



## Daily Verse and Comment

### [Jeremiah 45:3-5](#)

(3) 'You said, "Woe is me now, for the LORD has added sorrow to my pain. I am weary with my groaning and I find no rest." ' (4) Thus you shall say to him, "The LORD says this, "Behold, what I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even all the land. (5) And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them*; for behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh," says the LORD. "But I will give your life to you as a prize, in all places where you go." ' "

*A Faithful Version*

[God](#) puts things into perspective for Baruch by making clear His intention and purpose. He has set His hand to bring about a major change in “this whole land.” However, God had taken action to protect Jeremiah and Baruch, hiding them away as the sun was setting on Judah. The catastrophe to come was immense in scope: *All* the civilizations of that time were in various stages of unraveling, being uprooted by God Himself.

God cuts through the smoke, that is, through any excuse Baruch may offer for wishing to end his service to Jeremiah and, through him, to God.

[Jeremiah 45:5](#): “But as for you, do you seek great things for yourself? Stop seeking!” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible* [HCSB]).

We may surmise why Baruch sought “great things” for himself. First, he may have considered himself well-positioned to take advantage of unstable times, times of war. Having come from a prominent—or perhaps, once-prominent—family, he may have had the capital with which he could fund significant investments. He may have been well-connected in the society of his day.

He was obviously educated. He understood that knowledge, properly leveraged, becomes power. And knowledge he had, in spades. As the

secretary of God's prophet, he was an insider's insider. He knew what God was doing. A significant piece of that knowledge was that God had committed himself to *protect* Jeremiah in troubled times. After all, had he not himself transcribed God's words, recorded in [Jeremiah 1:17-19](#)?

What an insurance policy—underwritten by God Himself! Baruch well may have thought that, if he did not seek to use the unstable situation to his benefit, he did not deserve greatness. Add a little ambition to the mix, and you have a recipe for [covetousness](#).

While we do not know the specifics, Baruch apparently sought to take advantage of highly turbulent times, leveraging the knowledge he had to turn a profit. God did not mince words: “Stop seeking.” He urges Baruch to read the words he had transcribed for Jeremiah and to heed their warning, not underestimating the enormity of the changes that were in the wings. Jeremiah would shortly see Jerusalem in flames; Baruch would see it in ashes. Great things—fame, notoriety, and money—would do Baruch no good in circumstances totally unlike the days of the fathers, when God had uprooted everything.

Baruch appears focused—maybe even fixated—on himself. He wants to aggrandize himself, bestowing “great things” on himself. In this regard, it is interesting to note the promise that God issues to Baruch: His life. That is all—just his life.

[Jeremiah 45:5](#) reads, “. . . I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go.” The HCSB renders it as, “. . . grant you your life like the spoils of war.” The *Common English Bible* states it as, “I will let you escape with your life.”

The implication of God's promise to Baruch is twofold. First, God connects Baruch's life with war. War and struggle would characterize his life. Baruch would continue to live as a blessing of God in the midst of a highly unstable environment, not apart from that environment, not in a state of immunity from its hardships. While many others would lose their lives, property, or freedom in the troubles that lay just ahead, God promises that He will preserve Baruch's life.

Second, the clause “wherever you go” hints that Baruch's would be a life “on the move.” Perhaps he would even be fleeing for his life at times. His life would not be a settled one behind a white picket fence in suburban Jerusalem. The *rest* that Baruch wanted, mentioned in [Jeremiah 45:3](#), would not come in this life: It would come later.

It was the worst of times. The winter of despair chilled Baruch. Yet, God promises him his life, if he will refocus his priorities on God's work, not on seeking fame for himself. It is motivation that Baruch seems to have taken to heart.

— Charles Whitaker

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