

Jeremiah

Chapter 36

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll

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.

36:1–38:28 Three chapters united by the common theme of Jeremiah's suffering and persecution. (CSB)

36:1–32 An account of King Jehoiakim's attempt to destroy Jeremiah's written prophecies. (CSB)

Ch 35 God uses the faithful Rechabite family to show His people what obedience looks like. People seem to be much more willing to follow the traditions of men and ignore the Law of God (cf Mt 15:1–6). (Consider, e.g., how holiday traditions spread easily though their spiritual meaning is often lost.) God patiently calls sinners to repentance, sending messengers and granting them ample time to turn back to Him in faith. • Father, make us ready servants, faithful to Your Word and will, through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

36:1 *fourth year of Jehoiakim.* 605 B.C.—a critical year in Judah's history. (CSB)

36:2 *scroll.* Thin leather or papyrus that could be rolled up for storage. (TLSB)

write on it. To preserve Jeremiah's messages for future generations. (CSB)

all the words I have spoken to you. This "earliest edition" of Jeremiah's prophecies may have included all or most of chs. 1–26; 46–51. (CSB)

from the days of Josiah. A period of twenty-three years. The command was given at that time, but the public reading of the prophecies did not take place until the next year, in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim. Meanwhile Nebuchadnezzar had gathered his army and took the city at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth year of Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was taken captive and brought to Babylon, but upon his promising allegiance was returned to Jerusalem. When he withheld the stipulated tribute, however, he was again carried off and died before the campaign was brought to an end. The prophecies which were here recorded may have been written down before, but they were now brought together in one roll, to be read to the Jews. (Kretzmann)

36:3 *it may be.* If the people repent, the Lord will relent. (CSB)

If or when they return to the Lord in true sorrow for sins committed, such grief having been wrought by the power of His Word, will find Him more than ready to dispense forgiveness. (Kretzmann)

36:4 *Baruch.* Means "blessed (by the Lord)." He was Jeremiah's faithful secretary and friend. (CSB)

36:5 *I am banned.* Perhaps because of his unpopular temple message(s) (see 7:2–15; 26:2–6), or perhaps because of the events recorded in 19:1–20:6. (CSB)

Jeremiah was not in prison at this time. It appears he was prevented by the temple authorities from appearing there after his clash with them (20:1-3; 26:1-11). (TLSB)

36:6 *day of fasting.* Proclaimed because of a national emergency (cf. Joel 2:15), perhaps in this case the Babylonian attack of 605 B.C. (CSB)

Likely observed in view of the threat of Nebuchadnezzar’s advance toward Jerusalem after he defeated the Egyptian army at Carchemish. (TLSB)

36:7 Literally, "Possibly will fall down their pleadings before the face of Jehovah," as though kneeling before Him in an attitude of begging, and will return everyone from his evil way. (Kretzmann)

36:8 If the book were in chronological order, ch. 45 would appear after this verse. (CSB)

Actual writing was done by his secretary, Baruch, at Jeremiah’s dictation. After several months, when the manuscript was completed, Baruch was ordered to read the scroll to a large audience assembled in the temple to observe a fast day (vv. 1-10). (TLSB)

36:9 *ninth month of the fifth year.* December, 604 B.C., during a time of cold weather (see v. 22). (CSB)

all the people – the celebration being ordered by those in authority and proclaimed throughout the country for the specified day, the object probably being to arouse the national consciousness against the Babylonian invasion and oppression by combining the religious features of a fast with a public assembly of this magnitude. Jeremiah very likely had Baruch read the words of Jehovah in order to counteract the plans of the king and his counselors. (Kretzmann)

36:10 *Gemariah.* A common name in Jeremiah’s time (see 29:3), found on one of the Lachish ostraca (see note on 34:7) as well as in at least two of the Elephantine papyri (see note on 32:11) a century later. (CSB)

Father of Micaiah (v 11). A seal bearing these names was found in Jerusalem. Gemariah was a supporter of Jeremiah.

Shaphan. Secretary of state under King Josiah. (CSB)

Hbr *sopher*, from the verb for counting or recounting (in speaking/writing). Also translated “scribe” (v 32; 8:8). Five such men are mentioned in Jer. They were officials who served at the palace, temple, and military posts. (TLSB)

entry of the New Gate. The cell of Gemariah was evidently located at or near the outer wall of the Court of the Priests, so that it overlooked the Court of Israel, where the people were assembled. (Kretzmann)

36:11-19 A temple official named Micaiah reported what he heard there to the officials assembled for a cabinet meeting in the chamber of the secretary of state. (TLSB)

36:12 *Elnathan son of Acbor.* One of King Jehoiakim’s highest officials (see 36:12), he was impressed on another occasion by Jeremiah’s prophecies (see 36:16), “urged the king not to burn” Jeremiah’s scroll

(36:25), and warned the prophet to hide (see 36:19). An Elnathan (perhaps the same man) was Jehoiakim's father-in-law (see 2Ki 24:6, 8). An Acbor (perhaps the father of this Elnathan) was one of King Josiah's officials. (CSB)

36:13 *told them all the words* – He rendered a complete report of the message which had been read in the Temple. (Kretzmann)

36:16 *turned one to another in fear* – Their faces and bearing showed the terror which they felt on account of this proclamation with its horrible threats, a message which was, at the same time, so utterly at variance with the wishes and hopes of the king. (Kretzmann)

report...to king – They felt that it was their duty as officers of the kingdom to make known what they had now heard, since it affected the whole country. (Kretzmann)

Anxious to hear the contents of the scroll, they had Baruch read the entire document to them. They were so perturbed by what they heard, they impounded the scroll in order to bring it to the attention of the king. (TLSB)

3:17 *how did you write all these words* – The officials sought to discover who was responsible for the message. (TLSB)

36:18 *ink*. Mentioned only here in the OT (but see also 2Co 3:3; 2Jn 12; 3Jn 13). In ancient times, ink was made from soot or lampblack mixed with gum arabic, oil, or a metallic substance. (CSB)

36:19 The officials were understandably concerned about the safety of Jeremiah and Baruch (cf. 26:20–23). (CSB)

The reading had made a deep impression upon them, but they had an instinctive feeling that Jeremiah and Baruch were in danger of their lives on account of the message which they proclaimed, especially since a report of the happening had to be made to the king. (Kretzmann)

36:20-26 At Jehoiakim's command, the scroll was taken into the court and read to him by Jehudi, one of his counselors. The king cut and burned the scroll until every hated word was destroyed. Not doubt Jeremiah and Baruch would have shared the fate of Uriah (26:20-23), but the Lord hid them. (TLSB)

36:20 *put*. For safekeeping (the Hebrew root for this word is translated "store" in Isa 10:28). (CSB)

36:21 *stood beside the king* – Literally, "over the king"; for, since they were standing in his presence, their heads were higher than his. (Kretzmann)

36:22 *winter house*, Probably a large room in the king's palace. (CSB)

A separate palace or special area within the palace that was easier to heat. (TLSB)

This was in one of the inner and sheltered rooms of the palace, where also the great hall was situated. (Kretzmann)

fire pot. A depression or container in the middle of the floor where coals were kept burning to warm the room. (CSB)

Needed for warmth in the ninth month (Dec). (TLSB)

This was a brazen vessel with glowing charcoal such as are used in the Orient. (Kretzmann)

36:23 Contrast King Josiah's desire to know the word of God and obey it (see 2Ki 22:11–23:3; 23:21–24). (CSB)

columns. Lit. “doors,” so called because of their rectangular shape. (CSB)

cut. Lit. “tore.” Instead of tearing his clothes, the king tore the prophet's scroll. (CSB)

The king had become so enraged on account of the passage which he had heard that he could not contain himself, but laid blasphemous hands upon the sacred roll, slashing it right and left and destroying it completely. (Kretzmann)

36:24 *servants...was not afraid.* See v. 31. Contrast the response of the “officials” (v. 12; see vv. 16, 25). (CSB)

They were concerned about the political significance of the document, but not its message from God. (TLSB)

nor did they tear their garments. Contrast the response of Jehoiakim's father Josiah (see 2Ki 22:11; cf. 1Ki 21:27). (CSB)

36:26 *king's son.* Since Jehoiakim was only about 30 years old (see 2Ki 23:36), the phrase probably is not to be understood literally but means “member of the royal court” (as also in 38:6; 1Ki 22:26; Zep 1:8). (CSB)

Normally such well-known citizens were easily found but God had hidden them. (TLSB)

36:27-32 The king's foolish attempt to silence the Word of God failed. At Jeremiah's dictation, Baruch rewrote the scroll, including also the prophecy of disaster pronounced for their iniquity on Jehoiakim, his servants, and Jerusalem. (TLSB)

36:29 *cut off from it man and beast* – The king had evidently given vent to his anger in exclamations of this kind when he destroyed the roll. (Kretzmann)

36:30 *Jehoiakim ... shall have none to sit the throne.* His son Jehoiachin (see 2Ki 24:6) “ruled” only 3 months (see 2Ki 24:8) and then was captured and carried off to exile in Babylonia (see 2Ki 24:15), where he eventually died (see 52:33–34). (CSB)

His son Jehoiachin was nothing but a vassal of the foreign emperor and could in no sense call the kingdom his own. (Kretzmann)

his body shall be cast out. As punishment for the fact that he “threw” (v. 23) the prophet's scroll into the fire. (CSB)

36:32 *another scroll.* Cf. similarly Ex 34:1. (CSB)

Jeremiah had received other inspired messages, and the Lord took this opportunity of embodying them all in the book which was to be preserved as a testimony against the disobedient nation and its king. (Kretzmann)

Ch 36 Jehoiakim of Judah destroys the written prophecies of Jeremiah, rejecting God's mercy and the chance to repent of his sins. In doing so, he seals his fate and the fate of the nation. Persistent unbelief rejects forgiveness and grace, guaranteeing eternal condemnation for sin. Even at this late stage in Judah's history, God wants to spare the people and forgive their sins—if only they would repent and turn back to Him. So also is God's desire for every person in every age, that they might turn and repent and believe in the Savior. • Father, keep me from stubbornly insisting on my way. Teach me to trust You and live as Your child through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)