

JEREMIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 44 as we continue our study through the Bible. As we saw last time, the Babylonians made their third and final assault upon Jerusalem, destroyed the city, burned the Temple to the ground and took the remaining people captive with them to Babylon except for the weak, the sick, the old.

Then Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon made Gedaliah governor over the people that remained in the land. As the Babylonians pulled out, leaving only a skeletal army in Judah, the people began to return from their hiding. Two of the more prominent people were Ishmael and Johanan. For whatever reason Ishmael cuts a deal with the Ammonites to kill Gedaliah and as Gedaliah is told by Johanan of this assassination plot, he refuses to listen. And, not only was Gedaliah killed by Ishmael, but all those that ate with Gedaliah and even some of the Babylonian soldiers were also killed!

Now Ishmael takes the remaining people captive with him and is going to seek safety in the land of the Ammonites, the one who paid him to do this. But before he is able to escape, Johanan overtakes them, releases the captives but Ishmael and eight of his men escaped to the Ammonites.

Now the remaining Jews were fearful of what the Babylonians would do to them because of the murder of Gedaliah and some of the Babylonian soldiers. So they do the right thing, they seek guidance from the Lord and they go to Jeremiah to find out what the Lord wants them to do in this difficult situation.

And the Lord tells them through the prophet Jeremiah, **“Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,” says the LORD, ‘for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand.’**” Jeremiah 42:11. The bottom line was this, the Lord tells them to remain in the land of Israel, don’t go down to Egypt for safety!

Tragically they did not listen to the Lord for as soon as Jeremiah finished sharing the Word of God with them we see their response. They said, **“... ‘You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, “Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.” But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon.’ . . . So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the Lord. And they went as far as Tahpanhes.”** Jeremiah 43:2-3, 7.

They sought direction from the Lord but when they didn’t like what the Lord was telling them they blamed Jeremiah for lying and conspiring to get them killed by staying in the land of Israel.

And that is where we will pick up our study this evening beginning in verse 1 of Jeremiah chapter 44 as we see how the people are living down in Egypt and what God is going to do about that. Also keep in mind that this is the last words of Jeremiah down in Egypt. Many believe that it was in Egypt where Jeremiah finally died. The rest of Jeremiah is filling in some of the details prior to the final captivity, the judgment of the nations as we will see. So let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

JEREMIAH 44**VERSES 1-4**

1. As I have said, this is Jeremiah's final message to the nation. Keep in mind that he began his ministry in 627 B. C., in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. The last invasion of the Babylonians on the Southern Kingdom of Judah was in 586 B. C. And now it is 580 B. C. He has been speaking forth the Words of God for some 47 years now and no one has wanted to listen to what he has been saying. In this final message Jeremiah is going to try to admonish his people to follow the ways of the Lord. He will also rebuke them for their failure to listen and obey the Words of God. A very tough ministry but Jeremiah finished the race, he kept the faith!

2. As the Jews are settling in down in Egypt the Lord is going to speak to them and warn them of what has happened to the Jewish people, the land of Israel because of their idolatry and their refusal to turn back to Him! And the object lesson was fresh in their minds, the destruction of Jerusalem. One writer put it like this,

The memories were all too painful, the gaunt faces of little children struggling against famine, flaming torches catapulted over the walls striking their mark, burning their homes, the dreadful sight of the battering ram breaking through the walls they thought impenetrable, the twisted faces of barbaric captains storming the streets of their defeated city. The stench of burning flesh, the sound of helpless cries, the sight of such calamity they bore forever in their memories.

- John Guest, Jeremiah, Lamentations, The Communicator's Commentary, Vol. 17, pp. 189-190

And even though they had rebelled so much against the Lord, even going down to Egypt when God warned them not to, we see the love of God for His people. He could have just given up on them, but He doesn't. He is going to speak to them once again, and as we are going to see, He is going to give them another chance to be free or to remain in the bondage of this death and destruction down in Egypt.

3. Some people see God as this angry God who is waiting to strike out against those who come against Him. Actually, the exact opposite is true. You see, when I read this I see the passion and heartbreak of a Father whose children have rebelled against Him. And yet He still is begging them to turn back to Him.

Thus, God is reminding them why all this has come upon them to awaken them from their spiritual sleep and to come back to Him with their whole heart! And the Lord is going to continue to show them how they were so rebellious in the land of Israel that even after all the warnings, they still refused to listen and because of that they suffered the consequences of their actions!

VERSES 5-10

1. You would think after all that has happened to them, the destruction of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the captivity of the Jewish people that they would have learned the lesson, but they didn't. God even reminds them of why they went into captivity; it was their wickedness and the worship of other gods, burning incense to these gods.

And instead of learning the lesson they are doing the very thing that brought them into captivity in the first place and they are doing this down in Egypt, worshiping these gods down in Egypt! They were not broken, their hearts were still hard, they were still rebelling against God and it seems that they are even more stubborn now! You see, they refused to be broken by God, they refused to humble themselves before God and thus, nothing good comes out of that unless they turn back to Him! And the same is true in our own lives.

VERSES 11-14

1. The reason they fled to Egypt was because they were fearful of the Babylonians coming upon them and capturing them and maybe even killing them. But the Lord told them that He is with them, that He would deliver them, they just refused to believe and they went to Egypt for safety!

And the Lord is reminding them that they will not find safety in Egypt, they will not find safety in the world you might say as Egypt is a type of the world. And what is interesting is that everything they tried to run away from was going to come upon them, they would die “**... by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.**” Jeremiah 44:13.

The only hope is that if they obey the Lord and return to Judah, God will protect them there. And tragically they remained in Egypt and the freedom they thought they had would not come. Those Jews who were captured and taken to Babylon would be released after seventy years of captivity. They turned back to God and were set free while the Jews in Egypt remained in their sin and it eventually destroyed them!

2. Notice how the people respond to what Jeremiah is telling them.

VERSES 15-17a

1. Look at the love, the compassion that God has for His people and as this large group of people listen to what Jeremiah has to say, their response is very sad. Just listen again to their response. They tell Jeremiah, “**... ‘As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth ...’**” Jeremiah 44:16-17.

Talk about your hard hearts! This is willful disobedience to what God has said. It is one thing not to obey God out of ignorance, but that is not what is taking place here. Think of it like this. God has drawn a line in the sand and told us not to cross it, and that is exactly what they did. That kind of rebellious attitude will lead to action as we are going to see with these people.

2. They were not concerned about what God wanted, but they only wanted to do what they wanted! And in the church today that is exactly what we see happening. We see people do things based upon emotions, feelings instead of the Word of God. They want to do what they want to do and what happens is they are willfully transgressing the Words of God.

Listen to this article and you will see what I mean in regards to this issue of knowing what is right based on feelings. We are told,

How do you know what you feel is right? Haven't your feelings ever turned out to be wrong? Are you are saying that what you feel determines truth? If so, then you are putting yourself in the place of God and looking to yourself for what you “feel” is right.

If religion is whatever you feel is right, then that could lead to chaos. What if some people had a religion where they felt stealing was acceptable? And what about lying and cheating? Would you trust someone who believed in a religion that felt it was all right to steal, lie, and cheat?

Hitler felt killing Jews was right. He was wrong. The Bible says that the heart is deceitful and untrustworthy (Jer. 17:9). If you could come to know truth by what you felt, then the Bible, which is the revelation of God, didn't need to be written. But it has been written, and it has revealed that only God is the Source of truth - not your feelings.

I've never known truth to contradict itself. What if someone felt that something was right, and another person felt it was wrong? Would they both be right? If your statement is true, then how could there be a contradiction like that if feelings determined truth?

- <http://carm.org/apologetics/objections-and-answers/religion-whatever-you-feel-right>

The problem for many is they don't like the truth and that is what we see here in Jeremiah. They are doing what they want and they are going to share some interesting conclusions about why they are not listening to God. Listen to what they are saying to Jeremiah.

VERSES 17b-19

1. Before I talk about the worship of the Queen of Heaven, look at what God's people were still involved in. The same kind of idolatry they were doing in Judah which brought the judgment of God upon them they are continuing to do down in Egypt. They refused to stop, in fact they are saying that when they worshiped these god's they were blessed with food, prosperity and-so-on. What a twisted and wrong conclusion they came to! They are so blind, being so deceived in what they are doing like many today!

Just because something works, just because you benefited in some way by what you did does not mean it is of God. Satan and his demons are not going to give you garbage because no one would go down that path. They set the bait, it is good, there is a benefit for you, and you take a bite and you are hooked!

Also, we need to remember that even though they were living in sin what we might be seeing is that God continued to bless them for a time. God is gracious, He is patient, He is longsuffering and He desires for us to get right with Him, to repent of our sins. But there does come a point when those blessings come to an end and judgment comes and the Southern Kingdom of Judah found that out as well as the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

For the Jews in Egypt, they felt, "Why should we worship the Lord, why should we follow Him? We were so blessed when we worshiped the Queen of Heaven and now that we have stopped, all her blessings have stopped!" I told you, a very warped outlook of the situation and it was obviously a wrong outlook!

2. Now the Scriptures tell us they worshiped the Queen of Heaven, who goes by many different names. The Canaanites had Ashtoreth. The Assyrians had Ishtar. The Romans had Venus. The Egyptians had Isis. The Babylonians had Semiramis. The Greeks had Aphrodite. And tragically the Roman Catholic Church has picked up on this and they call her Mary.

This title of Queen for Mary was first used by Pope Martin in the seventh century. Then, in the following century we see Pope Sixtus IV acknowledge Mary as the Queen of Heaven. How did this happen? How did Mary become the queen of heaven in the Roman Catholic Church? One writer explains it like this,

Mary's right to reign as Queen of Heaven is a consequence of her Divine Motherhood. . . . Furthermore, Mary's royal merit is based on her intrinsic connection with Christ in His work of Redemption. Just as Christ is also our Lord and King because He has redeemed us with His precious blood . . . so, in an analogical way, Mary is Our Lady and a Queen because she the new Eve has shared intimately in the redemptive work of Christ, the new Adam, by suffering with Him and offering Him up to the Eternal Father.

- Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma

Is that true? Did Mary help Jesus in the work of Redemption? Did Mary share in this redemptive work of Christ by suffering with Him? Some have very strong feelings on this and will fight with all their breath to show you Mary is the Queen of Heaven and assisted in the work of our redemption!

But let's not go by feelings. Let's not go by emotions. Then what are we to go by? The Word of God! First of all Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:5-6, "**For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**"

I think that Paul makes this very clear for us by saying that there is only One God and One Mediator between God and men. Who is that? Jesus Christ, God who became flesh and dwelt among us to pay in full the penalty for our sins.

Remember the cry of Job in Job 9:33, "**Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.**" Now we see that Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ and He is the only Mediator, not Mary or anyone else. All roads don't lead to God; we can only come to the Father through Jesus!

Pope Pius XII had this to say regarding Mary being the Queen of Heaven. He wrote, He, the Son of God, reflects on His heavenly Mother the glory, the majesty and the dominion of His kingship, for having been associated to the King of Martyrs in the ineffable [deep] work of human Redemption as Mother and co-operatrix, she remains forever associated with Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of the graces which flow from the Redemption.

Jesus is King throughout all eternity by nature and by right of conquest; through Him, with Him and subordinate to Him, Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by right of conquest and by singular election. And her kingdom is as vast as that of her son of God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion. And this queenship of hers is essentially maternal, exclusively beneficent.

- Pope Pius XII

Make no mistake about it, I don't care what the Pope has to say, Mary is not the Queen of Heaven. And the church has even gone as far as to say she is co-savior, co-redeemer, the person we need to go to so that she can go to Jesus for us.

That is just blasphemy and it is not at all what Mary ascribed to herself. Yes, Mary was blessed by God; she was used by God to bring forth the Messiah. But she was still a sinner just like you and me. Now before you get angry or mad at me, listen to the words of Mary, listen to how she describes herself in Luke 1:46-47. We read, "**And Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.'**" She needed a Savior just as we do, she was not sinless!

And in regards to sharing the glory with Jesus, listen again to what the Scriptures have to say. In Isaiah 42:8 we are told, "**I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.**" I think it is important that we understand this because if you are going to base what you believe on your feelings, your emotions, you are going to be lead astray. Looked at the carved images, the statues and the such of Mary that are worshiped, and God says that is wrong!

Also, not only was Mary a sinner in need of a Savior, in need of Jesus, she also died like you and I will die one day. She was not taken up into heaven bodily, not dying. Jesus said in John 3:13 says, "**No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.**" And the last time we read of Mary she is in the upper room with the rest of the disciples praying. We can read of this in Acts 1:13. And we must keep in mind they were not praying to Mary in that upper room, there were no "Hail Mary's" but they were praying to the Lord!

One more point here about Mary before we move on and it has to do with Mary and Jesus and how they are depicted. When you see a picture of Mary and Jesus you will find Jesus as an infant and in the arms of His mother Mary. This Mother and Child worship came right out of Babylon, long before Jesus was even born, and that kind of worship has also infiltrated the church.

In Babylon it was Semiramis and her child-god Tammuz. In Rome it was Venus and Jupiter. In Egypt it was Isis and her child Horus, and-so-on. Understand this, Jesus is not a child, He is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world and He is coming again as the Lion from the tribe of Judah to pour out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world.

Remember what we read in Isaiah 42:8, **“I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.”** That means Mary or anyone else is not to receive the glory that is due the Lord. God alone is to be worshiped and receive the glory that is due His holy name! And He alone can save us. He does not need Mary’s help; He does not need our help. The work was finished on the cross of Calvary and all we must do is receive that gift of grace by faith. Peter put it like this in Acts 4:12, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** I think that is very clear!

3. Notice here in Jeremiah 44, in verses 18 and 19 how they associate all their problems to the fact that they stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven. The women did not partake of these things by themselves but the men consented to them. They were totally aware of what was going on.

Keep in mind that human beings are made to worship and if they do not worship the true and living God they will worship anything and everything, some other god they have made up in the imagination of their own hearts! That is just the reality and we see that played out here for us with the Jews down in Egypt. They rejected the true and living God and they are worshiping all these other gods, including the Queen of Heaven!

Now even when they were living in sin God continued to bless them for a time. God is gracious, He is patient, He is longsuffering and He desires for us to get right with Him, to repent of our sins. But they twisted the things of God and perverted them. They thought that the blessings they were receiving were coming from the Queen of Heaven, the one they were worshiping. And people do the same thing today. Instead of thanking God for what He has given them, they give everyone and everything else praise, including themselves!

And I think the same is true in America. We have been blessed because of our Christian heritage but like a locomotive that is traveling down the tracks, the brakes can be applied but it will take some time for that train to stop. I think God has applied the brakes on His blessings and shortly it will come to a stop because we have turned from Him and fallen deeper and deeper into sin!

VERSES 20-22

1. Jeremiah is trying to get their attention, to awaken them, so that they would see the truth of this situation. He wants them to look back and remember their family and friends who were taken into captivity by the Babylonians and see how much the Queen of Heaven helped them!

You see, she didn't!

God gave them time to repent but His patience and longsuffering came to an end and He had to judge them. They could look at the nation of Judah and see for themselves the results of their wickedness.

VERSE 23

1. God has warned them and He is telling them to remember what just happened to their people, their family in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, what drove them from their land into Egypt and it was not the Babylonians. It was their sin that brought this judgment upon them! They refused to see, they refused to learn and thus, what happened in Judah was going to happen to them down in Egypt!

2. Think of all the pain and suffering we would stay clear of if we would only listen and obey what the Lord is telling us. I remember when I was in High School we would hang out at MacDonald's in the evening, usually on a Friday night.

And one evening as we sat there this guy was causing trouble. Finally the police came and they wanted him to leave and they warned him to go with them and he fought them, argued with them.

Because he refused to listen they put the handcuffs on him and were beginning to take him out when he began to talk back and tell the police officers that the cuffs were not tight enough. He was mocking them. They warned him to stop and to leave with them and finally, they tightened up the cuffs and lifted his arms up a little and all we could hear was him screaming, ***"TO TIGHT! TO TIGHT!"*** as he was lead out the door!

I have to admit, we laughed, it was very funny. But my point is this. If he would have listened to them none of that would have happened but because he refused, because he was doing what he wanted, he was taken away with a lot of pain inflicted upon him!

That is what is going on here with the children of Israel who were down in Egypt. They refused to learn the lesson, they refused to listen to God and the reality is this, God is not mocked, for what a man sows he will reap! That is exactly what will happen to them and has happened!

VERSES 24-25

1. To me this is a very sad statement that Jeremiah has to make. He is telling the people that since they have made a vow to worship the Queen of Heaven, they will fulfill that vow and as you take that to its obvious conclusion, they will be judged for their actions by God. Death and destruction will come upon them as we shall see.

2. R. K. Harrison wrote in his commentary on Jeremiah these words regarding these women and the vow they took. He said, "According to ancient Jewish law (Nu. 30:7–15) the validity of a vow made by a married woman rested on the consent of her husband and if he did not approve he had the power to annul the vow. Thus the pagan worship which Jeremiah is condemning so vigorously had the full approval of the husbands in the community."

One writer summed up how far they had moved away from God by saying,

It is easy to misunderstand the full extent of these people's guilt. The Bible is less than explicit about what all was involved in this idol worship. It was not a mere ritual of baking and sacrificing cakes made in the image of a female deity. Nothing is said here about the sexual orgies and human sacrifices that accompanied these rites. But that was, evidently, the depth of darkness into which these people had thrown themselves. They had pledged themselves to demons and they felt that they owed it to their honor to keep their vows. That is why Jeremiah answers their remonstrance with "Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows!" Breaking their vows would have saved their lives; keeping them meant death.

- Rev. John Schultz, Commentary to the Book of Jeremiah, p. 247

VERSE 26

1. Talk about a sad verse, that "**... My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt ...**" Why will that be the case? Why will the people no longer say, "**The Lord GOD lives**"? Because they all will be dead! God is going to bring judgment upon those Jews living in Egypt and not one will survive unless they return to Jerusalem, to the land of Israel. They didn't and what a tragic ending to lives that God wanted to heal and restore, but they refused.

2. Maybe some of you, as we have been going over the judgment of God for several weeks now, are wondering, “What in the world does this have to do with me?” That is a great question and I think Paul gives to us the answer in Romans 15:4 when he wrote, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

Paul is telling us that the Scriptures are here for a reason, there are lessons for us to learn and apply to our lives. What is so important about these lessons? Paul says that in them you will find the examples of these men to encourage you and the end result as you go through the Scriptures is that you will have *PATIENCE*, *COMFORT* which then gives to you *HOPE!*

How many of you lack patience? I think most if not all of us do. Some of you are thinking right now, “Come on Joe let’s finish this up!” I don’t know about you but as I read through the Scriptures I find that God is not in a hurry, He has a plan, He has a purpose and He is patient.

On the other hand, we are not! The Greek word that Paul uses for **“patience”** is HUPOMONE (hoop-om-on-ay’) and it speaks of cheerful endurance, cheerful consistency, hanging in there, not giving up. Now how often, as we are going through things do we do so with cheerful endurance and yet, that is what Paul is saying will happen in our lives if we read and apply the Scriptures to our lives!

You see, as you read the Scriptures, as you look at the examples of the men and women of faith, you are learning that God is in control and when you truly believe that, you can be patient, waiting upon Him to accomplish what needs to be done instead of being anxious or trying to do it on your own, having your own plans, your own agenda instead of doing His perfect will. One brings peace and the other anxiety and fear! Thus, look at the examples in the Scriptures and let them bring *PATIENCE* into your life!

Paul then speaks of *COMFORT* and the Scriptures, as you read them and apply them to your life, will bring comfort to your life! As you read the Scriptures you will find that the Bible tells us that God is the God of all comfort. The Greek word that Paul uses for “comfort” is PARAKLESIS (par-ak'-lay-sis), which speaks of coming to one's aide, consolation, support. It is a Greek word that is used also of the Holy Spirit. Now, as we read the Scriptures they bring to our lives comfort as we see God's promises to us. We see that He is faithful and is able to bring to pass what He has promised us!

God has given to us comfort through His Word and He is the God of *ALL* comfort, not “most” comfort or “some” comfort! Read through the Psalms and see how often the Psalms start out with the Psalmist in despair but as he spends time with God, by the time the Psalm is finished, the Psalmist has received the comfort of God from the Words of God. As we spend time with God, spend time in His Word, He will give us the comfort we need as He comes alongside of us and carries us through these times, He is the God of all comfort! Thus, look at the examples in the Scriptures and let them bring *COMFORT* into your life!

And as you read the Scriptures, as you allow them by the Spirit of God to bring *PATIENCE* and *COMFORT* to your life, you will find *HOPE!* I am sure that all of you have heard of the story, The Wizard of Oz as Dorothy and her friends – the scarecrow, the tin man and the cowardly lion – make their way down the yellow brick road to find their future. And their hope is in finding the Wizard of Oz and it is a story, it is not real and many today look to find hope in fairy tales or fictional stories.

On the other end of the spectrum are those who pick up the newspaper and try to find hope and how is that going? Or what about the news on television, have you found any hope there? Some look for hope in modern literature and yet, many of the writers themselves have no hope! Now I don't want to be a downer but look at the world today and you tell me, can you find any hope in it? No, it is dark and it is dismal and the Lord never tells us to look to the world to find hope!

You see, this road we are traveling on, not a yellow brick road, but one that is filled with the Scriptures and it leads us to *PATIENCE*, it leads us to *COMFORT*, and it brings into our lives *HOPE!* The bottom line is this. As we learn to be patient knowing that God is in control, as we receive His comfort as we go through difficult times, we can have hope in what God has promised us, He will bring it to pass!

God's hope never disappoints us because it is perfect! The Greek word that Paul uses for "hope" is ELPIS (el-pece'), which speaks of an anticipated, an expectation, a confidence! The idea that Paul is speaking of is that we need to keep on having hope, don't give up!

A great example of this is given to us in Titus 2:13, and there are many, many other promises of God that we can look at, but here Paul tells us, “**Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**” You see, we have hope, expectation, confidence that the Lord is going to return because the Scriptures clearly tell us that and we can wait patiently, we can have comfort because He is coming back!

There are many lessons in the Bible, good news and bad news, may we learn from them these lessons and apply them to our lives so that we may grow in the Lord, learning patience, receiving comfort and having hope that all comes from the Word of God and His Spirit working in us.

The problem for many is that they have lost hope and they are ready to give up. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A number of years ago researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water. The researchers left one set in the water and found that within an hour they had all drowned. The other rats were periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. When that happened, the second set of rats swam for over 24 hours. Why? Not because they were given a rest, but because they suddenly had hope!

Those animals somehow hoped that if they could stay afloat just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. If hope holds such power for unthinking rodents, how much greater should its effect be on our lives.

- Today in the Word, May, 1990, MBI, p. 34

Our hope is in the Lord and His Word and thus, we will not be moved, we will not be shaken, we will have the *PATIENCE* and *COMFORT* of the Scriptures and that will bring *HOPE* into our lives! Listen once again to Romans 15:4 and this time from The Amplified Bible. We are told, **“For whatever was thus written in former days was written for our instruction, that by [our steadfast and patient] endurance and the encouragement [drawn] from the Scriptures we might hold fast to and cherish hope.”** May we not lose sight of those promises to us, learning *PATIENCE*, receiving *COMFORT* and having *HOPE* in the Lord through His Word!

The Jews in Egypt were placing their hope in these false god's and the Lord tells them that they will get what they have trusted in, no help at all and in the end, death and destruction! Listen to what the Lord tells them next.

VERSES 27-30

1. For those that remain in Egypt, they will die. For the small group that obeyed the voice of God and returned to Judah, they will live. It is possible that Jeremiah could have returned with this group, we don't know for sure, the Scriptures are silent in regards to the end of Jeremiah's life, where he was living. Most likely Jeremiah died down in Egypt never returning to the land of Israel.

2. Now some of the people probably laughed at what Jeremiah was saying to them, they did not believe it. Thus, the Lord gave them a sign to show them that this judgment was certain upon them. The sign was related to Pharaoh Hophra the King of Egypt. Keep in mind that this Pharaoh was known as Apries and he was the successor of Pharaoh Psammis, who ascended the throne following Pharaoh-Necho's defeat by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish.

Of this time we are told,

When Apries sent Amasis, one of his generals, to quell a revolt, the people instead crowned Amasis king. Apries was then forced to retreat to the northern part of Egypt. Taking advantage of the conflict, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and left Amasis in charge. When Apries tried to regain the throne, he was taken prisoner and strangled in his own palace. Thus, although Jeremiah's prophecy would, as usual, fall on deaf ears, it was, as always, fulfilled perfectly.

- Jon Courson, Jon Courson's Life Application
Commentary, Old Testament, Volume 2, p. 568

3. Now the rest of the book of Jeremiah consists of various prophecies that Jeremiah made through his ministry and this book will then conclude with the destruction of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and their captivity, in chapter 52 of Jeremiah.

Before we get to the prophecies against the nations beginning in chapter 46 next week, let's finish up this evening by looking at this message of comfort given to Baruch in Jeremiah chapter 45.

JEREMIAH 45**VERSE 1**

1. Keep in mind that this chapter was written during the reign of Jehoiakim, King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He reigned for 11 years and was not a good King; he did evil in the sight of the Lord. After Jehoiakim there were only 2 more Kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before the Babylonians carried them away into captivity, Jehoiachin who reigned for only 3 months and Zedekiah who reigned for 11 years!

It was during this time of Jehoiakim, probably taking place somewhere in Jeremiah chapter 36.

Keep in mind that Baruch was not only a scribe who wrote down the words of Jeremiah, but he was also a friend to Jeremiah. And God is going to speak to Baruch through Jeremiah this personal message for him to encourage him.

VERSES 2-3

1. When the Word of God was read before King Jehoiakim, the King was furious and he cut it up and threw it into the fire, burning it away. And then they went looking for Jeremiah and Baruch to kill them. And it may be out of that we see Baruch become anxious, fearful. So God is going to give him words of comfort because at this point Baruch wanted to throw in the towel, to give up, to get out of this ministry.

I am so thankful that the Lord is so patient with me, with us. He does not give up on us and when we have had it, when we are down and ready to throw in the towel, He is there with words of encouragement for us to continue on!

VERSES 4-5

1. That does not sound too encouraging! God says to Baruch through the prophet Jeremiah that God is going to break down, pluck up, the land will be devastated! How in the world is that encouraging? Because God is in control and everything that takes place He is aware of!

You see, God is going to judge the Southern Kingdom of Judah and bring them into captivity because of their idolatry. And God is telling Baruch not to fear, because the Lord will care for him, watch over him, his life will be spared. The key of course is not to seek your own personal glory or to exalt yourself. Our focus is to be the Lord and what He wants us to do.

Baruch maybe was looking for a job with more prestige, less pressure, and more glory. God is telling him to hang in there, that this is what He has for him. Don't give up. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 16:25-26, **“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

There is nothing that the world has to offer that is worth selling our soul, our eternity with the Lord for. In this life you can get discouraged, down, but the key of course is what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33-34, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**

Where are your eyes focused on this evening and don't say, “I am looking at you Pastor Joel!” That is not what I mean. Are you seeking the Lord? Are you doing things for yourself, to make yourself look good before others, to make a name for yourself? Are you more interested in making lots of money or buying lots of things? Are you seeking great things for yourself?

The Lord is saying, “Forget about it, seek Me and all that you need will be added unto you. Set your mind on the Kingdom of God and in that you will find rest, you will find peace, you will find Me!”

Let me close with these words that the Lord gave to Baruch and I believe He is giving to us as we look to Him and seek Him. He said, “**. . . But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go.**” Jeremiah 45:5. May we never forget that God is with us, He will never leave us or forsake us and He has good for us!