

“Revelation and Response” Jeremiah 36- Pastor Rand Lankheet

Before reading: Jeremiah was prophet in Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel.

He served the Lord for about forty years, both somewhat before and after 600 B.C.

That's 600 years before Christ was born.

In this chapter, chapter 36, we're going to be reading about King Jehoiakim of Judah.

Jehoiakim was the son of the good king Josiah.

You might remember Josiah as the boy king who began reigning when he was just 8 years old,

under his queen mother and other advisors. When Josiah was 26 years old, the Book of the Law, the first 5 books of our Bible, were rediscovered in the Temple building.

That Book of the Law had not been read or studied for many years.

King Josiah had these books of the Bible read in his hearing.

And by God's grace, Josiah repented of his sin, and the sins of his people.

And he renewed the covenant God had initiated with the people of Israel.

After a long reign of 31 years, Josiah was killed in a battle.

One son first reigned in his father's place. After that son died, another son of Josiah was made king.

That son is the king Jehoiakim we read about in this chapter. [Read Jeremiah 36.]

1. The revelation of the LORD.

Introduction: The people in ancient times did not have books like we have today.

The invention of the modern book is around 500 years old.

In ancient days, instead of books, the people used scrolls. Scrolls were like rolled up books.

The paper-like material of scrolls originally was made from papyrus纸草, a reed-like plant, growing along rivers, or in swampy沼泽的 areas. To make a scroll, sections of papyrus were fastened together to form one long roll.

Unrolling one section from the left side, you would write on it, top to bottom, like a page.

Then you would roll up the written part to the right. And unroll a new, blank section, from the left. Gradually, the blank roll on the left would get smaller and smaller, and the written roll

on the right would get larger and larger. Until the scroll was finished.

-In verses 1-2 of chapter 36, God tells Jeremiah to get a new scroll, with no writing on it.

A blank scroll. And God told Jeremiah to start writing His words. Not new words.

But to write the words God originally had spoken to Jeremiah about the kingdom of Judah.

Evidently, many of the chapters of our current book of Jeremiah were written down at that point. Up to then, those words were only spoken words from the LORD.

-The word "Scripture" means "written," or "written down." You can hear the English word "script"

in the word "Scripture." And our word, "inscribe" 刻 originally referred to scribes抄写员, those who wrote down words on a scroll.

So the spoken word of the LORD became the written, "inscriptured" word of the LORD.

Even today, we call the written Bible, the Scriptures. Written.

To do this, Jeremiah got himself a kind of secretary. As Jeremiah spoke the words which the Lord had spoken to him, that secretary wrote those words on that new scroll.

The secretary's name is Baruch.

Those written down words were not Jeremiah's words, or Baruch words. No.

Those words were the words of God. In 2 Peter 1:21 we read that certain men, such as the OT prophets [quote] "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Jeremiah was speaking from God. He was inspired by God's Spirit to recall God's words.

-Then Jeremiah gives his secretary, Baruch, another assignment.

Baruch had to go to the Temple building in Jerusalem.

And there Baruch had to read all the words newly written on that scroll.

Reading God's Word to God's people.

We're told that this happened during a time of "fasting."

The people of Jerusalem were going without food for some reason.

So there were probably more people than usual in and around the Temple area.

What would the people have heard, as Baruch was reading?

Well, think of some of the previous chapters of the book of Jeremiah.

The people would have heard the LORD comparing them to a newly married wife who abandons

her loving husband. Judah had become like a sexually immoral放荡的 wife, with multiple affairs.

That was the people, lusting after other gods, like Baal and Asherah.

Also from earlier chapters from the book of Jeremiah we read how the people had become

cruel and vicious towards one another. They showed no true love for each other.

They would have heard that being read, also, as Baruch read from that scroll.

In other sections of the scroll, God would point out their sins of cheating and stealing from one another.

Many people were taking advantage of those in poverty, taking from them, what little they had.

Others were telling lies, going about deceiving one another.

That and more, is what the people would have heard as Baruch read from that scroll.

They also would have heard this:

That because of all their sins, and their refusal to repent of their sins, God's anger was burning hot against them. And God was planning to smash them like a pottery jar. Smashing them into pieces.

God would be sending the Babylonian army into the land. Jerusalem and that beautiful Temple building would be destroyed. Thousands of the people would be killed by the Bab. soldiers.

Thousands more would be taken as exiles to the faraway 遥远的 city of Babylon.

-That was **God's revelation** to his people in the days of Jeremiah the prophet. God's **revealing** Himself, showing Himself, and His will to His people. And God **was revealing** the peoples' sin. Today we call the Bible God's "special **revelation**." The Bible is God's **revealing** Himself to us, in a special way. In the Bible God specially reveals to us our sin, and God's anger about our sin.

God also reveals how we can be forgiven of our sin. //

Hearing that **revelation** from God meant that God's people had to **respond**.

"Revelation" leads to "response." Many years ago I read from a series of small booklets for Christian children entitled, "Revelation and Response." Revelation and response.

God's revelation leads to our response.

2. So let's look, secondly, at the **response** God wanted from his people.

Look at vs. 6-7. These are words of Jeremiah to his secretary Baruch. [Read vs. 6b-7.

You see, when God gives us His Word, the Bible today, yes, He speaks openly and strongly about our sin. The sin we are born with, as well as the sins we personally commit.

And God judges us guilty because of our sin.

But, it's not God's intent, to leave us in our guilt. To make us fall into despair and to stay there.

No, God's intent, when we hear His Word, is that we would repent of our sin.

That we would admit we are indeed sinners. Even as Christians, even as God's people. Even as pastors, elders, deacons, older church members, younger church members.

One commentator writes: "God wants to do more than convict 宣判有罪[us]; he wants to convert [us]."

And remember that true conversion isn't merely a one-time event. We must daily be converted.

Each day we must be turned away from our sin, and be turned back to God.

-When we are confronted by God' Word, especially by His law, we should be moved to bring our humble petitions to him. [See vs. 7a. "Petitions." That is, us lifting up our prayers of repentance, our tears of sorrow, seeking His mercy to us in Jesus Christ.

-Let me remind you that it is only in Jesus, that we can truly repent. An unsaved person can have regret and sadness. But only a Christian, or someone becoming a Christian, will repent.

Repenting is humbling ourselves, as God works in us by His Word and Spirit.

Through Jesus. It is the Word of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus, that humbles us, and breaks us down. And we are brought to the work of Jesus, his saving work for us:

That God the Father has laid upon Jesus, on the cross, all our sin.

On the cross, Jesus took the punishment of our sin.

And trusting in Jesus, is our only hope of God forgiving us our sin.

To forgive our sins of yesterday and last week; to forgive the sins of last year, and ten years ago. To forgive our sins of old age, and the sins of our youth.

Are you repenting of your sin, truly repenting? Not just feeling bad about them, or guilty because of them. But honestly admitting your own sin, hating that sin, and turning from that sin.

In Jesus. And being assured that for the sake of Jesus your sin is forgiven?

God reveals all this to us in His Word. That's His **revelation**.

And then God looks for your **response**, as He enables you by His grace. What is your response?//

-When the officials of the king's court heard the Word of God, some responded in a good way.

In vs. 16, we read that they listened to those words and responded with "fear."

Probably that was a fear towards God, because now they knew how terrible their sin was.

They knew they were part of leading the people of Judah in their sin. These were advisors to the

king. They were part of the ruling class of people. In Israel, if the ruling class of people were wicked, if they didn't care for the Lord, or had no true faith in him, it would be very difficult for the ordinary people to have faith. So now, some of those ruling officials seem to be filled with a godly fear, a fear of God.

-But another part of their fear seems to be political. You see, they know their king.

King Jehoiakim. They know that King Jehoiakim would hate those words of God.

They also know that the prophet Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch would be in grave danger.

So the officials tell them to hide, so the king can't find them.//

2.B. Eventually, the king himself wants to hear the words written on that scroll.

The king's secretary obtains the scroll. He reads from that scroll to the king.

And what does the king do? Interestingly, the king's father, good King Josiah, many years earlier also had a scroll read to him. A scroll of God's Word, the Bible.

When King Josiah heard the Word of the Lord, he tore his clothing in that cultural way of showing repentance and sorrow. King Josiah wept over his sins.

And he grieved over the sins of his people. King Josiah, the father, repented. Now, interestingly, his son, King Jehoiakim is also listening to the reading of a scroll.

And it is also a scroll of God's Word.

But instead of tearing his clothing, this king, tears out the pages of the Bible!

Instead of shredding his clothing, this king shreds the scroll...and burns it up.

King Jehoiakim hates God's Word! And he refuses to repent.

King Jx takes out a knife, used by scribes in those days. After each section from the scroll was read, the king cut off that section. And he threw it into the fire.

It was the winter season. A small fire was burning in that room to give some warmth.

Section by section, the king threw God's Word into that fire. //

Revelation and response.

God's revelation to all people, in His Word. And peoples' response to that revelation.

King Jehoiakim responded in anger, hating God and His Word.

King Jehoiakim refused to seek the LORD while He may be found.

-We all know people today who hate God's Word. There are famous atheists 无神论者 who recently have written best selling books, attacking God and His Word.

Other people, not famous, just ordinary people, going to work each day, raising children, living in our communities, also hate God's Word. Oh, they would be too polite to say that.

And in other ways many of them can be very nice people. But they are simply not interested in God and His Word. They will not pick up the Bible.

Even if you gave them a copy of the Bible, they probably would not read it. Think of it!

God has written to us in His Word. His Word is really a letter to us: God writing to us, telling us about Himself, and telling us who we are. And how we should be in a right relationship with Him. But then, most of the people of this world, do not care.

They will not even open up the pages of the Bible. They are completely ignoring God's letter, God's writing to them.

-But let's not focus on those kinds of people. Let's look at ourselves.

How we ourselves, often, completely ignore God's Word to us.

Oh, we probably read the Bible. But how often we don't do what God says in the Bible!

How often we go our own way, living in the ways we want to live!

Oh, may God show us His grace...as His people. May we repent of our sins.

May we repent of our failure to truly hear God's Word, and have that Word change our lives.

May we repent of our ignoring of God's Word.

May we repent of not teaching God's Word to our children,

or sometimes being bad examples to them, of how to live according to God's Word!

-But then recall vs. 7, of Jeremiah 36.

That God's purpose in giving us his Word is that we would repent.

That we would turn from our daily sin and turn again, and turn repeatedly, to the Lord.

That we would, according to vs. 7, "bring [our] petitions before the Lord, and each will turn from his wicked ways." So let us pray for God's mercy to us in Jesus.

First, to know that Jesus has taken our sin on himself, and has been punished for our sins.

Punished by God in our place. So we are fully forgiven of all our sin.

And then, secondly, knowing that Jesus has been raised to new life, a resurrection 复活 life.

And He makes us share in that life, by His Spirit. That we would live in newness of life.

So may we increasingly live for Jesus, living in obedience to Him as our Saviour and Lord.

God's revelation to us. And **our response** to Him. **And to that all God's people said: AMEN.**