

KING JEHOIAKIM'S OPPOSITION TO THE WORD OF GOD

TEXT: JEREMIAH 36:1-32

Introduction:

1. The LORD told Jeremiah the prophet to write down all the messages which He had spoken against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the beginning of his ministry in King Josiah's reign up till that time (36:1, 2). This covered a prophetic ministry of over 23 years.
2. Jeremiah had a faithful friend and secretary named Baruch, who wrote down the words of Jeremiah and read them to the people in the temple (36:4-10).
3. While in the temple, a man named Michaiah heard Baruch read Jeremiah's messages and he went and told the princes of Judah (36:11-13).
4. The princes of Judah then called Baruch to come and read the messages to them (36:14, 15).
5. When these princes heard the Word of God from the mouth of Baruch they were afraid and decided that King Jehoiakim should hear as well (36:16).
6. Furthermore, they wanted to know how was Baruch able to record these messages given by God to the prophet Jeremiah (36:17). Baruch explained how the messages were transmitted (36:18).
7. The messages were so disturbing that these princes told Baruch that he and Jeremiah should go and hide themselves (36:19). The princes were trying to protect Jeremiah and Baruch.
8. Next we see that the princes went and told King Jehoiakim all about Jeremiah's messages which Baruch had read. The king told them to fetch the roll, and soon Jehudi read the messages to the king (36:20, 21).
9. When King Jehoiakim heard the words of God, he took out a penknife and cut up the Word of God and threw it into the fireplace. Some of the princes tried to stop the king but he would not listen to them (36:22-25).
10. The king wanted Baruch and Jeremiah arrested, but verse 26 tells us that "the LORD hid them."
11. King Jehoiakim did not understand this, but the Word of God is indestructible. Wicked men have been burning Bibles for centuries but the Word of God can never be destroyed.

12. Our Lord said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).
13. Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever” (cf. I Peter 1:23-25).
14. The LORD simply told Jeremiah, “Take thee again another roll...” (36:28). Jeremiah wrote everything down again, plus the LORD added another part which told of the terrible death of wicked King Jehoiakim (36:29-32).
15. God gave us the Word of God. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (literally, “God-breathed”). The Word of God is inerrant – without error.
16. Not only is the Bible inspired by God, it is also preserved by God. Wicked King Jehoiakim thought he could get rid of God’s Word by cutting it up and throwing it in the fire, but God preserved His Word (36:27, 28).
17. What was recorded by Baruch (and Moses, David, Matthew, et al) is revelation; the way it was recorded is inspiration; and the way God has protected it for us over the centuries is preservation.
18. Some Christians believe in inspiration but not preservation; but inspiration without preservation is meaningless.

I. GOD'S WORD BRINGS REPENTANCE (36:1-3).

1. “That they may return every man from his evil way...” (36:3) means to repent. This is the great theme of the book of Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 3:1, 12-14, 22; 4:1; 5:3; 8:5; 15:7; 18:8, 11; 23:14; 25:5; 26:3; 31:18; 35:15; 44:5).
2. Repentance is seldom preached any more these days. Preachers are afraid of offending people and so they back off and stay away from speaking out against sin.
3. Biblical repentance as preached by the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, involved a change of mind toward God, and a change of mind toward sin.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:13).
5. “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).
6. Whenever repentance from sin is glossed over and avoided, you are going to have shallow, insincere professions.

7. God told Jeremiah to write down all that God said, and to proclaim it so that wicked sinners would “return every man from his evil way” (Jer. 36:3). This means to repent.
8. Here is an interesting illustration from our friend David Cloud: “When my wife and I first began our work in the land of Nepal in 1979, our landlord began coming to our house to have Bible studies. He was a wealthy middle-aged Hindu and had a concubine that he spent most of his time with, though he was married and had grown children. After we went through the gospel a few times, he told me he was interested in receiving Christ, but he needed to know what he would have to do about two specific things in his life—his shady business practices, and the illicit relationship with his concubine. I could have said, ‘Don’t worry about those things. Just pray to receive Christ and those things will work out later.’ I don’t believe that is proper biblical counsel. I don’t believe he could receive Christ and be saved unless he was willing to repent of his immorality and his dishonesty. I told him God required that he repent of these great evils. He argued that it was not possible to be honest in Nepal and to be rich, and he never returned for another Bible study.”

II. GOD'S WORD BRINGS THE FEAR OF GOD (JER. 36:15, 16).

1. When Baruch read the Word of God, "they were afraid both one and other."
2. Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
3. Psalm 19:9 says, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”
4. Many a lost sinner has been saved after hearing what the Bible has to say about the terrors of hell. Scoffers tell us we should not scare people into heaven. That is the only way some people make it! They need the fear of God to open their eyes.

III. GOD'S WORD BRINGS OPPOSITION (36:17-28).

1. The princes were afraid when they heard the Word of God, but rather than turn to God they decided to notify King Jehoiakim (36:20-22).

2. Jehudi had not read very long before the wicked king Jehoiakim cut off portions of the Word of God with his penknife and scornfully threw the pages in the fire (36:23).
3. The great Bible preacher, Harry Ironside, preached a message on Jeremiah 36 and he entitled it, "The First Destructive Critic on Record."
4. The term "destructive critic" was a popular term in Dr. Ironside's day. It referred to men who claimed to be Christian but who were never born again. These men were also called "modernists" and "liberals." They attacked the Bible – all the way from Genesis to Revelation they tore it apart – just like wicked King Jehoiakim (36:23).
5. Another great preacher from that generation was I. M. Haldeman. For 49 years he pastored the First Baptist Church of NYC on 79th Street & Broadway. Dr. Haldeman wrote a book called, "A King's Penknife or Why I Am Opposed to Modernism."
6. Dr. Haldeman wrote these words:
 - * **I am opposed to modernism**, because like the king, it cuts out of the Bible, with the penknife of destructive criticism, all things not acceptable to the natural mind.
 - * **I am opposed to modernism**, because it uses orthodox phrases (redemption, resurrection, salvation), and then denies the facts those phrases were originated to express.
 - * **I am opposed to modernism**, because it preaches a Christ not to be found in the Bible.
 - * **I am opposed to modernism**, because it repudiates the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
 - * **I am opposed to modernism**, because it means moral and spiritual destruction to the rising generation.
7. Whereas the princes in the temple were afraid of the Word of God, King Jehoiakim and his princes at his winter house "were not afraid" (36:24).
8. When the Word of God was read to King Jehoiakim's father, King Josiah, II Kings 22:11-13 says the king "rent his clothes" and said, "Great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."
9. But King Jehoiakim was not afraid.
10. Romans 3:18 says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

11. Even when some of the princes made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll, "he would not hear them" (Jer. 36:25).
12. King Jehoiakim then ordered his officers to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, "but the LORD hid them" (36:26).
13. After the burning of the scroll by King Jehoiakim, the LORD directed Jeremiah to take another scroll, "and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned" (36:28).
14. The Word of God is indestructible. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

IV. GOD'S WORD BRINGS JUDGMENT (36:29-32).

1. Wicked King Jehoiakim burned the Word of God because it warned that God was going to punish Judah. But by committing this terrible sin he was only making his punishment greater (36:29-31).
2. King Jehoiakim would "have no one to sit upon the throne of David," and his dead body would be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (36:30).
3. We can never fight God and expect to get away with it. Sinners resist God and defy God and attack God's Word, but in all of this they are only adding to their suffering (36:30-32).
4. This judgment against King Jehoiakim was not part of the message that Jehoiakim threw in the fire. God added this judgment so that others might learn not to trifle with God's Word.
5. This chapter has been placed in our Bible by the Spirit of God as a warning of the certain judgment that comes upon those who reject the Word of God.

CONCLUSION:

Throughout history there have been men like King Jehoiakim who thought they could destroy God's Word.

Perhaps you have heard this poem by John Clifford.

"THE ANVIL OF GOD'S WORD"

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil sing the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with blasting years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; and then, with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
And so I thought, the anvil of God's Word
For ages, skeptic blows have beat upon.
Yet tho' the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed--the hammers gone.