

A CHARACTER STUDY OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Lesson 5

THE PREACHER WRITES

“This word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin”

Jeremiah 36:1b-3

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THE PREACHER WRITES

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus, speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”

Jeremiah 30:1-2

Jeremiah was commanded by God to *“Go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. . . I have put my words in thy mouth.”* (Jer. 1:7b,9b) However, after a time, because of his message, Jeremiah’s spoken words were no longer appreciated and he was shut out of the Temple. His words of rebuke and judgment were not received well by the leadership and the majority of the people. (Jeremiah 26:8,11,16) Yet, God’s words were in his heart like a fire and he had to speak. God recognized that the people would no longer listen to him preach so He came to Jeremiah in chapter 36 and told him to take *“a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations”*. (Vs. 36:2) *“After the destruction of*

Jerusalem he is not ordered, as heretofore, to speak, but to write the succeeding prophecy (VS. 4 Etc.), so as thereby it might be read by his countrymen wheresoever they might be in their dispersion.” (JFB. P. 101) The reason God wanted him to write His message in a book was because his hard preaching offended the hard-hearted people and they had excluded him from the Temple and separated him from the people. He could no longer communicate with the people face to face. He told Baruch that he was “shut up” or “detained” from coming to the Temple to speak to the people. He instructed his assistant, Baruch, to write down carefully all the prophecies he had given to the people. *“It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I [the LORD] purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I [the LORD] may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”* (Vs. 36:3) The words were not intended to merely frighten the people but, were intended to save them from the result of their sin. Jeremiah sent Baruch into the Temple where he was to read aloud the words of Jeremiah to the gathered people.

The result of the reading was that the people proclaimed a day of fasting. (vs. 9) This fast was, no doubt, in repentance of their sin. The leaders brought the book into a meeting of the princes of the Temple who became afraid at the reading of the book. They were fearful of how the king of Judah, Jehoiakim, would respond to the message of the book. They instructed Baruch to go to Jeremiah and hide him away from the king's wrath. Years before, Jehoiakim's father, King Josiah, had commanded the Word of God to be read in his presence. When he heard the words, he became so convicted that he rent his clothes. (II Kings 22:11) When Jehoiakim heard Jeremiah's words, his reaction was very different. He took the knife with which the scribes sharpened their quills and cut the pages out of the scroll and threw the cut pages in the fire. Even the courtiers in his palace were unconcerned by the message of the book. *"Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words."* (Vs. 36:24) The cutting of the pages of the Word of God in Jeremiah's book "was a deliberate way to insult and reject the prophet and the

God whom the prophet represented. Jehoiakim hoped to burn and destroy the word of the prophet and his God.” (Guzik. P. 8) The king did not realize that even though, “the ink and parchment can be burned, but God’s Word can never be destroyed. Jehoiakim ordered Baruch and Jeremiah be taken and punished ‘*but the Lord hid them*’.” (Vs. 26)

The Word of God cannot be hindered. God commanded Jeremiah to re-dictate the prophecies to Baruch and for him to copy them down again. This time he added new material. (Vs. 32) There is a serious warning to all people from this story. To openly defy God’s Word brings judgment. Jehoiakim defied the Lord by trying to destroy His Word. He was thinking that he did not need to listen to God. God pronounced a severe punishment upon this arrogant king and the people of his court who gave consent to the burning of the pages. (Vs. 31) Jehoiakim forgot that he was the king of God’s people. Therefore, “*the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the*

night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.” (Vs. 30) “The first recorded attempt to obliterate the word of God is something of a foretaste of the attacks on it in days to come: by sceptics, by persecutors, and with whatever good intent, by the rash use of the scholar’s knife. On this occasion, as on others to come, God saw to its preservation and completion.” (Guzik. P. 8/13 quoting Kidner)

The words written in the book of Jeremiah were a rebuke to the end that the people would repent of their sin. The words were meant to reunite the people with their God. This would avoid the punishment waiting for them because of their rebellion. God sent the words to be a blessing but because the people rejected God and this brought His judgment upon Judah. The Bible is still a book that is meant to help mankind be united with the Father. However, when we reject it and defy the God of Heaven, the Bible is to us a word of Judgement.

SOURCES

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