***Jeremiah 32:31-44‘For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face 32because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.’ 36“Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: 37Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ 42“For thus says the Lord: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, “It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.” 44Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,’ says the Lord.”***

That which is difficult for man is not difficult for God. When we left Jeremiah last time, God said in verse 27 *Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?* The answer we know intellectually is No – of course not. Often though, as life unfolds and difficulties present, we cry out to God in fear, not of Him, but of our circumstances. God says, “Believe, Trust, Be Still and know that I am God.” Though God is provoked by the idolatry and sin of His people, He will be merciful and deliver them in Hope from what appears to be a hopeless situation.

Verses 31-35 *For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face 32because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.’* ***For*** *this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury* ***–*** The city, meaning Jerusalem, has not provoked God. It is the inhabitants of that city. God has no issue with the walls or the gates or the dust on the street. The rebellion and wickedness from generation to generation is the issue. *From the day that they built it –* From the days of Solomon, as he built and enlarged the city, building the temple and the palaces, until this day. Solomon defiled the city by building a high place, or place of worship, for Chemosh, a false god of the Moabites. He built a high place for the false god Ashtoreth, a Sidonian false god. All this he built overlooking the Temple of Jerusalem. From the time of Solomon to this day, they have focused on sin and rebellion. *So I will remove it from before My face –* Since the people have sinned, though they have been warned by many prophets, including Jeremiah, it’s as though they did these things to intentionally provoke God. So, or therefore, God will cast out the people into captivity. Each day, worshippers of God have a choice to make. We either draw closer to God or we grow more distant. We either meditate upon the things of God or we set our hearts upon the things of the world. In the time of Jeremiah, true worshippers of God are few and far between. It’s the same today. Instead, God is viewed as a Genie, there for our comfort and ease. But God has been plain since the beginning of time. He is a Jealous God – Exodus 34:14, Moses says - *for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* ***Because*** *of all the evil of the children of Israel –* though God brings this destruction, the calamity is brought about by the sin of the people. His wrath comes after much long-suffering and many efforts to turn the people. *They, their kings, their princes –* This has the idea of the rotten figs from earlier in Jeremiah. The leaders are sick and corrupt, therefore the people are sick and corrupt. All of the people walked in corruption. They refused to hear calls for repentance. They loved their sin and clung to it. *And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face –* When confronted with this sin, the people have turned their back. They’ve refused to acknowledge God as Creator and Master. As in Jeremiah 2, they have pointed to a stone and said – here is my god. They’ve refused chastening and hated instruction, just as people do today. *Though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them –* God sent prophets to continually and consistently instruct and correct; yet they refused instruction. *But they set their abominations in the house –* They set their idols in plain sight and even brought them into the Temple to desecrate it. *And they built the high places of Baal –* We recall in Jeremiah 19, that they built high places to worship Baal and they burned their children with fire as sacrifice to Baal. At that time, God said – I did not speak this, nor did it come from My mind! He says it here again. In other words, this is an abomination before God.

Verses 36-39 *Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: 37Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.****Now*** *therefore* ***–*** God now returns to Jeremiah’s questions of verse 25, where Jeremiah asks about buying the field. Concerning the city of Jerusalem and the land which Jeremiah inquires about, it shall be delivered. The Chaldeans are nearby and the fact that the city will fall is becoming more and more obvious. Famine, pestilence, and the sword all are acting in favor of the king of Babylon and against the people. The siege is working, people are starving, and great havoc is being wrought upon the people. Courage is failing and a sense of hopelessness is prevailing. All of this emboldens the enemy. Now God speaks of the glorious return from captivity. *Behold I will gather them out of all countries* ***–*** God will bring a remnant back. This remnant will be holy unto God and worship Him. *I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. –* The city will fall. The people will be taken into captivity. But, this will not be the end. The loss will not be complete. God will gather the people again and they will dwell in peace and safety. This is an example of a dual prophecy. We know that a remnant returned and that the people prospered. But we also know that it was not in complete peace. This prophecy will be completely fulfilled when Jesus rules. *And they shall be my people, And I will give them one heart and one way* ***–*** when Israel and Judah were divided, there was not one heart and one people. In Christ’s Kingdom, these distinctions will be abolished. All will be one nation, one church, living under One ruler and worshipping one God. *That they may fear me forever –* That all will worship God in Spirit and in Truth. All will love, fear, and reverence God with a whole heart and complete focus. *For the good of them and of their children –* this love and complete focus will bring happiness and peace, as well as prosperity to the people and their children. But, this promise, in its fullest sense, will not be accomplished until God makes this happen in the New Jerusalem.

Verses 40-44 *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ 42“For thus says the Lord: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, “It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.” 44Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,’ says the Lord.”* ***And*** *I will make an everlasting covenant with them**—* This does not refer to the Jewish Covenant, as in Genesis 17:13. This applies instead to the Gospel Covenant of Jesus Christ. The Gospel will never pass away. The angel in Luke 1:31-33 says - *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.****32****He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.****33****And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”* ***That*** *I will not turn away from them to do them good* ***–*** When Jew and Gentile accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, we become sons and daughters, and God promises that His promises will never depart from us. Unlike the people, God will not turn His back on those that seek Him. He will neither leave us nor forsake us. *But I will put my fear into their hearts* ***–*** The Holy Spirit will be given and come to dwell. The Spirit will be our teacher and will remind us of the commandments. We will reverence God, as will all the Jews and Gentiles that accept Jesus. We will live in glad obedience. *That they will not depart from Me –* those that accept Jesus persevere, though we may stumble, we will not be separated from the Love of Jesus. *Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good –* God will do good and find great pleasure in blessing those that believe on His Son. *and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul. –* The blessings of God will be everlasting. He will plant and not pluck up. *Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people –* God will be true to His promises. He will execute blessings and curses with equal perfection. There is no shadow of turning in Him. *And fields will be bought in this land of which you say –* and so here is the answer to the question Jeremiah asked – God had Jeremiah buy the field to assure him that, though things look dark now with the Chaldeans at the gate and possessing the very land that Hanameel sold to him, one day there will be fields sold once again. The people will again buy and sell goods, as well as exchange property here. Though there is despair, *It is desolate without man or beast –* I will bring hope again - *For I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord –* We know that Cyrus returned the Jewish people to their land, property was bought and sold, fields planted and harvested, livestock raised, children raised, brides again given in marriage. But the greatest fulfillment is yet to come when Jesus will rule and bring a complete restoration to all who believe and call upon His Son.

And so, we leave Jeremiah tonight. He will die before the captivity ends. He will never plant the field that he redeemed. But he invested as God called him to invest, knowing that life goes on beyond our years. Likewise, we must ask how we are investing in the years past our own homegoing. Is our investment laying up treasure in heaven? Are we planting seeds for future harvest? Let’s have a heart for the Gospel well past our years, that the seeds we sow now might produce long after we are gone. It’s in investing in Christ’s Kingdom that we earn to joy of hearing, “Well done good and faithful servant”.