

Jeremiah chapter 36 is one of the clearest pictures in Scripture of how people respond to the Word of God. Some receive it and tremble, some delay and hide, and some despise it and try to destroy it. But this chapter also shows us something even greater: you can burn the scroll, but you cannot burn the Word of God. God will always have the last word.

Jeremiah 36 – When People Try to Silence God

1. God Commands His Word to Be Written (Jeremiah 36:1–3)

“Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: ‘Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you... even to this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear... that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.’” (Jeremiah 36:1–3)

Jeremiah has already been preaching for about twenty years—since the thirteenth year of King Josiah. Now, during the reign of Josiah’s son Jehoiakim, God tells him: “Write it all down.”

Why? Because God wants His people to hear and turn so that He can forgive.

That is God’s heart. He is not looking for ways to judge us; He is looking for opportunities to show mercy. He says, “It may be that... they will return... that I may forgive.” God is always leaning toward mercy.

Practical application:

- The Word of God is given not to crush us but to call us back.
- God delights to forgive. The moment your heart turns toward Him, He is ready to cleanse.
- Like David in Psalm 32, the very moment we say, “I will confess,” God begins to forgive (Psalm 32:5).

2. Baruch Becomes the Voice Jeremiah Cannot Be (Jeremiah 36:4–10)

“Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord... And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, ‘I am confined, I cannot go into the house of the Lord. You go, therefore, and read from the scroll... in the hearing of the people...’” (Jeremiah 36:4–6)

Jeremiah is “shut up”—confined, restricted, perhaps imprisoned. But God’s Word is **not** confined. If Jeremiah cannot go, Baruch will go.

So on a national fast day, when people from all over Judah have come to the temple to seek the Lord, Baruch stands and reads the written Word of God in the hearing of the people (Jeremiah 36:8–10).

Practical application:

- God always finds a way to get His Word to people.
- If one servant is hindered, God raises another.
- When God gives His Word, He expects it to be publicly proclaimed, not hidden.

3. Some Hearts Tremble at the Word (Jeremiah 36:11–19)

A young man named Micaiah hears Baruch reading and is shaken. He runs to the officials to tell them. They summon Baruch:

“And they said, ‘Sit down now, and read it in our hearing.’ So Baruch read it... Now it happened, when they had heard all the words, that they looked in fear from one to another... And they said to Baruch, ‘Go, hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are.’” (Jeremiah 36:15–16, 19)

These leaders feared the Word. That is the right response. Proverbs says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). They realized: *This is really from God. We must tell the king. And Jeremiah better hide, because the king is not going to like this.*

Practical application:

When the Word of God exposes sin, the right response is humble fear and repentance, not pride and resistance. One mark of spiritual health is that God’s Word still moves you. If we can hear warnings, corrections, and calls to repentance and feel nothing, then our hearts are in danger of hardening.

4. A King Who Tried to Burn the Bible (Jeremiah 36:20–26)

This is the turning point of the chapter.

“So Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king... Now the king was sitting in the winter house... with a fire burning on the hearth before him. And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe’s knife and cast it into the fire... until all the scroll was consumed in the fire...” (Jeremiah 36:21–23)

King Jehoiakim listened to God’s Word... and cut it up. He took a knife, sliced off pieces of the scroll as it was being read, and threw it into the fire. He destroyed the written Word of God piece by piece.

Why? Because he did not like what it said. It spoke of judgment. It confronted sin. It said Babylon would come. He decided: *If I destroy the message, I will not have to submit to it.*

“Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments.” (Jeremiah 36:24)

That is the tragedy—no fear, no repentance, no brokenness. Others pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll (Jeremiah 36:25), but he would not listen. Then he tried to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch—

“But the Lord hid them.” (Jeremiah 36:26)

Practical application:

People still do this—maybe not with a knife and a fire, but in their hearts.

- Some cut out what the Bible says about sin.
 - Some cut out what it says about marriage or forgiveness or loving enemies.
 - Some cut out what it says about Jesus being the only way.
- But editing God’s Word does not change God’s truth. We must bend to Scripture; Scripture does not bend to us.

If I only accept the parts of the Bible I agree with, I am not submitting to God—I am making myself god.

5. God Rewrites What Man Tries to Erase (Jeremiah 36:27–32)

“Now after the king had burned the scroll... the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: ‘Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words... which Jehoiakim... has burned...’ Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch... who wrote on it from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words... and there were added to them many similar words.” (Jeremiah 36:27–28, 32)

This is powerful. The king burns God’s Word, so God says, “Write it again—and add more.”

You cannot silence God. You cannot erase truth. You cannot burn away the Word of the Living God.

Then God sends a word of judgment to Jehoiakim:

- He will have no lasting dynasty on the throne of David (Jeremiah 36:30).
- His body will be cast out, dishonored (Jeremiah 36:30).
- All the judgment God warned about will still come, “because they did not listen” (Jeremiah 36:31).

Practical application:

- Resisting God’s Word does not cancel it.
- Destroying the scroll only brought greater accountability.
- God will always preserve His Word. That is why we can trust Scripture today—God Himself guards what He has spoken.

A Challenge for Believers

This chapter asks us hard questions:

1. How do you respond to God’s Word?
Like the princes—humbled?
Or like Jehoiakim—editing and discarding what confronts you?
2. Are there “verses in the fire” in your life?
Things God has spoken to you—about bitterness, purity, generosity, forgiveness, sharing the gospel—that you have quietly set aside?
3. Do you tremble at His Word?
God said in Isaiah 66:2, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”

Let us return to a posture where the Bible is not a book we judge, but the Book that judges us. Let us become doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22).

An Invitation to Non-Believers

This chapter is not only about Judah—it is about you.

Judgment was coming on Judah because of their sin. God warned them again and again, not because He enjoyed judgment, but because He wanted to forgive (Jeremiah 36:3).

The same is true today.

- *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)
- *“The wages of sin is death.”* (Romans 6:23)

But God, in His love, sent His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sin. He took the judgment you deserved. Then He rose again on the third day, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord (Romans 1:4).

You can reject God’s Word like Jehoiakim. You can cut it up. You can ignore it. But judgment will still come. Or—you can repent and live.

If you want to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, pray from your heart:

“Lord Jesus, I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose again. I turn from my sin and I turn to You. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and make me Yours. I confess that You are my Savior and my Lord. Help me to follow You and obey Your Word. Amen.”

If you prayed that sincerely, God heard you—because He delights to forgive.

Closing Exhortation

Jeremiah 36 reminds us:

- God speaks because He loves.
- God warns because He wants to forgive.
- God preserves His Word, even when people try to destroy it.

So let us be a people who love, honor, and obey the Word of God.

Let us not be like Jehoiakim with a penknife and a fire, but like Baruch with an open scroll and an obedient heart.

And let us remember: the Word of the Lord endures forever (First Peter 1:25).