

CHAPTER 45

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 45

This chapter contains a prophecy, delivered to Baruch for his personal use. The time of it is expressed, (^{245D}Jeremiah 45:1); a reproof is given him for his immoderate grief and sorrow, (^{245D}Jeremiah 45:2,3); the destruction of the land of Judea is prophesied of; and therefore it was wrong in him to seek great things for himself at such a time; however, he is assured of his own safety, (^{245D}Jeremiah 45:4,5).

Ver. 1. *The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah*, etc.] Who was his amanuensis or scribe; and this word he spake not to him of himself, but in the name of the Lord, as coming from him; so the Targum calls it,

“the word of prophecy which Jeremiah the prophet prophesied concerning Baruch the son of Neriah:”

when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah; not what immediately precede, concerning the destruction of the Jews in Egypt; which were delivered out many years after the writing of the roll by Baruch here referred to; and which was done, as here said,

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; which was eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem; so that this prophecy does not stand in order, which would more properly have followed the thirty sixth chapter; where we have an account of what Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah in a roll, and read to the people, and after that to the princes; which exposed him to danger, and caused the grief expressed by him in this chapter; but it being written to a private person, is postponed to this place:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch.*]

Whom he knew by name, had a great regard for, and honours with this prophecy; and, being an Israelite, both in a literal and spiritual sense, he

addresses him as the God of Israel, and as being his covenant God; in whom he should put his trust, and from whom he might expect safety and protection in the worst of times; and to whose sovereign will, in all the dispensations of his providence, he ought to have humbly and patiently submitted.

Ver. 3. *Thou didst say, woe is me now!* etc.] What will become of me? I am ruined and undone; this he said in his heart, if not with his lips, perhaps both ways; and when the king gave orders for the apprehending of him and the prophet, being provoked at the roll which he had wrote and read, (^{f805}Jeremiah 36:26);

for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; caused him grief upon grief, sorrow upon sorrow, an abundance of it; for there was a variety of things which occasioned grief and sorrow; the trouble of his office, as secretary to the prophet; the reproach east upon him by the people for it; the grievous things contained in the prophecies he transcribed, concerning the ruin of his people and nation; the king's displeasure at the roll, and his burning it; to which was added the danger he was exposed unto for writing it; and especially, as he might apprehend, for writing it over again, after it was burnt; to which were annexed new threatenings, and such as personally concerned the king;

I fainted in my sighing; or "with" it; he sighed and groaned at what he saw coming upon his country, and particularly upon himself; it quite overcame his spirits; he sunk and swooned away: or "I laboured in my sighing"^{f806}; amidst his sighs and groans, he prayed to the Lord, and laboured in prayer, that he might be delivered from the evils he feared were coming upon him:

and I find no rest; from his grief, sorrow, and sighing; no cessation of that; no serenity and composure of mind; no answer of prayer from God. The Targum is,

"and I found not prophecy."

And the Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Abendana, from the ancient Midrashes, interpret this grief of Baruch to be on account of his not having the gift of prophecy bestowed on him, which he expected by being a servant of the prophet^{f807}; and represent him as saying, Joshua ministered to Moses, and the Holy Spirit dwelled upon him; Elisha ministered to Elijah, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him; how different am I from all the disciples of the prophets! "woe is me now!" etc.

Ver. 4. *Thus shalt thou say unto him,* etc.] This is spoken to Jeremiah, and is an order from the Lord to him, what he should say in his name to Baruch:

the Lord saith thus, behold, [that] which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up; the Jewish nation, both as to church and state; which the Lord had built up as a spacious and beautiful house to dwell in, and had planted as a vineyard, and set it with pleasant plants; but now would demolish this building, and destroy this plantation:

even this whole land; not a few cities only, or only Jerusalem the metropolis, but the whole land of Judea; no part of it but what should be left desolate. So the Targum,

“even the whole land of Israel, which is mine.”

Ver. 5. *Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek [them] not,* etc.] Riches and wealth honour and esteem, peace and prosperity; these were not to be sought after and expected, when the whole nation would be involved in such a general calamity. Baruch perhaps expected that his reading the roll to princes would have been a means of preferring him at court, of advancing him to some post or office, in which he might have acquired wealth, and got applause, and lived in peace and plenty all his days; but this was not to be looked for; when, if he observed, the very roll he wrote and read contained in it prophecies of the general ruin of the nation. The Jews restrain this to the gift of prophecy they suppose Baruch sought after, which was not to be enjoyed out of the land of Canaan:

for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh; not upon every individual person in the world; but upon all the inhabitants of Judea, who should either die by the sword or by famine, or by pestilence, or be carried captive, or be in some distress or another:

but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest; suggesting that he should be obliged to quit his native place and country, and go from place to place; as he did, after the destruction of Jerusalem, along with the prophet; and even into Egypt with the Jews that went there; where his life would be in danger, and yet should be preserved; he should be snatched as a brand out of the burning, when Jerusalem was taken; and in other places, when exposed, though he should lose everything, yet not his life; which should be as dear to him as a rich spoil taken by the soldier, being a distinguishing mercy.