

Journey through Jeremiah Part 47, Message to Baruch

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2017

† Jeremiah 45:1-5 - Message to Baruch

We pick up tonight reading prophecy that was delivered specifically for Baruch.

Jeremiah 45 is the shortest chapter in the Book of Jeremiah and it seems to be sort of a rebuke or reproof to Baruch.

1 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch;

3 Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.

4 Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, *that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.*

5 And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

Baruch is a very important figure in this book and is mentioned 23 times.

We are first introduced to Baruch in Jeremiah 32 when he is assisting Jeremiah with the land purchase that he had made while in prison. Then again he is called upon in Jeremiah 36 to stand in place of Jeremiah and read the Words of God from the scroll.

We are told that Baruch is the **son of Neriah** 8 different times in this book.

A few interesting bits of information I discovered while studying about Baruch:

1. There is a **Book of Baruch** in the **Apocrypha** which used to be included with the King James Bible. These books were never considered to be part of Scripture but were included as help books to study. The Book of Baruch has 6-chapters and deals with the captivity of the people of Judah in Babylon.
2. Back in 1975 a **clay seal** was found in Israel that supposedly contained the **seal of Baruch son of Neriah** pressed in it. It was actually authenticated by Israeli archeologists and placed in the Israel National Museum. Then later in 1996 another seal was found with Baruch's seal on it and also a **fingerprint**. However, it has since been determined that both of these were fakes and had kept everyone fooled for many years.

According to **Jeremiah 51:59**, Baruch had a brother named **Seraiah** who is called "**the quiet prince**." **Jeremiah 51:59** *The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.* -- This means he would have worked in the King's Palace.

Baruch's grandfather, **Maaseiah**, was the governor of Jerusalem during the reign of King Josiah, so he comes from an important family.

The Bible has good things to say about Baruch and it appears he was a man of great moral and ethical values. His name means "**blessed**." He was a very well-educated man; a scribe by trade and was also a personal assistant to Jeremiah.

For Jeremiah, Baruch was not only a trusted friend, but he was also instrumental in the ministry. He was much like Joshua to Moses or Elisha to Elijah, or Timothy to Paul. They seemed to have a very good working relationship and Baruch was greatly trusted by Jeremiah.

1 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

Our text says that his occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. We have already studied about that time period back in **Jeremiah 36:1-2**: *And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.*

Of course, we all know the results of that. When Jehoiakim heard the words being read from the scroll he became enraged and cut them with a pen knife and threw them in the fire.

2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch;

Baruch is a true Israelite, both by birth and in practice. The LORD speaks to him personally through this prophecy and uses the title, **God of Israel**, and then calls him by name, letting Baruch know that he knows him and that the words are coming from the God that he serves and worships – the God of Israel.

3 Thou didst say, *Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.*

These words that the LORD says that Baruch said, are not recorded in the Scriptures but obviously Baruch said them or thought them, or perhaps he prayed them to the LORD.

"**Woe is me**," is a common Bible expression when someone is extremely overwhelmed. You may recall Isaiah saying those same words when he saw the LORD sitting on a throne and his train filled the Temple: **Isaiah 6:5** *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

As we studied in **Chapter 36**, after Jehoiakim read the words on the scroll that Baruch delivered, he sent soldiers out to arrest both Jeremiah and Baruch. **Jeremiah 36:26** *But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.*

They had to go into hiding to keep from being arrested. All of this was obviously placing a lot of stress on Baruch and he cries out, **WOE IS ME NOW!**

He said that "**the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow**." He was in sorrow over the condition of his country and the sins of the people and now on top of his sorrow he is now grieved over the extra stress caused by being the messenger for Jeremiah. Jeremiah's enemies had now become his enemies and it was getting too much for him. So much so that he says "**I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest**." Many times when we are under a lot of stress we find that we can't sleep, we stay worked up all day and never get any rest.

The fact is, as good of a man that Baruch was, he is complaining about the work that he has been appointed to. Make no doubt about it, Jeremiah thinks very highly of Baruch but he also has to tell him what the LORD has to say.

4 Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, *that* which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.
5 And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

The LORD tells Baruch that he is going to pluck up Judah and replant it. He's going to start all over again. Therefore, Baruch better accept the fact, stop his complaining and stop trying to make a name for himself and be busy at the task he has been given.

It may be that Baruch felt that he should have some greater rank, maybe of prophet or a position in the King's palace such as being a prince like his brother. He may have been looking at higher ambitions than just being a scribe and an assistant.

There's nothing wrong with having aspirations to do greater things, but we must remember when it comes to service for the LORD there is no place for self-promotion. Our only goal is to promote and exalt the LORD Jesus. When we put our own selfish ambitions higher than the LORD's, that is when we mess up.

Hey, if you leave a Church service and you know more about the preacher than the LORD Jesus, then that preacher has failed in his duty to preach the Word of God. Some men spend more time talking about themselves than they do the LORD Jesus. Jesus should be the object of our desire, the subject of our longing, and the center of our attention. The LORD didn't say, IF YOU BE LIFTED UP, He said if I BE LIFTED UP, I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME.

Baruch obviously desired to have a smoother road than what he has been on. He has complained of the weariness of the task at hand and obviously was wanting greater things than he had.

Over in the New Testament Jesus teaching on the Sermon on the Mount he says this:
Matthew 6:31-34

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Baruch needs to seek first the Kingdom of God and let the LORD take care of the rest.

Although the LORD is rebuking Baruch, he does tell him that he is going to spare his life. He said in our last verse: *I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.*

So, while everyone will be dying all around Baruch, the LORD is going to protect him and bring him through it.