

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH
XIX. God's Call To Exchange Our Plans For His Plan
(Jeremiah 45:1-5 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. God called Jeremiah to prophesy in Judah during its apostasy until God's judgment fell on the nation.
- B. Jeremiah's ministry is then similar to what God's servants face in our era of spiritual decline. Such a calling can be marked by political opposition that seeks to cause God's servants to cease being able to do His work.
- C. Jeremiah 45:1-5 reports on God's message to Jeremiah's scribe Baruch when he was distraught over facing life-threatening opposition to his calling as a courier of Jeremiah's prophecy to Judah's evil king Jehoiakim.
- D. It serves to instruct us on our need to exchange our plans for God's plan for us (as follows):

II. God's Call To Exchange Our Plans For His Plan, Jeremiah 45:1-5 et al.

- A. Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, had great plans for his life, but God's plan for Baruch upset his own plans:
 - 1. According to Jeremiah 45:1, the setting for Jeremiah 45:1-5 are the events of Jeremiah 36:1-32. There, the Lord had told Jeremiah who was not allowed to enter the Temple to write all the words he had spoken against Israel and Judah in a book for them to be read to Judah's people that they might repent, Jer. 36:1-3.
 - 2. God hoped that Judah under good king Josiah's son king Jehoiakim might react to these words as Josiah had reacted to the reading of the Law of Moses that had been found in the Temple to which Josiah had responded by repenting and leading Judah in a great reformation, cf. 2 Kings 22:1-23:22.
 - 3. Jeremiah was not then allowed to enter the temple, so he had summoned his scribal attendant Baruch and dictated the words of God's prophecy to him and had sent Baruch to the temple to read the scroll's contents to the people who had gathered there, Jeremiah 36:4-8.
 - 4. Baruch wisely read the scroll on a fast day held in the fifth year and the ninth month of Jehoiakim's reign in December 604 B. C., for "the Babylonians had conquered Ashkelon at that time" and Judah was concerned about Babylon's threat to herself, Jer. 36:9-10; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jer. 36:9.
 - 5. Thus, taking advantage of a time of national concern, Baruch had read the scroll in the temple on that fast day, and it had caught the attention of Michaiah, grandson of Shaphan who had read the discovered Mosaic Law to Jehoiakim's father Josiah that had led to Judah's reformation, Jer. 36:11; 2 Kings 22:8-10.
 - 6. Michaiah had reported the contents of Baruch's scroll to the princes in the king's palace (Jer. 36:12-13) and the princes had sent for Baruch to have him read the scroll to them, Jeremiah 36:14-15.
 - 7. The princes had become afraid in hearing Baruch read the words of Jeremiah, so they had told Baruch and Jeremiah to hide themselves while the scroll was being read to king Jehoiakim, Jeremiah 36:16-20.
 - 8. When Jehoiakim heard the words of the scroll, he had burned it up as it was being read, and he had directed that Baruch and Jeremiah be arrested, Jeremiah 36:21-26a.
 - 9. However, God had hidden Baruch and Jeremiah so they were not arrested, and Jeremiah had then dictated a second scroll to Baruch to record the former scroll's words with many more words, Jeremiah 36:26b-32.
 - 10. In this humanly trying setting of religious persecution, the event of Jeremiah 45:1-5 occurred (as follows):
 - a. God had Jeremiah instruct Baruch that he was not to complain that the Lord was adding sorrow to his pain, that he was worn out and found no rest due to the life-threatening risk he faced in his ministry as Jeremiah's scribe, Jeremiah 45:1-3 NIV.
 - b. Rather, the Lord wanted Baruch to know that He was going to overthrow what He had built and uproot what He had planted in Judah and in surrounding nations, Jeremiah 45:4 NIV.
 - c. Baruch was not to seek great things for himself, for God was going to bring disaster on all people, but wherever Baruch went, the Lord would let him escape with his life in contrast to Judah's people, Jer. 45:5.
- B. However, in view of God's eternal plan, Baruch's suffering as Jeremiah's scribe was a great spiritual ministry:
 - 1. Matthew 5:11-12 reveals that persecuted Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah will be greatly rewarded in heaven, so the persecution Baruch faced for reading Jeremiah's words will be greatly rewarded in eternity!
 - 2. Also, no other significant spiritual ministry on Baruch's part is recorded in Scripture, meaning that what he suffered in Jeremiah 45:1-4 for the Lord was his greatest ministry contribution of his earthly life!

Lesson: Though Baruch's plans for his life were upset by God's plan for him, Baruch was directed of the Lord to accept that divine plan as the best use of his life in vast superiority to his own plans.

Application: May we like Baruch accept God's plan for us even if it upsets our plans, for God's plan is far better.