

Class 12: Jeremiah 45-48

June 21, 2017

Encouragement to Baruch;

Message to Egypt, the Philistines & Moab

This study is in two parts: first, chapter 45, an interlude that stands alone as an encouragement to Baruch; then chapters 46-47, the first two of several prophecies against the nations. There is no purpose to bringing these portions together for our study except as a use of our class time. The message to Baruch stands alone, and the messages to the nations stands as a portion of the final part of Jeremiah

Baruch's Reassurance: Much of our attention focuses on Jeremiah, and yet the actual writer of these messages is likely Baruch (Jeremiah 36:18,32). Baruch is also a co-prophet with Jeremiah, having been the one to address the king when Jeremiah was forbidden entrance. When Jeremiah spoke to the army captain Johanan and Azariah, they accused Baruch of being the one who directed Jeremiah. This indicates that Baruch was seen as at least equal to Jeremiah. When they fled to Egypt, they took Baruch with them.

Baruch's complaint is that God has added sorrows to his pain, and that he was worn out with groaning, and could find no rest. His complaint is during the time of Jehoiakim (c. 605), twenty years before the destruction of Jerusalem (and the persecution of Zedekiah). Of course, we have seen that there was even more difficulty ahead of Baruch, so it is important to see this promise from God early on.

God's reply to Baruch is this: God intends to overthrow the things He established (i.e. the temple, Jerusalem). It would be unwise to seek "great things" for himself. Perhaps this points to his brother Seraiah, who was an advisor to King Zedekiah (32:12, 51:59). God promises that Baruch will escape these things with his life.

Prophecy Against Egypt: Again, we move in time to one of the most important battles in ancient history, the battle of Carchemish. There in the year 605BC the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians a second time (not the battle mentioned in 2 Chron. 35:20 in which Josiah was killed). This battle marked the end of the Assyrians as a nation, and the decline of Egypt against Babylon. The first portion of chapter 46 is Jeremiah's prediction of this defeat.

After 46:13 Jeremiah looks ahead to the coming wrath of Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt. He predicts the sword coming to Egypt, and a desolation against their great cities. He promises to war against the very gods of Egypt (see previous chapters) and that He will hand over Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar. However, the prophecy concludes with two points of hope. First, God will restore Egypt again. Second, God will restore Israel again as well.

Prophecy Against the Philistines: The Philistines represent a bit of a mystery in history. It is thought that they may be the "Sea Peoples" that the Egyptians record invading around the 10th century BC. However, there were Philistines in the time of Abraham as far back as 1800BC (Gen 26:1). In Genesis 10 the Philistines are identified as Caphtorites, a relation to the Egyptians and likely referring to the people of Crete and Cyprus. The Philistines were not one kingdom, but ruled by five king city states (Joshua 13:3). The cities were Giza, Ashdod, Gath, Ekron and Ashkelon. It is unusual that they were not listed as a nation to be removed from Canaan in Genesis 15:18 and Deuteronomy 7. As well, God had Israel avoid them in Exodus 13:17. Some of this may result from a covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen 21:22).

Jeremiah's prophecy is of an uncertain date. He states that Philistia would be destroyed by the Egyptians (as opposed to Babylonians). He decrees that this is in part to prevent aid to go to the Phoenicians of Sidon and Tyre. He states that the day has come to destroy all the Philistines. Historically, after being absorbed by the Babylonians, they disappear from history.

Prophecy Against Moab: Moab is one of the two nations descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:37). They were a special nation to God (Deut. 2:9), although their conduct brought them great condemnation and notoriety (such as the infamous King Balak in Numbers 22). At the same time, one of the seed ancestors, Ruth, was of Moab. At this time, the Moabites are in alliance with Nebuchadnezzar, aiding him in destroying Judah (2 Kings 24:2).

Jeremiah predicts an absolute destruction on Moab. He promises that their God Chemosh (mentioned as one of the deities Solomon worshiped) will go into exile. The time for Moab's calamity is at hand, a judgment that has been pending since Balak (Micah 6:5). Moab went into captivity sometime after Nebuchadnezzar. By the Persian period, the inhabitants of the land are the Arabs, not the Moabites (Neh. 4:1).

Making Applications:

1. When God spoke to Baruch, He told Baruch that He would tear down what He had built up. How does this express God's grief over sin?
2. Why would God's judgment on the nations around Israel and Judah come after the judgment on Israel and Judah, and not before?