

## Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: March 13<sup>th</sup>: Jeremiah 32: Some Notes

**Themes:** See also 37: 11-21. The long Babylonian siege, with Jerusalem surrounded and Anathoth etc occupied by the enemy. Jeremiah in the Royal gaol – having moved on from the cess pit where he had been dumped. Optimism from a prison cell! Realism too: J doesn't pretend that things are good at present or that they will get better quickly. We think J had tried to get to Anathoth for family business during a lull in the siege; and had been arrested as a traitor. Zedekiah and his colleagues didn't want the truth. They wanted good news: heady optimism. (Are we all that different: "I don't want to hear that!" ?) Taking a long term view. Building/planting/investing for the future: Jeremiah can't have expected to live long enough to enjoy his land investment.

**Quotes:** *You make men live with the fall-out from their parents' sins.* (Back to the familiar inherited consequences message.) *They refused to listen: refused to be taught. I'll bring them all back to this place; and let them live in peace. I will restore everything that was lost. I will certainly bring this huge catastrophe on this people, but I will also usher in a wonderful life of prosperity.*

**Clarifications:** Note the liberty to observe all the legal niceties and to access the cash required while in hospital. Keeping land in the family was very important for the Jews; and was part of the strong link between people and land. Our traditions are rather different – e.g. the renting rather than owning tradition; the focus on house rather than land; and the high level of mobility for many people; plus living in one place and working in another place. (Being exiled from your own place reminds us of Maria and other Ukrainians.)

**Questions:** I guess that those who are parents inevitably think in terms of investing in the future. How do the rest of us invest in the future? Are we good enough at looking at future potential in current adverse circumstances? Can we take comfort from Jeremiah's renewed confidence from combining God's promise of a family contact with the following reality of a real family contact? Are we up for God's promises, in the absence of immediate evidence of prayers being answered? Asking God "versus" listening to God?