

Message #49

Jeremiah 45:1-5

Sometimes in life things don't turn out the way you expected. Even when one is a believer, sometimes the story does not seem to end "happily ever after." Sometimes the relationship doesn't go the way you expected. Sometimes the career doesn't go the way you wanted it to go. Sometimes you don't end up where you thought you would end up.

That is what happened to Baruch. Life didn't go the way he thought it would go. What he thought was going to happen didn't happen. His dreams did not come true in life and it left him discouraged.

When we come to Jeremiah 45, we come to an odd text that is out of place in its chronology. The actual chronological sequential place where these events occurred would be in 605 BC right after the events of Jeremiah 36. So by the time we get to Jeremiah 45, we are 25 years later.

So the big question is why is this placed here in Jeremiah, some 25 years or so after the fact? One answer to that is that Baruch had lost sight of the fact that God had spared his life just as He promised He would and he needed to remember that (v. 5).

Jeremiah and Baruch had been kidnapped and taken to Egypt, and God just got done informing the Jews that God was going to destroy all of them in Egypt, and Baruch needed to remember something that God told him some 25 years prior to this.

Baruch, as we shall see, was apparently losing sight of the fact that even though he was living in a time when God was doing negative things to Israel, He still had taken care of him and had greatly used him.

What God wanted Baruch to know and what God wants us to know is this:

WHEN GOD IS PUNISHING PEOPLE IN HIS ANGER AND DOING NEGATIVE THINGS AND LIFE ISN'T GOING THE WAY WE WANT, GOD STILL PROTECTS, PRESERVES, PROVIDES AND PROSPERS THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO HIM AND WHO PURPOSE TO OBEY HIM AND DO HIS WILL.

God will protect faithful people. He will preserve faithful people. He will provide for faithful people. He will even prosper faithful people when He is negatively judging everybody else.

Baruch was a very important scribe and trusted man and friend to Jeremiah. He is mentioned 23 times in the book of Jeremiah and 16 of those 23 times he is mentioned in chapter 36. Jeremiah may have had some other men who were with him, but Baruch was an extremely important and valuable man to Jeremiah.

In fact, in 1975 a group of archaeologists purchased some clay documents from an Arab antique dealer that was not deciphered until 1986. When the documents were deciphered, one of them not only had the “seal of Baruch son of Neriah” on it, but it actually had his thumbprint. Philip Ryken, in his commentary, said that Baruch is “the only man in the Old Testament who has been fingerprinted” (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 643).

Baruch was a very important man in Judah during the days of Jeremiah. When Jeremiah signed for that land deal, when he was in prison, it was Baruch who handled the paperwork (Jer. 32:16). When Jeremiah was kidnapped and taken to Egypt, Baruch was taken with him (43:6).

So Baruch was a man God raised up to be a true friend and ally of Jeremiah. The truth is, the thing that makes Baruch so significant is his connection to Jeremiah. But apparently Baruch was depressed because he never quite achieved what he thought he should have achieved. Life hadn't gone the way he wanted it to go.

In **verse 1** we learn that Jeremiah received a message from God to give to Baruch.

Baruch is identified as being the **son of Neriah**. Now just reading that fact doesn't seem to mean much, but if we track this fact that he was the son of Neriah, it means a great deal.

Neriah had two important sons, Baruch and Seraiah. Baruch was the brother of Seraiah (Jer. 51:59). Seraiah was a key quartermaster and officer in the court of King Zedekiah (51:59).

According to Jeremiah 32:12, Baruch was the grandson of Mahseiah, who was a key official in Jerusalem in the days of King Josiah (II Chron. 34:8).

So Baruch came from a big named, key family of Jerusalem. Baruch was a learned scribe. He was a scholarly type of man who probably had high hopes and dreams of becoming a key leader in Jerusalem. He certainly had the pedigree he needed.

We learn in **verse 1** that Jeremiah initially received this message in the 4th year of the reign of Jehoiakim. The fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim was 605 BC. That was the year when Nebuchadnezzar began the first of his three deportations of taking Jews to Babylon.

That was also the year that Jeremiah had dictated the word of God to Baruch and told him to write it down (Jer. 36:1, 4).

We may recall that after Baruch had written down what Jeremiah told him, then he said your assignment is to take that scroll to the Temple in Jerusalem and read it (36:6).

We learn from Jeremiah 36:9 that Baruch took the book and read it in the 5th year of his reign. So there was a gap of time of about one year, between having the word and reading the word. So about one year after carefully writing the word, he was in the Temple reading the word.

Now during that year, Baruch had been simmering on the written Scriptures he was to take to the Temple to read. It was a message of warning, and that was a dangerous message to take into the Temple to read. It was not a positive message and the Temple scholars would not appreciate Baruch's message.

But Jeremiah told Baruch that he was to go read it in the Temple and he said that perhaps when the people hear these warnings of what God is about to do, they will repent (36:7).

Baruch had seen what had happened to Jeremiah and he may have been fearful. He also may have been somewhat disappointed with the way his career had gone. He was a highly educated and skilled man and his assignment was to take the word of God, dictated by Jeremiah, to the Temple and read it. Not a lot of glamour in that job.

So in **Jeremiah 45:1**, it is still the same year when all of this has happened. So in this year gap of time before Baruch was actually in the Temple and reading the word, he obviously is having second thoughts about his life and about what is happening.

He is worried about his assignment of having to go into the Temple to read the word that got Jeremiah in trouble. This was not his ideal job.

According to **verse 2**, the LORD the God of Israel had a specific message for Baruch. Notice that Jeremiah identifies God as being the LORD (covenant I AM Sovereign God of Israel) and God (Triune sovereign creator) of Israel. So God wants Baruch to realize I am Israel's God and I am your God.

Now from **verse 3** we learn what the problem was. Baruch was feeling sorry for himself. In fact, he was saying, "Woe is me." God has given me a difficult job. I don't like my life and I don't like my job.

He had just copied down the truth of God from Jeremiah that said God was going to completely destroy everyone in Jerusalem and Jerusalem itself, and that was not the type of career that Baruch thought he would have.

Apparently Baruch had been complaining to Jeremiah that he was depressed and weary for there was no rest or relief from the negative ministry he had. He is copying the word of God that is filled with negative warnings and predictions.

Certainly we could conclude from this that life probably hadn't gone like he thought it should and Jeremiah was always in trouble. Plus, he was intimidated in his responsibility which was to go and preach in the Temple a bunch of negative messages from God to a bunch of people who don't want to hear what you have to say.

Who wants to go into a room and tell a bunch of powerful leaders that God is sending sword, famine, plagues to kill you people and He will burn down your cities and even Jerusalem?

This was not the career Baruch expected for his life. His life's dreams were not coming true. Baruch said, "Woe is me," for God has not let me live in happy land and He has not let me live a happy life. He blames God for everything in **verse 3**. God has added sorrow to my pain and I am tired and weary and have found no rest. Baruch was constantly tired and weary and depressed.

Verse 3 says he had some kind of pain. We don't specifically know what it was. Perhaps a back pain. Perhaps it was cancer or some other disease. Perhaps headaches. Perhaps eye problems. Perhaps it was some psychosomatic pain.

When you think about this logically, Jeremiah is probably the wrong guy to whom Baruch should be complaining.

Frankly, this is a little light because Jeremiah's life was one that suffered many hardships. He suffered things that Baruch never suffered.

So God decided to send three messages to Baruch that he needed to remember now that he was down in Egypt:

MESSAGE #1 – God is the sovereign God who has built the nation and planted the nation and it is His prerogative to destroy it down. **45:4**

God says I am the sovereign God and I will do what I want to do with My nation. I built it and planted it to reflect My glory and nothing about it reflects My glory so I am going to tear it down and rip it up.

God's people had done evil and, as a result, God would overthrow them. Baruch was apparently thinking he would be a major achiever in Judah and have a happy life, and God says I am going to sovereignly bring down Judah and destroy Jerusalem, and your assignment is to communicate My word.

Keep in mind that Baruch is from a key family in Judah, so what that would mean is the status of the family wouldn't mean much of anything.

MESSAGE #2 – God's servants must not expect greater things than what is consistent with the program of God. **45:5a**

It may be that Baruch saw himself as a great deliverer of his people. He apparently saw himself as a key cog in the program of God. So Jeremiah tells him to seek what is best for God, not for you.

God says when My program is bringing judgment on a nation, your job is to communicate My word and not seek some great political ambition for yourself.

Our desires and whims must coincide with the word and will of God. Baruch wanted to be a real success in Judah at a time when God was bringing Judah down.

If Baruch was depressed by what he experienced, think of God. God says you think you have been wronged, well I have loved this nation, elected this nation, protected this nation, blessed this nation and they do not thank Me and do not even worship Me.

One commentator said for some people, the main thing is not that God's will gets done, but that they get to do it. They are happy if God gets the glory as long as they get some of it too.

MESSAGE #3 – God will reward those who remain faithful to Him. **45:5b**

Baruch needed to be reminded of the fact that he was still alive when many were dead. He needed to stop feeling sorry for himself. God says I am going to destroy almost everyone, but I have protected you and I am still protecting you. I will watch over you and go with you wherever you go.

It is significant to note that God is the one who permits a person to live or die.

Sometimes people think they know what is best for them. People make choices in life trying to do what is right.

God knows what is best for a man. A wise person will seek God because God knows what is best for every human being.

This is a rebuke to Baruch. Baruch was depressed and Baruch had been making some crazy statements about God and so Jeremiah basically said knock it off.

Jeremiah and Baruch did not want to be in Egypt. But God wanted Baruch to know that I am there with you protecting you and using you, so stop your pity-party.

Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you.