ left the tomb, and today He sets free the slave who calls on Him.

4. *He called attention to His present work in bringing destruction (23).* "They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey you or follow your law; they did not do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster upon them."

Did you catch that? The God who redeemed our people is the same God who brought this disaster on our people, says Jeremiah. That's because He is sovereign, and therefore deserves our praise.

Do you begin your prayers with praise? It's one of the ways that real faith shows, so let's learn from Jeremiah. Even in the tough times we can still, indeed it's vital that we bring the Lord our praise.

Now watch what Jeremiah prayed next in verses 24-25, "See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. And though the city will be handed over to the Babylonians, you, O Sovereign LORD, say to me, 'Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed.'"

Do you see what Jeremiah just did? I love it. He's no super-saint, just a sinner saved by grace like us. So after bringing his praise to the Lord...

B. Jeremiah brought his predicament to the Lord (24-25). Okay, Lord, says Jeremiah. I did what You told me to do, but I must confess I'm a bit confused.

1. *We're about to lose our country.* I get that. And yet just now...
2. *You told me to buy a field.* Am I hearing You correctly?

That's the way it is when you walk by faith, beloved. At times *God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm,* to borrow from Cowper. And when his ways seem mysterious, you run *to* Him, not *from* Him, as Jeremiah did. If we really believe the Lord, we show it by our preaching, by our spending, and by our heartfelt, God-centered praying.

IV. We show we believe the Lord through our listening (26-44).

Notice what happened in the very next verse, verse 26, "Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah." *Then*, right after Jeremiah went to the Lord with his struggle, *then* the Lord sent His word to Jeremiah. For the sake of time, let me summarize His message. It has two parts. First...

A. The Lord announced that He was going to judge His people (26-35).

1. *He clarified how it would happen (27-29).* "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?^[6] Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people provoked me to anger by burning incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods."

After clarifying the *how*, next...

2. *He clarified why it would happen (30-35).* "The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but provoke me with what their hands have made, declares the LORD. From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight. The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem. They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. They set up their abominable idols in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech, though I never commanded, nor did it enter my mind, that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin."

That's part one. Judgment is coming. Here's part two...

B. The Lord announced that He was going to restore His people (36-44). Restore them in four ways...

1. *I'm going to restore them to this land (37).* Verses 36-37—"You are saying about this city, 'By the sword, famine and plague it will be handed over to the king of Babylon'; but this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety."

2. *I'm going to restore them to Me (38).* "They will be my people, and I will be their God."

3. *I'm going to restore them to My ways (39-41).* "I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul."

4. *I'm going to restore them to prosperity (42-44).* "This is what the LORD says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolate waste, without men or animals, for it has been handed over to the Babylonians.' Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes, declares the LORD."

That's the message. Now step back and take a second look at it and answer this question. Did the Lord tell Jeremiah anything new in it? He didn't, did he? There's no new revelation here. Then what's the Lord's intent? It's called the ministry of reminding, and people struggling with doubts need it, including prophets.

Yes, Jeremiah, you heard me correctly. The judgment is coming, but so is the restoration. That's why I wanted you to buy the field. And you did well. For the past three decades you've done what I asked you to do through your preaching. Now you've done it through your spending. Well done, my faithful servant. Your message is going forth loud and clear, and I'm pleased with you!

The point is, if we believe the Lord, it'll show up not just in our preaching and spending and praying,

but also in our listening. Like Jeremiah, our ears will be tuned in to one voice. As Jesus put it, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4)."

That being the case, let me ask you a couple of questions...

Make It Personal: Two questions in light of Jeremiah's example...

1. *How am I treating the word of the Lord?* The Lord told Jeremiah to buy a field. Jeremiah heard and obeyed. How about you? What's the Lord been telling you? Maybe it's to call on His Son for salvation. Maybe it's to make your faith public through baptism and church membership. Perhaps it's to start tithing, or to forgive someone, or to get involved in a new ministry. So how are you treating His Word? Which leads to a more specific question...

2. *What is the Lord asking me to do today to show that I really believe Him?* That's what it's all about, for if we really believe Him, *it shows*.

****Note:** This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[1] In verse 12 we find the first mention of Baruch in the book.

[2] Keil and Delitzsch, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, pp. 50-51.

[3] As Keil and Delitzsch observe, the buyer wasn't really buying the land but only the harvests that land would produce between the present date and the year of Jubilee, for in that year the land would return to the former owner. Keil and Delitzsch, p. 51.

[4] Archaeologists actually found storage jars like this at Elephantine in Egypt and at Qumran. The Dead Sea scrolls which were written on leather and preserved in earthenware jars lasted for over two thousand years. See Charles Feinberg, *Jeremiah*, p. 583.

[5] *Your Social Security Statement*, February 2, 2010

[6] Here the Lord actually used Jeremiah's own words (from verse 17) to assure the prophet that nothing is too hard for the Creator.