

The Unbreakable Word

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[0 : 0 0] Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we ask that you will speak through your word.

And that by your spirit, you'll open the eyes of our hearts so that we might see and believe. And we pray that you would transform us into the people of God who tremble at your word.

And who seek to bring every aspect of our life into conformity with your will. We pray that you give us grace for that today as we go through Jeremiah 34 and 36 together.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. My name is Sean. For those of you who are visiting, I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. And I have the privilege of preaching God's word to you this morning.

This is our 16th week in the book of Jeremiah. And persistently up to this point, Jeremiah has called the people of God to repent of their sins, alternating between prophecies of judgment and promises of restoration that will come after the judgment.

[1 : 1 0] And today in chapters 34 to 36, Jeremiah is really firing his final warning shots before the judgment fully overtakes Judah and Jerusalem.

And we see three different responses to God's word in these chapters. And the first, we see the Jerusalemites' disobedience.

And second, we see in chapter 35, Rechabites' obedience. And third, we see in chapter 36, the Jehoiakim, king of Judah's defiance. And through all of this, God teaches that we should turn from our sins in obedience to God's word so that we might be forgiven of our sins.

That's really the main point of this passage. And so in chapter 34, deals with really the closing chapter of Judah's national existence.

It's the last days of Zedekiah's reign. And verses 1 to 7, Jeremiah kind of repeats the judgment that's coming against Judah and then assures Zedekiah that he will not escape this confrontation with king of Babylon no matter what he tries.

[2 : 2 1] And Jerusalem was under the siege of the Babylonian army at this time. And it appears that the Babylonian military strategy was to keep the capital under siege to weaken all their networks.

And then while it's under siege, to take out one fortified city out after another. Kind of basically kind of suffocating them. That seems to be the case because it says in verse 7 that only Lachish and Azekiah were left of all the fortified cities of Judah.

We know from 2 Chronicles 11 that there were 15 fortified cities in Judah and now there's only two left. So this is really the advanced stages of the Babylonian siege and invasion in Judah.

And then in verse 8 and following, we read about the prophecy that came to Jeremiah during that time. Verses 8 to 10 give us the context for this prophecy. It says, read with me, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should enslave a Jew, his brother.

And they obeyed all the officials and all the people who had entered into the covenant that everyone would set free his slave, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again. They obeyed and set them free.

[3 : 40] But afterward, they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free and brought them into subjection as slaves. So apparently, in a last-ditch effort to avert this Babylonian conquest, Zedekiah had attempted to renew Judah's covenant with God, and this included the emancipation of all Hebrew slaves.

But they soon thereafter reneged on that promise and re-enslaved all their former slaves. They were trying to obey Deuteronomy 15, 12 to 15, which commanded the manumission of all Hebrew slaves on the seventh year of their servitude.

This is summarized in verses 13, 14 of our chapter, chapter 34. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I myself made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying, At the end of seven years, each of you must set free the fellow Hebrew who has been sold to you and has served you six years.

You must set him free from your service. But your fathers did not listen to me or incline their ears to me. So now, if you actually go back to the original context of that command in Deuteronomy 15, it gives us the rationale for this command.

And the rationale is this. It's projected for you on the screen there. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you.

[5 : 08] Therefore, I command you this today. So they were supposed to free all their Hebrew slaves. They were not to enslave one another because they were formerly slaves and God had redeemed them from Egypt.

And that idea becomes clearer if you look at the words that God uses as he is rescuing people from Egypt in Exodus 8 verse 1. The Lord said to Moses, Go into Pharaoh and say to him, Thus says the Lord, Let my people go that they may serve me.

Right? That word serve is the same word that means to be enslaved to. Now you can see why Pharaoh was so upset when Moses comes to him and say, Hey, let my people go so that they may come and be my slaves is basically what God is saying.

And Pharaoh wouldn't be so upset if he were just claiming, Oh, let's go. Let us go. Let his people go so we can go and worship him outside. They were polytheists. They worshipped all kinds of gods. What's the problem with going in and worshipping another god?

No, Pharaoh is upset because he's saying, Let my people go so that they may no longer be your slaves but be slaves to the Lord God. And of course, it's not the same kind of slavery because being a slave to God is to be in a state of perfect freedom because God, the Lord, is our creator.

[6 : 20] And we were designed and created for this. And so that's the crux of it is that God's people are those who have been redeemed from their former slavery and therefore, they're not to be enslaved anymore to another fellow man.

And for that reason, this command was given so that even if a Hebrew had to enslave himself because of his debt, you know, to repay the debt, at the end of seven years, he was supposed to be freed and liberated.

But the people of Judah were not following this command. And so in an attempt to renew this covenant and get God's favor, they tried to do it again. But then soon, they turned back on that promise and took their slaves back.

So it says in verses 15 to 16, God's assessment of what they did, you recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor.

And you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name. But then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves whom you had set free according to their desire and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves.

[7 : 31] So they had renewed their covenant in the temple, but then they turned back and broke the terms of that covenant soon thereafter. And by doing this, God says that they profaned God's name.

Because according to Isaiah 65, 16, Israelites were only allowed to make covenants and to enter into solemn oaths in the name of God. And they believed that that was the only sure basis for an enduring covenant because God is unchanging and because he is eternal.

And so therefore, to enter into a covenant in his name would be to make it binding forever. And really, the third commandment of the Ten Commandments deals with this when it says, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

You should not use the name of the Lord in vain. And that's what they're doing. They're profaning his name because they took their oaths to renew that covenant in the name of the Lord, but then violated that covenant, making God's name cheap and making God out to be someone that you can take lightly.

So they profaned God's name. And the punishment that God inflicts on them for this is fair and exacting. God says in verse 17, Therefore, thus says the Lord, you have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, everyone to his brother and to his neighbor.

[8 : 43] Behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, declares the Lord. I'll make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because all the Israelites had failed to proclaim liberty to their evil slaves.

God will proclaim their liberty, which is ironic, of course, because it's a liberty to the sword, pestilence, and to famine. Having been freed from their perceived slavery to servitude to God, they thought they would be free, but instead their freedom is to be devoured to the sword, pestilence, and famine.

They sought to be free from the demands of God's law, but to be free from the authority of God's word. But that freedom that they sought turns out to be slavery to Babylon. So God continues in verses 18 to 19, and the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts.

The officials of Judah, the officials of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf. This is a little bit strange, right, the reference, but it's an allusion to the covenant-making oath sign that the officials of Judah and Jerusalem had gone through.

So in a typical ancient Near Eastern covenant ritual, between a suzerain, who is the covenant lord, and a vassal, who is the covenant's subject, the servant, they would cut up animals and lay them down in parallel lines, and then the vassal, the weaker party, would then march through, walk through these, between these torn up animal parts, and invoke a curse upon himself, saying, if I break the covenant, may I become like these animals, cut up in pieces.

[10 : 30] That's what that covenant sign means. It's picturing. And God's saying that that's the covenant that they made for themselves, and God's going to make good on that covenant oath that they had made. This passage doesn't give us details into the owners, the slave owners' motivations.

We know that they were attempting to renew their covenant with God, but why did they then so quickly turn back from the covenant and reclaim their slaves?

A significant clue may be found in verses 20 to 22. Read with me. God says there, Behold, I will command, declares the Lord, and will bring them back to this city, and they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire.

I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant. It turns out that as this passage tells us right there, at some point, the Babylonian siege against Jerusalem was lifted.

We learn why in Jeremiah 37, verse 5, tells us that the army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt, and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

[12 : 01] So Zedekiah was trying to play both parties, Egypt and Babylon. He was trying to be covenant subject to both Egypt and Babylon, and at one point, he rebelled against Babylon, which is why he's coming to enforce the terms of his covenant, and then Zedekiah goes to Egypt for aid, and basically, it's the Egyptian army comes and divert the attention of the Babylonian army so that for a little while, the siege on Jerusalem is lifted.

And while that's happening, it seems, that's, they were making that covenant with the Lord, renewing that covenant, releasing the Hebrew slaves at the time under the Babylonian siege, but when things seem to be looking up, when the army seems to be withdrawing from Jerusalem, they quickly take back their slaves because the economic costs are too high, because they weren't really obeying God, because they loved God, but because they feared the punishment, they didn't want what they were experiencing, the siege.

They weren't sincere in their repentance. They were motivated not by God's word, but by their circumstances. And so that's what, and how often it serves to ask, is our own obedience to God a matter of expedience rather than conviction?

Do we only pray to God when there is something that we desperately want for ourselves? Do we obey God's word not because it is right and true, but because it is expedient for us to obey?

Because it serves our own interest to obey? Do you tell the truth as God teaches us to only when it's to your advantage? What if it would hurt you to tell the truth?

[13 : 47] What if you damaged someone else's car while no one was looking? Would you still tell the truth? Do you only proclaim parts of God's word that would make you well-liked by others and popular, but not the parts that would offend people's sensibilities?

Do you follow God's word only where it agrees with your own sensibilities? Do we seek to free ourselves from the constraints of God's word not knowing that that freedom leads to spiritual enslavement?

The Jerusalemites' disobedience in chapter 34 teaches us that we should obey God's word not because it suits us, but because it's true, because it's good, because it's God's word.

In chapter 35, we have a scene change. Verse 1 says, The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah. So let me review the royal genealogy briefly because Jehoiakim was a pro-Egypt king of Judah, and when he refused to pay tribute to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar came down and besieged Jerusalem.

Sounds similar, but this is a different siege. This is the first siege of Jerusalem. Zedekiah was reigning under the second siege. During the siege, Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin became king of Judah, but his reign was short-lived because Judah was soon defeated.

[15 : 09] It only lasted a few months, and then Babylon put Zedekiah on the throne of Judah, and then 10 years later, Zedekiah rebelled again against Jerusalem, and that's what we saw in chapter 34.

So we're kind of going back a little over a decade in Judah's history in chapter 35 before the first Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. During that time, God instructed Jeremiah this way in verse 2.

Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak with them and bring them to the house of the Lord into one of the chambers. Then offer them wine to drink. Interesting instructions, right?

Jeremiah does this. He invites the whole house of the Rechabites to a chamber within the temple and then sets before them pitchers full of wine. That's a lot of wine. And cups. And he invites them to drink.

To be a guest at the house of the Lord at the invitation of the prophet of the Lord is an honor, but the response of the Rechabites is curious. They respond in verses 6 to 11 this way.

[16 : 09] Read with me. We will drink no wine for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, you shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons forever.

You shall not build a house. You shall not sow seed. You shall not plant or have a vineyard, but you shall live in tents all your days that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.

We have obeyed the voice of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he commanded us to drink no wine all our days, ourselves, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, and not to build houses to dwell in.

We have no vineyard or field or seed, but we have lived in tents and have obeyed and done all that Jonadab, our father, commanded us. But when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against the land, we said, come and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Syrians.

So, we are living in Jerusalem. This is the most extensive description of the Rechabites that we find in scripture. They were apparently nomads that were opposed to settled living on principle.

[17 : 16] They lived in tents instead of building houses and they did not plant vineyards or drink wine because wine and vineyards represented the sedentary life. So, by inviting the Rechabites to drink, Jeremiah was testing their adherence to their founding principles as a community.

And the Rechabites responded strongly by saying, we will drink no wine. And then they explained why they can't drink it lest they be rude to their hosts. So, even though they were living in Jerusalem a settled life at the time, they were explaining that we're only here because of the Babylonian invasion.

Otherwise, we would still be living as nomads outside the city gates. This is a temporary arrangement. So, the Rechabites remained faithful to the commands of their fathers by refusing to drink.

And this then becomes an illustration for Jeremiah's next prophecy. Because in verses 13 to 17, God contrasts the Rechabites' obedience from the Jerusalemites' disobedience.

He says in verses 14 to 16, the command that Jonadab, the son of Rechab, gave to his sons to drink no wine has been kept and they drink none to this day for they have obeyed their father's command.

[18 : 26] I have spoken to you persistently but you have not listened to me. I have sent to you all my servants, the prophets, sending them persistently saying, turn now every one of you from his evil way and amend your deeds and do not go after other gods to serve them and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.

But you did not incline your ear or listen to me. The sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, have kept the command that their father gave them but this people has not obeyed me.

You can see the sense of grievance that God has against the Judahites here. The Rechabites were careful to obey Jonadab but Israel who has many more reasons to obey the Lord and has been given many chances to do so refused to listen to him.

And so in verse 17, God pronounces his judgment upon the people of Judah but in verses 18 to 19, God says to the Rechabites, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab, your father, and kept all his precepts and done all that he commanded you.

Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall never lack a man to stand before me. God's not necessarily endorsing and enjoining the nomadic life of the Rechabites for everyone.

[19 : 52] He clearly says earlier in verses 14 to 16 that if they would obey him, he wants them to dwell in the land that God gave them. So that's not, he's not endorsing the Rechabite lifestyle necessarily, but he is using them as an example of faithfulness to his commands.

There's a lesson for us here in the obedience to the Rechabites because of course the Rechabites were not exactly in the right about their rejection of settling in the promised land that God had given to his people, but they did get something right, didn't they?

When Israelites settled in Canaan and began to live a sedentary life centered around agriculture, they encountered Canaanite culture and religion and they were irresistibly drawn to the fertility god Baal of the Canaanites.

So repeatedly they were unfaithful to the true God and worshipped Baal an idol. The Rechabite reluctance to adopt the sedentary life was seemingly justified.

While the people of Jerusalem were unfaithful, the Rechabites remained faithful. A modern day equivalent to these Rechabites might be the Amish people, if you've heard of them.

[21 : 09] Amish people are Christians who prioritize their faith, family, and farm above all other things. And they believe strongly that worldliness can keep them from being close to God.

So they try to eliminate all worldly influences from their lives, which includes limiting the infiltration of technology. So instead of using modern machines, they rely on the horses to farm.

And they ride horse-drawn carriages instead of riding cars. They restrict their access to TV, radio, telephones. And most modern people, like us, we wonder how they can survive in their backward ways.

And we're so fascinated with these people that Amish people have themselves become a tourist attraction in parts of Pennsylvania. Sure, there's nothing evil in TVs and radios and mobile phones and cars in and of themselves, but they did come with significant sacrifices, didn't they?

The Amish, for example, tends to have very strong family ties and a deep sense of community. Because when there aren't cars and planes available to enable long-distance travel, families tend to stay together.

[22 : 17] When there aren't TVs to watch and radios to listen to, they tend to watch and listen to each other. When there are no mobile phones to keep them in touch with people far away, they tend to keep in better touch with people nearby.

Instead of bonding with celebrities on Instagram, they tend to bond with each other, their families and friends. Apprehensions about the pervasiveness and invasiveness of technology are on the rise today and a lot of books are being written.

One such book is entitled Tech Wise Family, which I read, I recommend it to you, written by a Christian author, Andy Crouch. And he says that in order to put technology in its proper place, quote, you don't have to become Amish, but you probably have to become closer to Amish than you think.

Before we speak dismissively and derisively of Amish people or the Rechabites or people like them, calling them religious fanatics or Luddites, we need to ask ourselves, what are some modern amenities and modern anxieties that have crept into our hearts to preoccupy us and make us unfaithful to God?

In Mark 4, Jesus tells the parable of the seeds and in the parable some of the seeds fell among the thorns and the thorns grew up and choked the seeds so that they yielded no grain and Jesus describes these seeds that they are those who hear the word but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word and it proves unfruitful.

[24 : 04] Are the cares of the world the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things choking out the gospel in your life and making you fruitless? Have the gifts of modern life distracted you from the giver of all good gifts?

In chapter 36, so that's the response to the Rechabites. In chapter 36, we see yet another response to the word of the Lord and this time by the king of Judah. So we're still in the reign of Jehoiakim here in chapter 36 as verse 1 tells us and God says to Jeremiah in verses 2-3 of chapter 36, 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, I have spoken to you against Israel from the day I spoke to you from the days of Josiah until today. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them so that everyone may turn from his evil way and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

We may wonder why Jeremiah dictated this prophecy to be written down on a scroll because all the previous times he simply went in person and spoke these prophecies. The simple answer of course is God told him to.

He did tell him to in verse 2. But why did God tell him to write it down this time? We may find a clue in verses 5-7. Jeremiah ordered Baruch saying, I am banned from going to the house of the Lord 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.

[25 : 51] You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their city. It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the world. Is that me?

You guys hear that? Yeah. It's amazing how I use this thing every week and I still haven't figured out how to use it.

Yeah. I hope we're good now. We're in verses 5-7 of chapter 36. And so it turns out that Jeremiah because, probably because he had been basically prophesying about judgment for so long and so persistently he had been banned.

He's become an unwelcome person in the temple precincts and so that's likely why he had to have his prophecy written down to be delivered by his scribe Baruch to be read in public during one of the public fasts when a large congregation is gathered from all over Judah.

The fact that Jeremiah has been banned shows how persistently he has preached this message and how stubbornly the people of Judah have refused to listen.

[27 : 09] And yet even now the goal of this threat of judgment is repentance. look at verse 3 again with me. God says, it may be that the house of Judah will hear all that disaster that I intend to do to them so that everyone may turn from his evil way and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Similarly, Jeremiah says in verse 7, it may be that their plea for mercy will come before the Lord and that everyone will turn from his evil way for great is the anger and wrath that the Lord has pronounced against his people.

When God pronounces his judgment over his people, he doesn't do it with smug satisfaction nor are his prophets gloating over God's people as they pronounce and announce God's judgment.

The goal of this warning of judgment is repentance that they may turn from their sins, that they may be restored to God into right relationship with him so that judgment might be averted. That's the goal.

And we should see in these pronouncements of judgments not God's vindictiveness but God's love and his desire to show mercy and therefore his persistent warning of judgment so that they would repent of their sins.

[28 : 23] In verses 9 to 20 we see Baruch follow Jeremiah's instructions. He reads the entirety of the scroll in the temple. Within it says the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the secretary.

And when Micaiah Gemariah's son and Shaphan's grandson hears the words of the Lord from the scroll he goes to the king's house to relate to the officials that were there and then they send for Baruch to have him come and read the scroll again to them and at which point they say in verse 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.

So far so good right? The scroll is being read is being heard and it seems to be traveling up the chain of command and hopefully it will get to the king eventually and he will bring some reform and change to this nation.

But verses 19 to 20 tell us that perhaps things will not go so well because the officials say to Baruch go and hide you and Jeremiah and let no one know where you are.

And then instead of taking the scroll directly to the king they leave it in the chamber of Elishamah the secretary for safekeeping and then simply report the words to the king. Before we proceed further in this chapter it's interesting to note the similarities between this passage and 2 Kings 22 8-20.

[29 : 54] That's the passage where Hilkiyah or Hilkiah finds the book of the law inside the temple and then delivers that book to King Josiah.

The word book and word scroll in Hebrew are the same. So both passages involve a scroll which contains the word of the Lord and both stories feature officials actually from the same noble families.

So in 2 Kings for example Shaphan the secretary is present when the scroll is read here in Jeremiah and the scroll is read in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the secretary and Micaiah the grandson of Shaphan the secretary is in the audience.

So again same noble family present. Similarly in 2 Kings Akbar is among the officials present in the royal courts and here in Jeremiah Elnathan the son of Akbar is among the officials present in the royal courts.

So all these similarities I think are deliberately noted by the editor of Jeremiah to invite comparison between the two accounts. So let's compare how King Josiah and King Jehoiakim his son respond to the reading of this scroll.

[31 : 10] Read verses 21 to 26 with me. Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll and he took it from the chamber of Elishamah the secretary and Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood before the king.

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. 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.

Yet neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words was afraid nor did they tear their garments even when Elnathan and Deliah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll he would not listen to them and the king commanded Jeremiel the king's son and Saraiah the son of Azrael and Shalamiah the son of Abdiel to seize Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet but the Lord hid them.

The contrast between Josiah's response and Jehoiakim's response can't be more striking in 2 Kings 23.11 it says when the king Josiah heard the words of the book of the law he tore his clothes.

Tearing one's clothes is a sign of profound sorrow and mourning. Josiah was so grieved by his nation's failure to obey the Lord that he tore his clothes in sorrowful demonstration of his repentance.

[32 : 50] But notice what verse 24 of our passage says. Yet neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words was afraid nor did they tear their garments.

Taylor is my hairdresser. Yeah. Yeah. Taylor. I heard. Just don't touch it. Okay. Sorry. Yeah. It's like a like a child that's entrusted with something sensitive that he doesn't know how to take care of.

So there's a deliberate contrast being drawn here because Josiah tore his clothes but Jehoiakim and his officials did not tear their clothes. It's the Jeremiah notes that specifically. And instead of tearing their clothes what did they tear apart?

Yeah. Jehoiakim methodically cut the scroll off with the knife. The word cut is the same in Hebrew as the word tear. What he should have done with his clothes Jehoiakim did to the scroll that contained the word of the Lord.

And the parallels do not end there. In 2 Kings 22-13 after the scroll is read Josiah remarked 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.

[34 : 15] Kindle. Burn. Great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us because of this. Instead of fearing the wrath of the Lord that's burning against them Jehoiakim instead burns in his fire pot the entire scroll of the Lord.

This is really the height of disobedience and defiance. By cutting up and burning the scroll of the Lord Jehoiakim showed utter contempt for the word of the Lord.

And as if that weren't enough he orders the arrest of Baruch and Jeremiah. Thankfully the Lord has hidden them and they're nowhere to be found but we know what he would have done if he had found them because we were told in chapter 26 what he did to another prophet of the Lord who prophesied judgment against Jerusalem.

His name was Uriah trying to arrest him and kill him and Uriah heard of it and escaped to Egypt and then Jehoiakim had him extradited from Egypt and then executed him and then unceremoniously threw his body out.

That's likely what he would have done to Jeremiah. Many people throughout history have tried like Jehoiakim to stuff out God's word but in the end God's word always gets the last word because as Isaiah 48 says the grass withers the flower fades but the word of our God will stand forever.

[35 : 33] Because as Matthew 24 35 says Jesus says heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away. God speaks to Jeremiah this way in verses 28 to 31.

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 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.

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. Even though Jehoiakim defied God's word he cannot escape its power and the word of God will be fulfilled regardless of Jehoiakim's obedience.

The Babylonians will indeed come and destroy Jerusalem that was fulfilled and Jehoiakim will have none to sit on his throne of David. After his son after his death his son Jeconiah also called Jehoiachin succeeds him for a brief three months and then God sees through this promise that he will not have anyone left to sit on his throne.

In the same way that Jehoiakim threw the scroll of the Lord into the fire Jehoiakim's corpse will now be cast out. It's the same word. There may be parts of scripture which is the written word of God that all of us some of us may want to cut out and burn but that will in no way diminish its truth and power.

[37 : 16] Jehoiakim as the king of Judah should have known that he is reigning at God's behest as his representative but instead he sought to reign for himself instead of upholding God's word as the king of Judah he wanted his will to prevail in Judah and the question we need to ask ourselves is is the word of God the final authority in your life or is your will your judgment the final authority of your life?

As Christian pastor Tim Keller often says and I've quoted this before if your God never disagrees with you you might just be worshipping an idealized version of yourself. Verse 32 tells us 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.

We're never told exactly what words were on this scroll but it's possible as many think perhaps even likely that this scroll that was written down is the basis for the book of Jeremiah as we currently have it.

As we then almost 1600 years later read God's word in Jeremiah we are faced with the same choice. Will we respond like Josiah in repentance and faith or will we respond like Jehoiakim in rebellion and defiance?

In Matthew 21 33 to 42 Jesus tells his disciples the parable of the tenants. In the parable God is the master of the house the owner of the vineyard and the vineyard represents the people of God the church and the tenants represent those who have been entrusted with taking care of the vineyard and harvesting its fruit.

[39 : 11] In the Old Testament it was the Jewish leaders like Jehoiakim and the servants that the owner sends to the vineyard to collect the fruit are the prophets whom God sends like Jeremiah. Now listen to this parable with the backdrop of Jeremiah in mind.

There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a wine press in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants and went into another country.

When the season for fruit drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit and the tenants took his servants and beat one killed another and stoned another.

Again he sent other servants more than the first and they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them saying they will respect my son.

But when the tenants saw the son they said to themselves this is the heir come let us kill him and take his inheritance. And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

[40 : 15] When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes what will he do to those tenants? They said to him he will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.

Jesus said to them have you never read in the scriptures the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Jesus Christ is the son who came to the vineyard. He is God's last resort the ultimate final messenger to reclaim his vineyard.

But in the same way that Jeremiah declared the word of the Lord and was rejected Jesus too was rejected by his own people and he was killed on the cross. But on that cross even though he was the stone that the builders rejected he became the cornerstone of the house of God.

Because on that cross Jesus bore the sins of all those who would trust in him for salvation. all of us are sinners and all of us at one point were persistent sinners unrepentant sinners and though we may not have burned the scroll of the Lord like Jehoiakim we are not less dismissive and defiant toward the word of the Lord.

[41 : 36] And we deserved all the disaster that Jeremiah had proclaimed against Judah. We were the insubordinate tenants the wretched who deserved a miserable death as Jesus' own disciples put it.

That's us. Yet Jesus came in the same way that God's word came as it says in chapter 36 verse 3 so that everyone may turn from his evil way and that God may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that we no longer have to bear the punishment for ourselves for our own sins and can instead receive the forgiveness of God.

And then Jesus was raised from the dead to give us new life eternal life resurrection life so that we will no longer live for ourselves but live for God by the power of the spirit for the glory of God.

And in the same way that their different responses to the word of the Lord divided Josiah and Jehoiakim how you respond to Jesus Christ will divide all of humanity.

[42 : 46] Will you turn from your sins in obedience to God's word? Please take a moment you can close your eyes if you'd like to reflect on this message.

If you're not yet a follower of Christ do you recognize your disobedience to God? Will you turn from your sins and turn toward Christ in faith for the forgiveness of sins? If you're already a follower of Christ what are some ways that God is calling you to greater obedience to his word?

After some reflection we'll respond by praying out loud together as a church.