

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part LXIII: God's Judgment Over Man's Response To Scripture
(Jeremiah 36:1-32)

I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Paul charged pastor Timothy to preach the written Scriptures in the church since his hearers were to be judged at Christ's coming by the contents of those Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2.
- B. An illustration of this accountability of men to heed written Scripture is provided in Jeremiah 36:1-32, and we view it for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Judgment Over Man's Response To Scripture, Jeremiah 36:1-32.

- A. God had Jeremiah write a scroll to be read to Judah to get her to repent as Josiah did in his era, Jer. 36:1-9:
 - 1. The Lord told Jeremiah to write in a scroll all the words He had given him to preach to the people of Judah since the start of his prophetic ministry 22 years earlier, Jer. 36:1-2; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1180.
 - 2. God hoped that the reading of this scroll would influence the people of Judah to repent of their sins that they might avoid all the destruction God planned to bring on them for their sin, Jer. 36:3. God had seen Judah's former king Josiah, Jehoiakim's father, repent upon the reading of the Mosaic Law scroll that was found in the temple (2 Kings 22:1-13), so He hoped his son Jehoiakim would respond in similar fashion!
 - 3. Jeremiah had been barred from the temple due to of his judgment prophecies, so he sent his scribe, Baruch, to read the scroll there on a fast day held to seek God's intervention due to king Nebuchadnezzar's recent defeat of nearby Philistine Ashkelon and his big taxation of other Palestine nations, Ibid.; Jer. 36:4-9.
- B. However, the reading of this scroll gained a mixed response, with king Jehoiakim rejecting it, Jer. 36:10-26:
 - 1. When Baruch read Jeremiah's scroll in the temple, the official Michaiah told other royal officials of its startling contents of judgment (Jeremiah 36:10-13), and those officials in turn directed Baruch to come to them and read the scroll to them (Jeremiah 36:14-15).
 - 2. Those officials responded by becoming alarmed at the scroll's message of judgment as had Michaiah, so they in turn decided to have the scroll read before king Jehoiakim himself, Jeremiah 36:16.
 - 3. However, sensing that Jehoiakim might not like the scroll's convicting message since he himself practiced idolatry (2 Kings 23:36-37) and thus was responsible for influencing the nation to practice idolatry, these officials directed both Baruch and also Jeremiah whom they learned from Baruch had dictated the scroll's contents to him to hide themselves before the scroll was read to the king, Jeremiah 36:17-19.
 - 4. When Jeremiah's scroll was read before king Jehoiakim, he just cut it up leaf by leaf as it was being read and threw each leaf into a fire he was using to warm himself on that winter day, Jeremiah 36:20-23.
 - 5. Some officials present urged the king not to destroy the scroll (Jer. 36:25a), but he did not heed them (Jer. 36:25b) while other officials present were as unresponsive to the scroll as was the king, Jeremiah 36:24.
- C. Jehoiakim then ordered that Baruch and Jeremiah be arrested, but the Lord kept them hidden, Jer.36:26.
- D. Consequently, God directed Jeremiah to get a new scroll and write the messages he had written in the first scroll and add that though Jehoiakim had burned the first scroll for despising its warnings of judgment for sin (Jer. 36:27-29), Jehoiakim would be judged by God for his negative response to the reading of the first scroll (as follows): (1) he would have no descendant to rule on David's throne (Jer. 36:30a), (2) he would not have a proper burial at death (Jer. 36:30b) and (3) God would bring upon him, his descendants and his officials the calamitous judgments God had predicted He would bring in the first scroll by Jeremiah, Jeremiah 36:31.
- E. Jeremiah thus obtained a new scroll and dictated the contents of the first scroll to Baruch who wrote them in the new scroll, and Jeremiah added many similar words of judgment for sin in the new scroll, Jeremiah 36:32.

Lesson: *Though Jehoiakim rejected the reading of the warnings of judgment for sin in God's written Word by Jeremiah in contrast to the repentance of his father king Josiah, even to the extent that Jehoiakim burned up the scroll in opposing its message, God's Word STILL STOOD and would be FULFILLED in Jehoiakim's life! Like Psalm 119:89 KJV claims, "Forever, O Lord, they word is settled in heaven," so no matter what someone does to a given written copy of God's Word, GOD STILL holds one ACCOUNTABLE to HEED IT as in Jehoiakim's case!*

Application: *(1) Scripture is as authoritative as God's spoken words (2 Timothy 3:15-17), so we must heed its message lest we suffer discipline and loss of reward at Christ's judgment seat, 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. (2) May we like Jehoiakim's father Josiah wholeheartedly heed Scripture (2 Kings 22:11-23:3).*