

Message #40**Jeremiah 36:1-32**

This is an interesting chapter in this book of Jeremiah and it shows us that had Jehoiakim succeeded in this chapter there would be no book of Jeremiah in the Bible.

As Jeremiah opens this chapter, he wants us to know exactly when it happened. It was the 4th year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah. Jehoiakim became the king of Judah in 609 BC so this event occurred in 605 BC, which was the very first year that the Babylonians were winning major victories. The Rechabites were in Jerusalem because Nebuchadnezzar was on the move (35:11). Jeremiah is predicting God's judgment on them (35:17).

Jehoiakim was an evil king (II Chron. 36:5). He was an arrogant, power-crazed, evil man who despised the word of God. So in 605 BC, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.

Now this chapter is important for several reasons:

- 1) It shows us one way a prophetic book like Jeremiah actually got into written print.
- 2) It shows us that there were very close relationships and trusted friendships in ministry based on the written word.
- 3) It shows that a wise government does want the counsel of those who truly know God's written word.
- 4) It shows that some who are God's people actually hate and despise God's written word.
- 5) It shows that when some people oppose God's written word, others support it.
- 6) It shows what happens to those who treat God's written word lightly.

This would have been the 23rd year of Jeremiah's ministry (Jer. 1:2). What God wanted him to do was to write down all of the prophecies to this point. This was a verbal communication from God to Jeremiah the prophet. It was God saying and speaking His word. Jeremiah's job was write it down.

What we clearly see in this chapter is this:

ANY PERSON WHO TREATS GOD'S WORD AND WARNINGS IN A DISRESPECTFUL WAY WILL BE SEVERELY JUDGED AND PUNISHED BY GOD.

The punishment will be seen and known by many people; in fact, it will make an impact on everyone connected to the one being punished.

It is a very serious thing to treat God's word in a light and irreverent way.

PART #1 – God gives His word to Jeremiah to proclaim the first time. 36:1-26

Now the word God gave to Jeremiah included about four distinct messages:

Message #1 - Take a scroll and write all the words I have told you. **36:2a**

The word “scroll” refers to a scroll on which one writes. Scrolls were made of papyrus or leather sheets (vellum) that were sewn together with the writing placed in columns. We may assume that Jeremiah is writing on papyrus reed because it was easy to burn. A typical scroll was 30 feet by 10 inches. It was wrapped around wooden rollers and it was unrolled from one side to the other as it was being read.

Any person, church, city, state or nation that minimizes the written word of God, the Bible, is making a fatal mistake.

Message #2 - Write all My words pertaining to Israel, Judah and all the nations. **36:2b**

Again we may observe that God actually did speak these words to Jeremiah. He was to write “all” the words, not some. The Hebrew word “concerning” is the preposition “al” which may also mean against. So much of the data will not be positive.

God wanted the truth of His word presented to Israel, Judah and the nations. God’s judgment was coming and all people need to hear about it.

Message #3 - Write all My words from Josiah’s time until now. **36:2c**

Josiah began his reign in 640 BC. So God wanted Jeremiah to go back 30 years and write down all of God’s words that He had spoken to Jeremiah right up until that present time.

Notice the job was to write words. This is how God communicates to His people through words. Now God started speaking to Jeremiah in 627 BC so He wanted him to carefully go back and record all He had told him.

Message #4 - Perhaps when My people in Judah hear what I have done and what I am about to do to them, they will turn from evil and I will forgive them. **36:3**

One purpose of the word of God and the warnings of God is to bring people to the point where they will turn away from their sin so God does not have to punish them. Biblical warnings are not given to destroy, but to save.

God offers His people grace forgiveness if they will turn from their evil. They can be completely forgiven and blessed. The problem is most won’t turn from the evil.

The sad reality is, you can warn most people that judgment disaster is coming from God and most won’t repent.

There is a remarkable picture of the mindset of people during the Tribulation in Revelation 9. After God has been pouring out His wrath for over three years and the people know it is His wrath, here is what we read: “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues did not repent” (Rev. 9:20). They did not repent of their idolatry, their murders, their sorceries, their immorality or theft.

God gave His word to His people so they would turn from their sin and receive His forgiveness and blessings.

So in the aftermath of God giving this assignment to Jeremiah, there were a series of eight different reactions:

(Reaction #1) - Jeremiah calls Baruch and dictates the word of God and tells him to write it, take it to the Temple and read it. **36:4-7**

This project of writing this down will take about one year. We may conclude this by observing that **verse 1** is given in the 4th year and **verse 9** is given in the 5th years.

Baruch was the son of Neriah. He was apparently the grandson of Maasaiah (Jer. 51:59; II Cron. 34:8), who was a ruler in Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah. Baruch was the brother of Seraiah, King Zedekiah’s quartermaster (Jer. 51:59).

Now what Jeremiah wanted him to do was to go read the word of God in the Temple. According to **verse 5**, Jeremiah was restricted from going. Probably the Temple authorities were not letting Jeremiah into the Temple area to speak so Jeremiah sent Baruch.

The word “restricted” (azur) may mean imprisoned or in hiding but most likely the authorities did what they could to keep Jeremiah out of the Temple.

According to **verse 6**, there was a fast day that would feature large crowds and Jeremiah wanted Baruch to read God’s word to the big crowds of people on that day.

In **verse 7**, Jeremiah said there is always the chance that the people will listen and turn from evil and then God’s anger and wrath will be thwarted.

This is what you hope for when you expound the Scriptures. You hope God’s people will take it in and make changes in life so God will bless them.

(Reaction #2) - Baruch obeyed and did exactly what Jeremiah told him to do. **36:8-10**

Baruch did exactly what Jeremiah wanted him to do. He did this in the 5th year of Jehoiakim in the 9th month. So he read this in November-December 604 BC. So about one year after Jeremiah wrote this down, Baruch was in the Temple reading it to the people.

You would think that everyone going to the Temple would want to hear the word of God read and expounded. You would think that would be the one thing the people of God would want.

Baruch read this message from the room of Gemariah, the son of Shapha, which was in the upper courtyard near the entrance of the New Gate of the Temple. Gemariah must have been favorable to letting Jeremiah read it there.

(Reaction #3) - Macaiah informs all key officials of what Baruch read to them. **36:11-13**

When Micaiah, Gemariah's son, heard the message from the word of God, he went to the king's house and told all key officials what the word of God said.

Some of the officials included: "Elishama the scribe; Delaiah; Elnathan—his father found the scroll of God's word during Josiah's reign (II Kings 22:12), Gemariah, Zedekiah" and others.

(Reaction #4) - All officials ask Baruch to come and read God's word to them. **36:14-19**

The officials wanted Baruch to read the word of God to them. So Baruch sat down and read it (**36:15**). When they heard it, they became greatly afraid of the warnings and predicted judgments and said we need to tell the king (**36:16**).

I do not think they want to tell the king because they are a bunch of tattletales. They think the king needs to know this so he can intervene and turn this nation away from the anger and wrath of God.

They wanted to know whether these were the words of Baruch or dictation from Jeremiah (**35:17**). **This is important because they want to verify that this is truly God's word and not just someone's opinion.**

Baruch said these are the dictated words of Jeremiah (**35:18**).

It is clear from **verse 19** that these guys care about Baruch and Jeremiah because they want to keep them safe. They said to go and not let anyone know where they are.

(Reaction #5) - All the officials report to the king what the scroll said. **36:20**

When they went to tell the king, they did not take the scroll with them. They put it in the chamber of the scribe "Elishama."

(Reaction #6) - The king asks Jehudi to get the scroll and read it to him. **36:21-22**

The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll and read it to him. All of the leaders were there. **Verse 22** says he was in his winter apartment. It was obviously an area that was heated better during the winter with a nice fire burning.

(Reaction #7) - The king cut the scroll and threw it in the fire. **36:23-25**

When Jehudi had read just 3 or 4 columns, the king put a stop to it. This is supposedly a God-fearing leader. This is the King of Judah who was the key political leader of Israel. Look at his attitude concerning the word of God.

He put a stop to the reading, he took a scribe's knife and cut it and threw it into the fire. The scribe's knife was a sharp knife used for cutting papyrus paper. The very instrument that was typically used to make a scroll is being used to destroy a scroll.

Even though the leaders pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. He held the word of God in total contempt so he cut it up and threw it in the fire.

He wants to get rid of the written word of God. I do not think most people who go to church want to sit and carefully be taught the word of God. They really don't want it.

(Reaction #8) - The king commands that Baruch and Jeremiah be arrested. **36:26**

Not only did he destroy the scroll, he wanted to arrest Baruch, who wrote and read it and Jeremiah, who dictated it.

The king wanted Baruch and Jeremiah arrested immediately, but God prevented it. In fact, the text says, "the LORD hid them." What that means is that God sovereignly protected Baruch and Jeremiah so that the king could not get them.

He could not touch these two men of God.

PART #2 – God gives His word to Jeremiah to proclaim the second time. **36:27-32**

God came again came to Jeremiah and gave him specific messages:

Message #1 - Get another scroll and write down exactly the same words as before. **36:28**

God wanted His word completely rewritten.

Message #2 - Give a specific message to Jehoiakim who burned My word. **36:29-31**

When God had His word rewritten, He added some data directly for Jehoiakim. The specific information is that because you have thought so lightly of My word, I will destroy you and your family. Normally, the punishment God gives is directly to the individual, but not this time. It would include his family for generations to come.

According to **verse 32**, Jeremiah took another scroll and dictated another copy to Baruch and then gave it to Baruch. God's people may demean God's written word; they may despise God's written word but they will never destroy God's written word!