

Jeremiah 45

Read Jeremiah 45:1-5:

Publishing the Word and Inside Information

How do we find comfort as we approach the end of this age? How do we look forward to what comes next; knowing that it is evil, and it involves destruction? I always feel like a downer when people ask me about the future; and how they think things are going to get better. That is not what the bible says.

This chapter is about the fear of judgmental prophecy. There can be a lot of anxiety for people who hear frightening end-times prophecies for the first time. I can remember passing time at my grandmother's house as a little boy. She had bookshelves full of encyclopedias, year books and other miscellaneous books. I happened to pick up a Catholic Bible and read some apocrypha and other books in her bible. It seemed very medieval and full of dungeons and dragons. It perked my interest. My Grandma did not stop me from reading it; but she thought that it was odd...and she thought it was borderline questionable that I read this stuff on my own.

Some churches do not dive into prophecy and end-times scripture because there are competing interpretations. Others bypass these prophetic writings because they involve the future. Many pastors and congregations just want to dial it down and keep it to the stuff in front of our faces today. Here are some pastoral statistics:

- Only 70% of the pastors have ever taken a study course on end times prophecy
- Only 60% of those who have studied these things are pre-millennialists.
- Half of these pre-millennialists feel strongly about their view.
- Many self-appointed messiahs teach that Revelation has already been fulfilled.

Churches that do not dive deep into scripture can be intimidated by not knowing where symbolism stops, and actual details start. I would say that the least-understood books of the bible might be Revelation, Ezekiel, Zachariah and Leviticus. People who have not immersed themselves in scripture might be intimidated by the flood, the Lake of Fire, martyrdom, and the destruction of the Jewish populations so many times. People are more likely to leave that stuff to the clergy. Many Christians are not even clear about the details of the second coming. The rapture scares a lot of believers as well.

Those with lesser knowledge of scripture are less likely to believe miraculous and more-spiritual writings (i.e.. being born again). Some churches just stick with the more positive writings.

Baruch is Jeremiah's scribe. He recorded the details of the coming judgements before they were made public. When Jeremiah told the people that they would be destroyed, Baruch's hand probably trembled. He was essentially hearing that his family would likely be killed along with the masses of Jews. Fortunately, Baruch would be spared. He could not save his loved ones.

“Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast,²⁰ even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,” says the Lord GOD, “they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.” (Ezekiel 14)

Woe is Me

How much do we interject ourselves and our interests into the story? We are called to be witnesses and truth tellers. It's never about us. Prophecy comes under two categories. There is *foretelling* the future; and *forthtelling* the accurate interpretations. Those who teach are held to a high standard to not add or subtract scripture. Sometimes, we might find ourselves drifting into the driver's seat. Do we want to punish those who are not receptive to our preaching? It can be hard to remember that sometimes we are just a conduit of information.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah,⁵ and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the LORD.⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. (1 Samuel 8)

⁶ Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. ⁷ And in the morning, you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?”⁸ Also Moses said, “This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD.” (Exodus 16)

Baruch means *blessed*. We are blessed to just be grafted into the process. We are not necessary, but we do grow by being part of it. It is like being a watchman above the gates who gets to cry out as a rider is seen on the horizon.

I have had more success ministering to people from other's ideas than my own. I have a desire to do my own ministry things; but I do better jumping in and helping an ongoing effort. Baruch had the responsibility to be Jeremiah's proxy, while he was in jail. Baruch had to show up, and he even bought the land from Jeremiah's cousin for him. Baruch took dictation and read the scrolls (twice) which the king chopped up and threw into the fire. Like Baruch, we are probably not the *star of the show*. Perhaps we are just prepping others for their missions. I know that I can slowly *commandeer* the message as if it is one of my own creations. I tend to take things personally that I put out there. I find myself getting upset when I hear guys at work putting down those who evangelize or proclaim the word of God. I get upset when I hear God being misrepresented.

Seeing evil for what it is can cause you to become depressed. I have been listening to Shawn Ryan's podcasts lately. He has been interviewing Trump's new cabinet members, as well as numerous war heroes. The podcast format is a combination of a biography while exposing little-known dark government secrets. Hearing how corrupt things can be can leave you feeling helpless. Some of these interviews even reveal dark things about the 'good guys' who we support. This show appeals to patriots; but it can leave feeling like there is no sense in trying to fix the layers of corruption. Baruch has to detail and inventory the total moral collapse of his people. He may have walked home every night deeply disturbed.

It is easy to forget that God is in the business of turning hopeless situations into unforeseen deliverances. All this drama inspires us to pray. Life would be easier for us if we could focus on *the Kingdom's first downs*; more than our personal milestones.

Glorifying God

We say that glorifying God is one of our highly held Christian virtues. How does that play out? Certainly not by us becoming the deliverers and having all the solutions to other people's problems. God's inexplicable power is often not revealed until we conclude all is lost and unsalvageable. God is glorified when the written-off underdog gets rescued. Jeremiah was given to us as an example of loyalty amidst rejection. Baruch had the embarrassing job of publishing information that nobody wanted to hear. Does this sound familiar?

The Kingdom has gotten more first downs from my failures than my successes. There are not many journeys that you can successfully fail forward. The best testimonies involve rescuing a fallen and threatened soul. I am much more likely to bring up God if I am being crushed, than when I am *crushing it*. Probably one of my lowest points in business ended up being the best time to inspire my workers to pray for me. I had people lighting candles in churches for me in Mexico City. I had nearly broke manual laborers passing the hat to collect enough money for me to pay off the EDD. Whenever I share my life experiences with someone it does not sound too much like Elon Musk's rise to success. It is more like some poor soul who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Baruch is one of the only people with fingerprint verification in the bible. His fingerprint is captured in the clay seal around various scrolls that he wrote. It is verified as being the same person in every case. His name and fingerprint are intertwined on the same scroll seals.

We already know of one extraordinary relic of Baruch's, a **bull**, or lump of clay, impressed with the scribe's seal.^b That seal reads, in three lines of ancient Hebrew letters, "**belonging to Berekhyahu, son of Neriyaahu, the Scribe.**"

Berekhyahu is the complete original name of Baruch, which means blessed. The suffix *-yahu* is a form of Yahweh, the personal name of the Israelite God. So the name means "**Blessed of Yahweh.**" Baruch's father Neriyaahu, who is called Neriah in the Bible, had a similar suffix in his name. These common suffixes are often dropped from the Biblical text.

This first bulla is now displayed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem for all to see.

On one hand Baruch gets a name-mention in scripture. On the other hand, he is admonished to calm down; and not make this about him. God tells him not to seek greatness for himself. Seeking personal glory is the opposite of seeking God's glory. There is a popular U-Tube Christian series of interviews call I am Second. This tendency to desire greatness is a corrupting influence. Consider anyone who has been able to do whatever they want. Michael Jackson and Howard Hughes and many movie stars became weird and twisted. Even the all-wise Solomon explored how far he could go into pleasure and accomplishments. It absolutely ruined him and his nation. God honored Solomon partially because he wanted to help the people. After God blessed him; Solomon morphed it into a quest for experiences.

³ I searched in my heart ^[b]how ^[b]to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives. ⁴ I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. ⁵ I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made myself water pools from which to ^[c]water the growing trees of the grove. ⁷ I acquired male and female servants, and had ^[d]servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and ^[e]musical instruments of all kinds. ⁹ So I became great and ^[f]excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure. For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my ^[g]reward from all my labor. ¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. ¹² Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly; For what can the man do who succeeds the king?— Only what he has already done. (Ecclesiastes 2)

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not ^[a]loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom^[b] the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. ⁷ Then Solomon built a ^[c]high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. ⁹ So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had

turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, ¹⁰ and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.” (1 Kings 11)

How Should Publishers of Scripture Respond to Rebellion?

What would have been the best response for Baruch to have, if he was not to interject himself into the story? Should he have been **happy** that God was going to wipe out his rebellious people? No. That is the arena of the flesh and pride.

and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. ⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, ^[i]just as Elijah did?” ⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, ^[k]and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. ⁵⁶ ^[l]For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village. (Luke 9)

Should he have been **ambivalent**, and shrugged his shoulders at hearing about the destruction of his people? No. Ignoring those who are perishing is essentially to despise them. Hate sin; while loving the sinners.

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ (Matthew 25)

Should Baruch have been **sad** about the moral failures and ensuing destruction of his people? Yes, just like Paul. It is a characteristic of righteousness to grieve for sin and its consequences.

⁴ and the LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” ⁵ To the others He said in my ^[e]hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; ^[f]do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly ^[g]slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the ^[h]temple. ⁷ Then He said to them, “Defile the ^[i]temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!” And they went out and killed in the city. (Ezekiel 9)

It can be therapeutic to try to put yourself in God's shoes. What would you do to the people of Judah? What would you do to America today? You could not allow them to go their own way, and poison mankind with evil acts and false worship. We have to stop our free fall. When do men turn to God? During a crisis. Not during good times. Again, Baruch (Blessed of Yahweh) you are along for the ride to be my witness. You will be fine. It's not about you.