



Lesson
Behar / "On Mount" (Sinai)
Leviticus 25:1 – 26:2
Jeremiah 32:6-27
Luke 13:1-33

GRAFTED IN FELLOWSHIP
KING GEORGE

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All scripture references are Hebraic Roots Bible (HRB) unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE: Parashat Behar is read together with Bechukotai except in leap years. When the portions are read together, Haftarat Bechukotai (Jeremiah 16:19-17: 14) replaces the haftarah for Behar.

My Notes:

Your Notes:

Historical Context:

- In the 9th year of King Zedekiah, the Babylonian army came up against Judah
- 2 Kings 25:1 – And it happened in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth of the month, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and camped against it, and built a siege mound all around it.
- Jeremiah told King Zedekiah that YHVH had given Jerusalem to the Babylonians
- Pharaoh Hophra sent his army to help Jerusalem
- Babylon withdrew from Jerusalem in order to fight the Egyptian army
- At this time, Jeremiah decided to go to his hometown to settle some business matters
- As he was leaving, the captain of the guard assumed he was defecting
- He was arrested and placed in prison
- The Babylonians defeated the Egyptians and returned to Jerusalem
- In despair, King Zedekiah sought out an answer from YHVH, so he secretly brought Jeremiah to the palace
- Jeremiah responded: Jeremiah 37:17 – And Zedekiah the king sent and took him out. And the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there Word from YAHWEH ? And Jeremiah said, There is. For He said, You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.
- Jeremiah also asked the king not to put him back in prison: Jeremiah 37:20 – And now hear, I beg you, O my master the king, please let my plea fall before you, so that you do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, that I not die there.
- King Zedekiah did not send him back to the dungeon, but sent him to the court guards in the palace courts
- The Babylonians continued building the siege ramps
- The city's food supply dwindled and failed
- The siege-famine began
- The end was near

Summary of Haftarat Behar:

- Relates the account of Jeremiah's redemption-purchase of a family field at Anathoth
- While in prison, a cousin asks Jeremiah to redeem a piece of property
- YHVH commands Jeremiah to execute the transaction according to careful, legal procedure
- Jeremiah does so, but does not understand why
- If Jerusalem is about to fall, why does it matter?
- Jeremiah asks for an explanation
- But the haftarah ends just as YHVH gives an explanation
- Why this portion for Behar?
 - + Behar provides laws of buying, selling, and redeeming property

In Depth:

In the Guardhouse

Jeremiah 32:6 – And Jeremiah said, The Word of YAHWEH was to me saying,

- Even though in prison, Jeremiah was not isolated – he could receive visitors
- He also received a daily ration of bread – while it was available
- While in the guardhouse, Jeremiah continued his prophetic word from YHVH
- He predicted Babylon would overrun Jerusalem
- His prophecies continued to also cause him problems
- King Zedekiah's advisors wanted to kill Jeremiah
- The advisors said Jeremiah was discouraging the men of war and the citizens
 - + Jeremiah 38:4 – And the rulers said to the king, Please cause this man to die. For in this way he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking these words to them. For this man does not seek the peace of this people, but the evil.
- During this time (siege and internment), YHVH told Jeremiah he would receive a visit from his cousin Hanamel
 - + Jeremiah 32:7 – Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum, your uncle, shall come to you, saying, Buy my field in Anathoth for yourself, for the right to redeem is yours, to buy it .

Right of Redemption

- This week's Torah portion contains the laws for redeeming property
- Land-redemption laws are concerned primarily with preserving the original family, clan, and tribal borders

of the land of Israel

- The people of Israel were not to sell their land to non-family members permanently
- YHVH explained that they were not to consider themselves the owners of the land
- The land belongs to YHVH!
- YHVH said the land was to stay within the family
- The people of Israel are only sojourners in the land
- + Lev 25:23 – And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine; for you are aliens and tenants with Me.
- Should a person become so impoverished he needed to sell the land, he is to sell to a family member
- + Lev 25:25 – If your brother has become poor and has sold his property, then his kinsman redeemer shall come, and he shall redeem the thing sold by his brother.
- The act of buying back is called “redemption” (ga’al – גֹּאֵל)
- The family member who buys it back is called a “redeemer” (go’el – גֹּאֵל)
- The owner’s brother, uncle, cousin (in this order) has first right of purchase
- If none of them redeem the property, then the owner can sell to an outsider
- Even then, if the original owner or family member attains resources to purchase the property back, he may redeem it
- Once redeemed, the land belongs to the redeemer
- If no one from the clan redeems the land, it reverts to the clan in the year of Jubilee

Ben Dod

Jeremiah 32:7 – Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum, your uncle, shall come to you, saying, Buy my field in Anathoth for yourself, for the right to redeem is yours, to buy it.

- Just as YHVH had said, Hanamel arrived at the guardhouse
- The Hebrew word for “uncle” is “dod” (דוד)
- The Hebrew word for “cousin” is “ben dod” (בן-דוד) – literally uncle’s son
- Both the uncle and uncle’s son qualify as redeemers
- + Lev 25:48-49 – 48 after he has been sold, there is a redemption to him; one of his brothers may redeem him, 49 or his uncle, or a son of his uncle, may redeem him, or any of his fleshly relations of his family may redeem him. Or, if his own hand has reached out to gain, then he may be redeemed.
- Jeremiah refers to Hanamel as both ben dod and dod
- + Jer 32:12 – And I gave the purchase document to Baruch the son of Neriah the son of Maaseiah, before the eyes of my uncle's son, Hanameel, and before the eyes of

the witnesses who wrote in the purchase document before the eyes of all the Jews who sat in the court of the guard.

- The word dod can also mean friend, beloved, or relation
- There is a midrash that offers a messianic interpretation to the passage
 - + The laws of the Torah portion allude to the final redemption
 - + Since the word dod can mean friend or beloved, YHVH is the true dod – the redeemer of Israel
 - + Likewise, the “ben dod” is then the Mashiah
 - o Psalm 2:7b – Today, I have begotten you
 - + Go back to the spelling of dod (דוד) and ben dod (בני־דוד)
 - o If we spell ben dod in the “long form” (with the vav) it looks identical to ben-David – son of David!
- This means Jeremiah received a message of Israel’s ultimate redemption before they even went into exile!

Hanamel’s Field

Jeremiah 32:7-8 – 7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum, your uncle, shall come to you, saying, Buy my field in Anathoth for yourself, for the right to redeem is yours, to buy it .8 So Hanameel, my uncle's son, came to me in the court of the guard, according to the Word of YAHWEH, and said to me, Please buy my field in Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the right of redemption is yours. Buy it for yourself. Then I knew that this was the Word of YAHWEH.

- Jeremiah knew this request was from YHVH
- Anathoth was a Levitical city in Benjamin
 - + Joshua 21:18 – Anathoth and its open lands, and Almon and its open lands; four cities.
 - + 1 Chronicles 6:60 – And out of the tribe of Benjamin was Geba and its open lands; and Alemeth and its open lands; and Anathoth and its open lands. All their cities in their families were thirteen cities.
- Today, the city is named Anata, and is an Arab city – it is 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem
- Jeremiah came from a clan of priests from Anathoth
 - + Jeremiah 1:1 – The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests who resided in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,
- His contemporaries referred to him as Jeremiah of Anathoth
 - + Jer 29:27 – And now why have you not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, who prophesies to you?
- At one point, his kinsmen tried to silence his prophecies by threatening his life
 - + Jeremiah 11:21-23 – 21 For this reason, so says YAHWEH concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, Do not prophesy in the name of YAHWEH, that you do not die by our hand. 22 So YAHWEH of Hosts says this: Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine. 23 And there shall be no survivor of them, for I will bring evil on the men of Anathoth, even the year

of their punishment.

- Torah does not allow priests and Levites to own large tracts of land
- But they can own permanent possession of homes within the Levitical cities
- They also owned small acreages with pastures or open fields around those cities
- + Lev 25:31 – But the houses of the villages which have no walls all around shall be counted as the field of the country; there are redemption rights to it. And it shall go out in the jubilee.
- In the days of King Solomon, Abiathar the priest owned a field at Anathoth
- + 1 Kings 2:26 – And the king said to Abiathar the priest, Go to Anathoth, to your fields. For you are a man of death. But I will not at this time cause you to die, because you have borne the ark of Adonai YAHWEH before my father David, and because you were afflicted in all the things with which my father was afflicted.
- The Torah prohibits the Levites from selling their small fields to non-Levites
- + Lev 25:34 – And the field, the open land of their cities, shall not be sold; for it is a never ending possession to them.
- Hanamel's only option for selling the property was to find a redeemer among his kinsmen who would be willing to buy it
- As the Babylonian army entered the land, the inhabitants of Anathoth fled to Jerusalem
- When Hanamel decided to sell his land, he was already trapped inside Jerusalem
- He was probably desperate – the siege-famine had begun, and the price for food was very expensive
- If YHVH had not told Jeremiah to buy the land, he probably would have said, "This is not the time to be purchasing property rights."
- Within a few weeks, the kingdom of Judah would be gone
- Titles, deeds, and claims to property meant little in the face of exile

An Ancient Legal Transaction

Jeremiah 32:9-14 – 9 And I bought the field in Anathoth from my uncle's son, Hanameel, and weighed him the silver, seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I wrote it in the document, and sealed it, and called witnesses, and weighed the silver on the scales. 11 So I took the document of the purchase, that which was sealed according to the law and the statutes, and the open copy. 12 And I gave the purchase document to Baruch the son of Neriah the son of Maaseiah, before the eyes of my uncle's son, Hanameel, and before the eyes of the witnesses who wrote in the purchase document before the eyes of all the Jews who sat in the court of the guard. 13 And I commanded Baruch before their eyes, saying, 14 So says YAHWEH of Hosts, the Elohim of Israel: Take these books, the purchase document, the one sealed, and the open book, and put them in an earthen vessel so that they may stand many days.

- These verses provide a detailed description of an ancient

Israelite transaction

- Normally, this type of transaction would take place in the city gates
- Due to the siege, the city gates were not available and Jeremiah could not leave the guardhouse
- So the guardhouse was transformed into an ad-hoc legal court
- Jeremiah wrote out two copies of the agreement
- The agreement contained the “terms” (mitzvah – מצוה) and “conditions” (chukkim - חוקים) – literally, the commandment and statutes of the transaction
- With the scrolls signed, Jeremiah sealed one copy, and kept the other copy unsealed
- Jeremiah gave both copies to his personal scribe – Baruch, the son of Neriah
- This was witnessed by all present

Potter's Field

- The Gospel of Matthew alludes to this story from Jeremiah
 - Judas was given 30 shekels for his betrayal
 - When he tried to return the money, it was not accepted
 - Judas threw the money into the Temple courts and departs
 - Caiaphas uses the money to buy a tract of land outside Jerusalem called the Potter's Field to be used as a cemetery for non-Jews
 - Since the field was bought with blood-money, the apostolic community referred to it as “Chakal Dama” (Field of Blood)
 - Matthew uses two passages to reveal clues in the prophets about Judas, Yeshua, the 30 shekels, and the Potter's Field
- + Matthew 27:9-10 – 9 Then was fulfilled that spoken through the prophet , saying, And I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him who had been priced, on whom they of the sons of Israel set a price, 10 and gave them for the field of a potter, as YAHWEH directed me.
- Matthew attributes this passage to Jeremiah, but the quote actually comes from Zechariah 11
 - Most scholars think Matthew made a mistake
 - However, the quote used appears to be an abbreviated version of a longer citation that contained material from both Jeremiah and Zechariah
 - Matthew's source probably contained a midrash that linked Zechariah 11:11 and Jeremiah 32:8

Hagner suggests "The Zechariah and Jeremiah passages in question were already associated by the early church and perhaps ... conflated in a collection of *testimonia* under Jeremiah's name, which Matthew made use of." Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (vol. 33b of *Word Biblical Commentary*; Dallas, TX:Word Books, 1995), 815, citing F.F.Bruce, "The Book of Zechariah and the Passion Narrative," *Bulletin of John Rylands University of Manchester* 43 [1960-61] 341; J. A. Findlay, "The First Gospel and the Book of Testimonies," in *Amicitiae Corolla* (ed. H. G. Wood, London: University of London, 1933), 57-71.

- + Both verses share the same phrase:
 - o Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD (Jer 32:8)
 - o They...will know that this was the word of the LORD (Zech 11:11)
- + The exact phrase appears only in these two passages, forging a strong *Gezerah Shevah* (verbal analogy).
- Matthew's effort to condense the apostolic midrash created the impression he was mistaken on who wrote the verse
- The full midrash may have sounded like this:

It is written in the prophet Jeremiah [32:8], "You have the right of possession and the redemption is yours. Buy it for yourself." Who is this who owns the right to possess and the right to redeem? The Messiah son of David. And with what does He purchase? He buys it for Himself with the thirty shekels of Judas, for Jeremiah says [in 32:8-9], "*Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. I bought the field ... and I weighed out the silver.*" And it also says [in Zechariah 11:11-13], "Those who were watching me *knew that this was the word of the LORD ...* So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them: So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.' Thus they gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me, saying, "Buy it for yourself."

- + The 30 shekels exchanged for the life of Yeshua represents the "value" of His life
- + The priests exchange the 30 shekels for the Potter's Field
- + Yeshua exchanges His life for the right to possess and redeem Israel

Deposit for the Future

Jeremiah 32:14 – 14 So says YAHWEH of Hosts, the Elohim of Israel: Take these books, the purchase document, the one sealed, and the open book, and put them in an earthen vessel so that they may stand many days.

- Jeremiah prophetically instructed Baruch to seal both scrolls in clay jars "that they may last a long time"

- He preserved the documents for future generations by depositing them in a safe place
- In the Torah, YHVH instructs Moses to place the tablets of the testimony into the ark of the covenant – a deposition of legal documents
- Likewise, when Moses finishes writing the scroll of the Torah, he entrusts it with the Levitical priest in the presence of witnesses and deposits it in the ark
- Jeremiah’s deed to the field in Anathoth symbolizes the Torah and YHVH’s covenant with Israel
 - + Both the deed and the Torah contain “commandments and statutes”
 - + Both the deed and the Torah guaranteed the rights to the land
- YHVH intended Jeremiah’s purchase of the land to be a prophetic sign – a future hope
 - + **Jeremiah 32:15** – For so says YAHWEH of Hosts, the Elohim of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.

Resources used:

- [First Fruits of Zion, Torah Club Volume 3, Voice of the Prophets](#)