

THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

God's Indestructible Word

TEXT: Jer. 36

Introduction: Her name was Susanna, and she lived a life filled with more tragedy and heartache than most people think possible. In the first 19 years of her married life, she gave birth to 19 children. Eight of them died due to sickness. Another died in an accident. Another was paralyzed.

Her husband was of little help or comfort. He entered long periods of depression and was often absent from their home. One time he was gone for nearly a year. On top of everything else they were dirt poor and their lives mired in debt.

In spite of everything, Susanna was a woman of deep faith in the Lord Jesus and she dearly loved the Word of God. She read it faithfully and taught it to her children. You will recognize the names of two of them: John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, and Charles Wesley, who wrote more than 9,000 hymns and poems in his lifetime, including "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

To all who are mothers and grandmothers, and to all who will become one or both, let me say this. There is nothing of greater value that you may do with those precious ones given into your care than to bring them to faith in the Lord Jesus and instill in them a love for the Bible, the Word of God.

To further that purpose in your life I bring you the message today from Jeremiah chapter 36, God's Indestructible Word.

Have you ever wondered how a certain passage of Scripture came from its inception in the mind of God to the transmitted thought in your mind? Take the book of Jeremiah. Why is a book of his preaching and prophecy Scripture? Chapter 36 of Jeremiah relates why. It is the story of God making and preserving a portion of the Bible.

When Jeremiah was called, there was no mention of writing. He preached for over 23 years and still no mention of writing. But in the 4th year of King Jehoiakim (605 BC) God said, "Jeremiah, write all the words I spoke to you."

Jeremiah called upon Baruch. God spoke to Jeremiah. Jeremiah spoke to Baruch. Baruch wrote the scroll. All this took more than a year.

Because of his preaching of destruction, Jeremiah was barred from the temple. He sent Baruch to read the scroll.

In Dec., 604, A fast was proclaimed, probably because Ashkelon in the Philistine plain had just been destroyed by the Babylonian army. All the people gathered.

Baruch stood in the chamber of Gemariah, in the upper court of the temple near the New Gate. Among the people was Micaiah, Gemariah's son. God touched his heart with these words and he knew the princes of Judah must hear them. Down the temple stairs and thru the winding streets he ran to the secretary's chamber in the king's palace. The princes were somber as they discussed Judah's plight. Micaiah burst in and told them what he heard. Immediately, Jehudi was sent to fetch Baruch and the scroll. Jehudi finds Baruch and brings him. They invite him to sit and read. Baruch reads. The princes are astounded and gripped, "We must tell the king."

"Baruch, how did you write all these words? At Jeremiah's dictation? Go hide; we'll take the word to the king."

The princes went to the winter house of the king and found him sitting before the fire. They told him. He sent for Jehudi and the scroll in the secretary's chamber. Jehudi read, the king cut off the columns of the text and burned them in the fire.. He then sent for Baruch and Jeremiah.

What if he had found, captured, and killed the prophet? We would not have this portion of God's Word. But "the Lord hid them."

Jeremiah 36:27–32 ²⁷ Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: ²⁸ "Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. ²⁹ And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, '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 cause man and beast to cease from here?' " ³⁰ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. ³¹ I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed." ' " ³² Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.

God gave Jeremiah many other words to record. This descriptive account of the writing of a portion of the Bible and God's preservation of it points to many truths we must be confident of today.

I. THE BIBLE IS THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD. "WRITE WORDS I HAVE SPOKEN."

A. This statement is fundamental to our faith.

1. If the Bible is nothing more than the collection of the ideas and thoughts of religious men of the past, it has no word, claim, or authority for today.
2. But if the Bible is truly God's own Word, if the Bible puts in our language and within our understanding the thoughts of God Himself, if it is God's written revelation then
 - a. It reveals the principles by which God judges us and
 - b. It is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed, and opinion should be tried.

Believing that God is the author of the Bible makes all the difference in the world. If you want the answer to a spiritual or moral problem, you can go to His Word.

B. The Bible claims to be the Word of God.

1. "The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Amos. Over 2,000 times the Bible says, "Thus saith the Lord" and "God said..."
2. The Bible speaks with authority. Jesus used it as final authority, "It is written."

C. Modern methods of determining authorship show that God is the author.

Illustration:

1. Stack of books with title pages removed. No indication of author.
2. Examine and find the same message going through and through. Either written by 1 author or authors collaborated.

Bible

Written over 1500 years

Bears names and personalities of 40 men used like Jeremiah to record what God said including kings and peasants, philosophers and fishermen, poets, statesmen, and scholars.

Different places: across 3 continents, wilderness, dungeons, hillsides, palaces, prison, and islands

Different settings: war and peace, joy and sorrow

3 languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

Yet 1 unifying theme: "God's Redemption of Man"

Blends together like colors of a painting, making one harmonious picture.

D. How did God communicate His Word to men?

1. By direct quotation: **2 Sam. 23:2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.**
2. By selection of material.
 - a. Written sources: **Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us,**
 - b. Things experienced: John 20:30, 31; 21:25 "if all were written, world could not contain."
3. By giving power to remember.
 - a. Sermon on the Mount

- b. High priestly prayer
- c. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17)
- 4. By adding material until complete.
 - a. Mark's account, perfectly true, but not complete.
 - b. Add Matthew, Luke, and John – Revelation in its completeness.
 - c. Each like a single picture; together they are complete.
 - d. Now God's written word is complete. Near the end of the last book of the Bible and the last chapter of that book, we read these words of testimony and of warning: **Rev. 22:18-19** ¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Geisler and Nix put it this way:

“The Paradise lost of Genesis becomes the Paradise regained of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is forever opened in Revelation.”

The men God used did not know each other and often were ignorant of the writings of the other. The presence of the unity of the message of the Bible can bring a logical and discerning person to only one conclusion:

God is the author of the Bible.

E. History verifies the accuracy of God's Word.

If the Bible is God's Word, certainly it is accurate. Men have tried to prove it wrong, demonstrate fallacies or mistakes, and show it to not be God's Word, but they have failed. The more we learn, the more we see that the Bible was right after all.

Critics rolled with laughter at the story of the Tower of Babel. Laughter ceased when the greatest of the Babylonian ziggurats was excavated and found to be much older than Babylonia. Babylonian records say the tower was there long before their kingdom and that the name of the builder was Nimrod, which coincides with the Biblical record. (Gen. 10:8, 9; Gen. 11)

For years critics of the Bible pointed to repeated references in the Scripture to a people called the Hittites, yet there was no verification of their existence. Archeological scholarship has long since put them in their place and revealed that the Hittites were one of the most powerful and influential nations of antiquity. The same was true of the Edomites. Today Petra, or “the rock city,” their former capital, is a favorite tourist site.

Thousands of verifications have been made. King Solomon's stables and his seaport at Ezion-Geber. Hezekiah's pool and conduit.

The more we learn, the easier it is to see that God is the author of the Bible.

II. GOD'S WORD MAY BE ACCEPTED OR REJECTED.

A. Jehoiakim

1. The people knew whose word was written.
2. The princes knew whose word was written.
3. Jehoiakim knew whose word was written!
4. But he had become self sufficient.
 - a. He was enlightened.
 - b. He was modern.
 - c. He was king!

He chose to reject God's Word; it cost him his nation and his life.

B. Modern man has a choice.

1. Let us have no delusions of self sufficiency. Recently we have seen how weak and helpless we are. Earthquakes and sunamis in Japan, massive tornados and flooding in the U.S; and what can we do? Nothing.
2. Man can laugh and scoff and ridicule and refuse to believe the principles set down if he wants, but it is only self ridicule.
3. Man can only accept or reject the truths of Holy Scripture.

C. You have a choice.

1. Heresy of unbelief.
2. Heresy of neglect. "Bring mother that grand ole' book she always reads."
Sears Catalog

Regardless of what you or anyone else believes

III. GOD'S WORD CANNOT BE DESTROYED.

- A. Jehoiakim thought he had destroyed it.
- B. Critics who said, "There were no Hittites or Edomites" thought they had destroyed it.
- C. Evolutionists thought they could remove God from the story of creation and find today when they do they are left with more questions than answers.
- D. Couples think they can live together to see if they are fit for marriage, and find they have destroyed their lives.
- E. People think they can abuse their bodies and minds with alcohol and drugs and pay no price stand at the scene of a bloody carnage of loved ones they caused while driving under the influence.

You can accept it or reject it, but you cannot destroy it, alter it, or deny it. God is its author and it will remain. Isaiah said it best.

Is. 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

Conclusion: A young Colombian Girl received a New Testament in her school. She read the New Testament until one day her father caught her reading it...and told her not to read it any more because it was full of lies and fantasy.

But the girl kept on reading until one day her father came home unexpectedly found her with the NT grabbed it from her hands and put it in his pocket.

The father went off to work where he was a mining engineer. Several hours later sirens went off in the community there had been a cave in at the mine. The father was trapped in the mine. The rescue workers took 5 days to finally reach the men, but it was too late. All 31 men died, including the father of this little girl.

Curiously, workers found the man clutching the NT between his praying hands. When they opened the front cover they read a note: "To my daughter: Keep reading this NT, it is true and right, and I will see you one day in heaven."

Then they turned to the back page where the father had signed the commitment card after having said the sinner's prayer.

But that was not the end of the story. Turning the page, there were signed the names of the other 30 workers.

(This illustration came from the Gideons International.)