

Jeremiah 36

Today we study the book Jeremiah chapter 36. This passage shows different people's responses toward God's word. I want you to think about those responses, and decide what would be your response?

The chapter started with the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. This was at or near the time of the first Babylonian invasion. It occurred around 605BC when Daniel and other captives were brought to Babylon. Jehoiakim was still the king of Judah but he was a bad king. Verses 1 to 19 described how Jeremiah delivered God's message. Verses 20 to 26 described King Jehoiakim's response.

1) Person who rejects God's word

a. Conviction of sin

God's word contains conviction. King Jehoiakim was convicted but was not willing to listen. Instead, he had no fear and opposed in a very harsh way towards God's word and God's people (burn the scroll and try to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah in verses 23 to 26).

b. Response

The typical responses to God's conviction are: 1. repent, 2. self-evaluation and think it over and 3. rejection. The king chose the worst response that is rejection. Warning to those that just do self-evaluation but not willing to repent of sin because God will not accept that.

2) Person who treasures God's word

Jeremiah and Baruch stood firm on God's calling.

a. Delivered God's message without fear for the love of God's people

Baruch supported Jeremiah and delivered God's message. He cared about people's life because God cared about them.

b. Keep the faith and continue to serve God

Baruch and Jeremiah kept the faith. They continued to serve God and re-recorded the message in the scroll (verse 32).

3) Truth about Bible from this scripture passage

This passage describes three key characteristics of the Bible which are very important for us to remember.

a. Bible is God inspired word

II Tim. 3:16 states “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”. Verse 4 in this chapter described Jeremiah listened to God and had Baruch to write it down.

b. It is forever and non-destroyable

Matthew 24:35 states “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (also see Psalms 119:160 & Isa. 40:8). King Jehoiakim tried to destroy God’s word, but it has been re-recorded by Jeremiah and Baruch (verse 32).

c. It can convict or threaten people but also a message of hope

Bible can convict or threaten people like King Jehoiakim in this case. Verse 3 clearly stated that God will forgive their sin if they turn from their wicked ways. There is a message of hope. He still rejected God’s word and not repent. Hebrews 4:12 states “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” When King Jehoiakim was convicted, he was threatened and decided to destroy God’s word instead.

There were many cases of people trying to destroy the Bible. However, the Bible is still widely available today in most part of the world. I give you two examples; one is not too long after Christ’s death and another one is more recent. The Bible and Christianity had threatened the local leaders at that time.

The first example is in 303 AD, the Roman Emperor Diocletian calls for the destruction of all the scriptures of the Christians. He ordered attacks and prosecution of those people who hold on their Christianity belief and not gave out their Bibles. Only about 10 years later in January 313 Roman leader Constantine was in power. He met with Licinius in Milan and they both agreed to grant Christianity full recognition throughout the Empire. The situation

reversed under Constantine and the Roman government financed the multiplication of copies of scriptures instead of destroying them.

The second example is about the early communist control period in China. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), all religious books including the Bible were destroyed. However, the Bible was available just several years after that. Christianity grew pretty fast in the early 80s and 90s inside China.

In conclusion, you need to decide how do you respond to God's word. Do you accept only the portion of the Bible you like and reject the rest? Will you repent when you are convicted? Will you stand firm on God's truth, and against those that try to destroy or humiliate God's word?

Finally, three of the many truths about the Bible have been shown in this passage. Remembering these truths can help us in our faith.