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## *Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah*

God's Word Cannot be Destroyed  
– Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's  
Scroll

*June 6, 2021*

**Sermon Text:** Jeremiah 36

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 55

In the history of the church – and continuing right on through our own day – the devil has tried his best to stamp out God's Word. Just read the histories for example of the Reformation and you will see many examples. Follow for instance the history of the translation of the Bible into English (William Tyndale) and you will read about Bible's being burned as well as the "heretics" who translated them.

The wicked seem to think that if the Bible could be obliterated, the Word of

God would cease to operate. This is fascinating – it indicates that the devil knows this is true:

Heb 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (13) And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

We just saw this in Isaiah 55 –

Isa 55:11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

You see this also in Genesis 1 – "And God said....and there was." Or in Jesus' miracles – He just speaks – "Rise up and walk" and legs or eyes or ears are created. God's Word, His decree, contains His power in such a way that it is, I suppose you could say, self-

fulfilling, self-effecting. Nothing can stop it. God speaks, and it is done.

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Num 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

The certainties of every real Christian are guaranteed because of this. He has spoke and it will be done. He has pronounced His people justified, and they are. Glorified and raised, and we shall be. Nothing can stop it.

Now, here in this 36<sup>th</sup> chapter of Jeremiah we come to still another example of a wicked fool – a king – who thinks he can destroy God’s Word by burning up the scroll it is written on. Follow along as I read:

Jer 36:1-32 In the fourth year of **Jehoiakim the son of Josiah**, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: (2) “Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you,

from the days of Josiah until today.

(3) It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them, so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”

(4) Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of **Jeremiah all the words of the LORD that he had spoken to him.** (5) And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, “**I am banned from going to the house of the LORD,** (6) so you are to go, and on a day of fasting in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their cities.

(7) It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people.”

(8) And Baruch the son of Neriah did all that Jeremiah the prophet ordered him about reading from the scroll the

words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

(9) In the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD. (10) Then, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the scroll, in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house.

(11) When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, (12) he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber, and all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the officials.

(13) And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people. (14) Then all the officials sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, son of

Shelemiah, son of Cushi, to say to Baruch, "Take in your hand the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them.

(15) And they said to him, "Sit down and read it." So Baruch read it to them.

**(16) When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear. And they said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king."**

**(17) Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, please, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?" (18) Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll."**

(19) Then the officials said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are." (20) So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary, and they reported all the words to the king. (21) Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary. And Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. (22) It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter house, and there

was a fire burning in the fire pot before him.

**(23) As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a knife and throw them into the fire in the fire pot, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the fire pot. (24) Yet neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words was afraid, nor did they tear their garments. (25) Even when Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. (26) And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son and Seraiah the son of Azriel and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.**

(27) Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: (28) **“Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. (29) And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah you shall say, ‘Thus says the LORD, You have burned this scroll, saying, ‘Why have you written in it that the**

king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it man and beast?’” (30) Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. (31) And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity. I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the people of Judah all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear.”

(32) Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

Let's make some observations now about God's Word, evil people like Jehoiakim, and the certain outcome of their wicked attempts to destroy God's Word.

First of all, note that here we have still another example of *a wicked, evil king whose father was a godly king*. King Josiah was a wonderful, courageous

leader who effected great reforms – destroying idols and idol priesthods. You remember that during his reign, this is what happened:

2Ki 22:8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

2Ki 22:10-13 Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, “Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. (11) When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. (12) And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, (13) “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

Jehoiakim had to know about all of this, and yet he does just the opposite when

God’s Word, the scroll, is brought to him. We may grow up in a godly home, and that is a great privilege. *But it is no guarantee that a person will come to faith in Christ. Each of us makes the choice and no one can make it for us.* There has been and still is false teaching floating around that maintains just the opposite. We reject it.

The scroll which God commanded Jeremiah to write down was a collection of everything the Lord had told Jeremiah to this point. Jeremiah dictated and Baruch wrote it down. It would be Baruch who took the scroll to the Temple and read it to the crowds who had come to Jerusalem for a religious festival/fast. Jeremiah was banned from the Temple – no doubt because of the preaching he had already done there. That in itself was an attempt to put a gag over the Word of God.

Notice now the purpose for the reading:

(7) It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people.”

Consistently in Jeremiah and the other OT prophets as well, we see the amazing depth of God's mercy. These people had refused to obey Him for a long, long time. They had pursued their idols and their sin. They denounced the prophets. And yet here is still another opportunity to repent.

Now, after Baruch read the scroll in the Temple, word is sent to the leading officials and they have Baruch read the scroll to them. This was their response:

(16) When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear. And they said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king." (17) Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, please, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?" (18) Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll."

These men show a proper response. They are struck with fear. And they realize that they had to run and tell the king right away because God's wrath against them was hot.

And notice what else they did, which is very instructive. They asked Baruch if

the words in the scroll were written by him as Jeremiah spoke them. Baruch said, of course, yes. This even increased the officials' fears. Why?

*Because they knew full well that Jeremiah was a prophet of God.*

We have seen this before in Jeremiah. The people knew that he was a prophet and spoke for the Lord. This is a kind of spiritual dissonance – refusing to believe and obey God's Word, yet at the same time knowing it is God's Word. This is a *knowing unbelief* and it will always take a person to hell if followed.

Many people today are exactly like this. They know the Bible is God's Word – they will even treat a Bible with some respect, though never read it. And yet when they hear God's Word, they hate it. Knowing. And hating. It fuels God's righteous wrath against them.

But the officials are different. They believe the scroll and show a proper fear.

And here is the meat of the story. Listen to it again:

(19) Then the officials said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let

no one know where you are.” (20) So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary, and they reported all the words to the king. (21) Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary. And Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. (22) It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter house, and there was a fire burning in the fire pot before him.

**(23) As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a knife and throw them into the fire in the fire pot, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the fire pot.** (24) Yet neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words was afraid, nor did they tear their garments. (25) Even when Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them.

Notice first of all that the officials knew they had a wicked king and that he would try to kill Jeremiah and Baruch, so they directed them to go hide in total secrecy.

It is cold. The king has a fire pot going to keep warm. And as the scroll is read to him, he cuts each section out and burns them in the fire pot. This of course is a horrid mocking of God, a defiance and a dare. Jehoiakim thinks that he can neutralize God’s Word by burning the paper it is written on.

But God is not mocked. It isn’t God’s Word that is going to burn, it is Jehoiakim and all his descendants.

We are told that even Jehoiakim’s officials urged him not to do this, but he would not listen.

This is exactly what Popes have done down through the centuries. Burn the Bible. Burn those who print it. But it is also the same spirit that is in so many theologians and preachers and professing Christians as well. Consider for instance:

- We will deny the virgin birth of Christ.
- We will re-interpret the cross of Christ and make it mean what we say it means
- We will create our own gospel which pronounces everyone saved

- We will deny the historicity of the miracles of Christ, of His resurrection, of anything in fact, supernatural in the Bible.
- We will deny Jesus' declarations that He is the only way of salvation – “no one comes to the Father but by Me.” And instead, teach that there are many ways to God.
- We will reject the creation account of Genesis and replace it with evolution.

There is no end to the cutting and burning, you see. Jehoiakim and his kind are still with us. Cut, cut, cut – burn, burn, burn. It's the very same wicked thing.

Recently I heard of a pastor who faithfully preached a sermon on this Scripture:

Eph 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

He compared that scripture, which is part of a true and biblical philosophy of labor, with what we see all around us

today. Myriads of people refuse to work. They know that there are plenty of sources ready to give them money and food without them having to work with their own hands and earn it.

Well, what do you suppose happened? Some people got angry and stormed right out of the sanctuary. To them I would say, good riddance! They are an example of Jehoiakim today. They want to cut out the parts of the Bible they don't like and burn them.

Well, Jehoiakim's efforts to destroy and render ineffective God's Word ended this way:

(32) Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

Not only was that Word published again, this time it had even more of God's Word – and none of it was welcome news to Jehoiakim.

The Popes who persecuted the Reformers are long dead and gone and

serving their eternal sentences in hell now. But God's Word? Well -

Isa 40:7-8 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass.  
(8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.