

JEREMIAH 45

A SPECIAL WORD FOR BARUCH

This short chapter contains a special word that was given from the Lord to Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch – apparently not long after he had finished penning the scroll full of Divine warnings (chapter 36), during the fourth year of the reign of King Jehoiakim (605 BC). Here we learn how Baruch was terrified when he was brought into trouble for writing and reading that controversial scroll (verses 1-3). Nevertheless, his fears were checked by a Divine reproof for his great expectations; and they were silenced by a Divine promise of special preservation (verses 4-5). Even though Baruch was only Jeremiah's scribe, yet the Lord took notice of his frights; and this provision was made for his comfort. God does not despise any of His sons and daughters; rather, He graciously takes an active interest in even the humblest and the weakest of them. He had just as much love for Baruch the scribe as for Jeremiah the prophet.

As we have seen, Baruch was employed in writing down Jeremiah's prophecies, and then publicly reading them; and for these things, he was threatened by the king. This caused him to be full of fear and anguish. "Woe is me now!" he exclaimed to himself; "for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I found no rest" (verse 3). Young beginners in religion are often inclined to be easily discouraged by the difficulties that they commonly meet with in the service of their God. And it seems that in Baruch's case, these complaints and fears came from his own natural corruptions. Apparently, he had raised his expectations too high in this world, and his high hopes had made it harder for him to bear the distress and trouble that he was now in. The frowns of the world would not disquiet us if we would not foolishly flatter ourselves with the hopes of its smiles – and even court and covet them! Therefore, what a folly it is for us to seek great things for ourselves here on earth, where nothing is certain!

In addition to these things, the very nature of the words of judgment that Baruch had been committing to paper were enough to make any Godly soul lament with a burst of patriotic feeling; for the future prospects of the land of Judah were very dark and dreadful indeed. However, Jeremiah assured Baruch that no matter what happened to the city or the nation, he would personally escape with his life wherever he went. This was a sure promise that was given to him from Jehovah as a reward for his faithfulness. But with this promise, he was to be content, and not continue to seek great things for himself. The country as a whole was definitely doomed, but the Lord would still permit a few individ-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Baruch's fear and terror – verses 1-3
- ❖ The Lord's special message to him – verses 4-5

uals to be spared – Baruch among them. The Lord had said, “Behold that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land” (verse 4). Some persons imagine that God cannot destroy His own work, but history reveals that He has often done so.



He has built cities, and then torn them down; He has planted communities, and then plucked them up; He has founded churches, and then swept them away; He has created this earth, but He will one day destroy it by fire. As we have said already, what folly it is for people to seek great things for themselves here – whether they are lands, estates, houses, names, titles, or wealth – for the tenure on which they hold them is so uncertain and insecure! “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content!” (1 Tim. 6:8) Whatever greatness a person may gain that is of a merely external nature, he must one day leave it. True greatness – the greatness which lasts forever – is the greatness of the mind; and it consists in a living faith in God, and in a holy obedience to His will.

We shall meet Baruch again as we continue to study this Book; and we shall find that he did not forget the lesson, and that he continued faithful to the interests of his friend Jeremiah!

Lord, we confess that we have often spent our time seeking great things for ourselves in this world – whether it has been wealth, property, possessions, fame, or something else. We beseech Your Holy Spirit to come and work in our hearts, so that we may remember that “Godliness with contentment is great gain!” Amen.