

Killing and Disease Are on Our Doorstep

32 ¹⁻⁵The Message Jeremiah received from GOD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah. It was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was holding Jerusalem under siege. Jeremiah was shut up in jail in the royal palace. Zedekiah, king of Judah, had locked him up, complaining, "How dare you preach, saying, 'GOD says, I'm warning you: I will hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will take it over. Zedekiah king of Judah will be handed over to the Chaldeans right along with the city. He will be handed over to the king of Babylon and forced to face the music. He'll be hauled off to Babylon where he'll stay until I deal with him. GOD's Decree. Fight against the Babylonians all you want—it won't get you anywhere.'"

⁶⁻⁷Jeremiah said, "GOD's Message came to me like this: Prepare yourself! Hanamel, your uncle Shallum's son, is on his way to see you. He is going to say, 'Buy my field in Anathoth. You have the legal right to buy it.'

⁸"And sure enough, just as GOD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me while I was in jail and said, 'Buy my field in Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin, for you have the legal right to keep it in the family. Buy it. Take it over.' "That did it. I knew it was GOD's Message.

⁹⁻¹²"So I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I paid him seventeen silver shekels. I followed all the proper procedures: In the presence of witnesses I wrote out the bill of sale, sealed it, and weighed out the money on the scales. Then I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy that contained the contract and its conditions and also the open copy—and gave them to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah. All this took place in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and the witnesses who had signed the deed, as the Jews who were at the jail that day looked on.

¹³⁻¹⁵"Then, in front of all of them, I told Baruch, 'These are orders from GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, the God of Israel: Take these documents—both the sealed and the open deeds—and put them for safekeeping in a pottery jar. For GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, the God of Israel, says, "Life is going to return

to normal. Homes and fields and vineyards are again going to be bought in this country.”