

SPEAKS

JEREMIAH 36:1-31

1. For you men: are you more like your father or less like him? Ladies: are you more like your mother or less like her?

George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush are an example where they are different. The father was a more “refined” Yale graduate, Ivy League background, while the son had more of a true “Texan” Attitude.

There are several examples in Scripture: Samuel and his sons, David, and Absalom, etc.

2. Can you think of some other examples?

Today we are going to look at a son in Scripture who had a much different attitude toward God and His Word than his father did. And it should cause us to examine how we will respond to the Word of God when we hear it!

(We’ll spend a little more time on the context today because it’s really important and sets the table for the focal passage.)

CONTEXT! Read Jeremiah 36:1-3

So the time was the 4th year of King Jehoiakim, which would have been about 605 B.C. Jehoiakim was the son of King Josiah, who had been a very good king—Josiah led Israel to re-affirm the covenant with God, took all the idols out of the Temple and had them burned, broken down the “high places” where they worshiped false gods, and had the Passover for the first time in many years. But as we will see, Jehoiakim was not like his father. He was a very different man. He led Israel to go back to idol worship, which led to their final destruction.

Old Testament scholar F. B. Huey writes that this is one of the most important chapters in the book of Jeremiah, because after this chapter, “Judah’s opportunity to repent had passed...Judah’s fate would be assured; it would be destroyed.” We’ll see the event that led up to that, here in this chapter.

Notice in verse 3 there is still hope, but it soon passes.

1. What was God telling Jeremiah to do? (Basically, write this Book of Jeremiah!)

Read Jeremiah 36:4-18

Notice this is about a year later, see verse 9.

2. Why do you think they thought the King needed to hear what was written on the scroll?

3. What was the reaction of all the officials when they heard Jeremiah’s scroll? (Fear.)

Notice verse 16, it is almost as if they had never heard Jeremiah’s messages. Then they had Baruch affirm that Jeremiah had dictated the entire scroll to him.

On the surface, Jehoiakim owed his reign to King Nebuchadnezzar. But while the Babylonian ruler may have been the human agent in placing Jehoiakim on the throne, God was behind the scenes working out His plans and purposes. Yet, Jehoiakim never acknowledged God, and his stubborn refusal to accept God’s words would lead to his utter destruction!

DELIVERED! Read Jeremiah 36:19-21

1. Why did the officials warn Baruch and Jeremiah? (The officials knew the King would have a violent reaction to the reading of the scroll, so they told Jeremiah and Baruch to go hide.)

2. How might God’s Word be delivered to someone today? (Preaching. Bible study. Hand out Bibles. Public meetings.)

Meanwhile, the officials put the scroll in the temple for safekeeping. When Jehoiakim heard about the scroll, he demanded that his servant, Jehudi, get it and read it to him. The King’s officials waited to see what his reaction would be to the scroll.

DESTROYED! Read Jeremiah 36:22-26

1. Does anyone recall what Jehoiakim's father, Josiah's response was when He first heard the Word of God? (2 Kings 22:11-13—He was deeply grieved and tore his clothes.)
2. How would you describe Jehoiakim's response to God's Word? (Disdain! Utter rejection! Contempt! Scorn! Derision!)
3. Why might a person be determined to dismiss God's Word and try to destroy it? (They are listening to Satan. It condemns something they are doing. They are worshiping false gods.)
4. How do you usually respond to criticism? (I'm too sensitive to criticism personally. I usually try to evaluate what I'm doing and see if there is any truth to the criticism.)
5. What makes accepting criticism so difficult? (**PRIDE!**)

The ninth month of the Jewish calendar aligns with December on modern calendars. That explains why Jehoiakim was in his winter residence and why a fire was burning. This residence was not a separate place, but probably a space on the ground floor that could be easier to heat.

He burned the scroll a few columns at a time as it was read to him.

Jehoiakim's response was a mixture of arrogant defiance and cold indifference. God was giving the king one more opportunity to turn back to Him. But the king again spurned God's mercy and grace. He also sent his servants out to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but God protected them!

Jehoiakim's rejection of the Word of God is not a hasty mistake. It is the most deliberate act of defiance of the spoken and written Word of God recorded in the Bible!

6. Why is it important for believers to share God's Word with confidence, even when it might not be accepted well? (Isaiah 55:11)

Voltaire, the famous French philosopher, and writer was an atheist. In 1764 he wrote, "The Bible. That is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach, and young children are made to learn by heart." He also wrote that year: "We are living in the twilight of Christianity"—he believed that Christianity was about to become extinct. But in August of 1836, only fifty-eight years after Voltaire's death, Rev. William Acworth of the British and Foreign Bible Society saw with his own eyes Voltaire's former residence in Geneva, Switzerland being used as a "repository for Bibles and Religious tracts." As the king would soon learn, burning a physical scroll could not destroy the truth of God's Word.

REPLACED! Read Jeremiah 36:27-31

1. What was God's judgment on King Jehoiakim? (His corpse would be treated with the same disrespect he had shown to God's Word. His body would never be buried, and no one would mourn his death. His kingship would be passed to one of his sons but only for three months then he was replaced.)
2. How should we respond to those who try to destroy God's Word? (As hard as it may be we need to earnestly pray for them. Treat them with kindness, as Jesus would.)
3. How can we be sure God's Word is enduring and trustworthy?
 - The Bible is a truly remarkable book. The more you know about it the more you appreciate it. Consider Psalm 19:
 - Verse 7—It is the perfect Law. It has no errors. It is historically accurate and provides spiritual truth.
 - Verse 8—It is a rule book for daily living. Scripture is always 100% right.
 - Verse 9—It is eternal. Other books come and go, but the Bible endures forever.
 - Verse 10—It is a treasure. It contains everything you need for life and godliness—2 Pet. 1:3

Written over a period of 1600 years in various countries, yet the Bible all fits together. It is inexhaustible! "The Bible offers a great deal more than just the plan for salvation. It incorporates everything I need to live a meaningful, rich life, and it explains the benefits that are mine simply because I put my faith in Jesus Christ."—Luci Swindoll.

4. How should that knowledge affect your life each day?

SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!

1. What are some things we might be tempted to compromise on today?
2. What are some ways we can be involved in faithfully delivering God's Word? (Live it out in our daily lives. Invite people to come to Bible study and church with us.)
3. What can we do to demonstrate our confidence in God's Word?
(Moral standards; LGBT issues; Jesus is the only way.)