

JEREMIAH AND JEHOIAKIM: MAN VERSUS THE BIBLE; THE BIBLE WINS

On this our Bible Sunday, we have chosen an appropriate story for our famous/infamous stories of the Bible series. We have our hero: Jeremiah who publishes the Word of God without fear or favor. Psalm 68:11: "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." Then we have our infamous character Jehoiakim, King of Judah. Let us begin.

1. A Generation Gap

Jeremiah 36:1. One of the godliest men in the Bible has to be King Josiah of Judah. Like father; like son does not apply. Through the years, it is heart-breaking when we see a young man or young lady reared up in a good Christian home depart from the teachings and lifestyle. Sadly, as the Bible says, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

For contrast, here is what the Bible says of King Hezekiah: "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses" (II Kings 18:5, 6). Here is what the Bible says about Hezekiah's son, Manasseh: "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel...And Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel" (II Kings 21:2,9b). You cannot get any more opposite than that. Here is some advice to parents whose children have departed from their righteous up-bringing: 1) Don't beat yourselves up. There are no perfect parents. The Bible teaches every person is responsible for his or her choices. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16). God declared that three of the most righteous men on the earth in some situations would not have influence on the youth: "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:20). 2) Pray. God can create faith when there is no faith. Prayer changes things. Prayer changes people. 3) Stay consistent in your Christian testimony. If you

compromise now, you confirm to the prodigal that this Christian lifestyle we have been preaching is not real.

2. A Divine Definition

Jeremiah 36: 1b, 2, 4, 17, 18. Here are just a few verses that espouse Divine inspiration of the Scriptures: I Thessalonians 2:13; I Corinthians 14:37; Luke 1:70; Exodus 24:4; Jeremiah 30:2; Jeremiah 1:9; I Corinthians 2:13.

Here are five theories that some hold to: 1) The ordinary theory states that the writers of the Bible were as inspired as Homer, Tennyson and Browning. 2) The fractional theory states that only parts are divinely inspired. However, the Latin maxim is true, "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus" –"false in one, false in all." Dr. T. Dewitt Talmage wrote. "I never so much as now felt the truth in the entire Bible. I prefer the old robe, which has kept so many warm amid the cold pilgrimage of this life and amid the chills of death. Give me the old robe rather than the thin gauze offered by the wiseacres who believe the Bible in spots." 3) The thermometer theory claims that parts of the Bible are more inspired than other portions. 4) The moral theory declares that the moral and spiritual teachings of the Bible are inspired but the historical elements may be true or may be false. 5) The spiritual illumination theory believes that the Bible was written in a merely spiritually heightened state. We do not hold to any of these theories; we believe, according to II Timothy 3:16, that all Scripture is "Theopneustos," God breathed, which is what "inspired" means.

3. A Reason for the Word

Jeremiah 36:3,7. We see in these two verses the reason God gives us His Word is so that we might repent and be in relationship with Him.

4. A Stirring from the Scriptures

Jeremiah 36:5-20. Jeremiah 36:16 says, "Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words." The Word of God can definitely make someone who is not in right standing with God very uncomfortable. This is one reason some avoid Bible-believing churches. If we are ever to have true revival, we must become saturated in obedience to the Word of God.

5. An Incineration of Inspiration

Jeremiah 36:21-25. King Jehoiakim did not like what he heard, so every time Jehudi read three or four leaves of Scripture, he took his penknife, cut it out and burned it. This attempt to do a way with the Bible continues to this day.

6. The Indestructibility of Infallibility

Jeremiah 36:26-32. Jehoiakim brought judgment upon himself for this horrible sin of attempting to destroy the Word of God. Jeremiah 22:19 and Jeremiah 36:29-31 tells of his despicable death. Jeremiah 36:30b says, "...his (Jehoiakim's) dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat...", which brings to mind, Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." An interesting twist on Jehoiakim's Bible burning is that Jeremiah said, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). Every word that Jehoiakim burned was restored and more infallible words were given besides. So the earthly king was gone, but the words of the Heavenly King abide! "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). The Bible is--true all of it.

Dr. Haldeman said, "Again and again the Bible's funeral services are held. Kind and condescending eulogies are uttered over its past history and its good intent. With considerate hands it is lowered into its grave. But before the critical mourners have returned to their homes, it has risen from the dead, passed with surprising speed the funeral coaches and is found--as of yore--in the busy centers of life, thundering against evil, offering consolation to the sorrowing and hope to the dying." Consider in closing this great old poem:

The Anvil Of God's Word

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he; then with a twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages, skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed - the hammers gone.

by John Clifford

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