

# The Word of the Lord Stands Forever

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     that we read, a chapter in which we read of the King Jehoiakim, the King burning Jeremiah's scroll. Back in the early 16th century, one of the greatest English reformers and certainly one of the greatest Bible translators, William Tyndale translated and published the New Testament.

It was translated into the English from the Latin text. Anyway, the Catholic Bishop of London was determined to destroy every single copy of Tyndale's work, every single English Bible the bishop was going to destroy and burn.

And it happened. Actually, the bishop bought up large numbers of the Testaments. He held a public burning and the Testaments were thrown into the fire.

And William Tyndale couldn't believe that that kind of action could happen against the Word of God from somebody who claimed to follow God.

And Tyndale was so aghast at the burning of the Testaments that he actually exclaimed about the bishop. He said, he burned the New Testament.

[ 1 : 2 1 ]     He said, he burned the New Testament. And here we read in Jeremiah 36, another burning of the Word of God.

The burning of God's Word that was given to the people, that burning by the King. The King, the King of Judah who would not listen to the infallible, inerrant Word that Jeremiah had been given from God to give to the people.

This King wouldn't listen to that Word. He was trying to silence God's Word by burning it piece by piece by piece. You know, thinking that, you know, that action would somehow remove the Word of Judgment from the land, from the people, from himself.

But remember this, God's Word can't be destroyed. And just as we see here in this chapter, one copy of the scroll in which God's Word of Prophecy was written, that one copy had been burned, what do we read at the end of the chapter?

Another copy was made with even more words added. Telling us, showing us, of the indestructibility of God's Word.

[ 2 : 3 9 ]     Try us, the opponents of God's Word will seek to remove it from the land. Try us, those who hate even the Word of God being in any place of public, the public meet and so on.

No, God's Word remains. God's Word cannot be destroyed. God's Word is that Word that stands forever. Because, you see, we don't need to go back to 1526, during William's Tindale's time.

We don't need to go back hundreds of years to see attempts made and actions given to destroy the Word of God. We see it today.

We see it in the media. We see it even in our churches. We see it in our places of learning. We see it even in universities where attempts are made to silence anything that disagrees with the policies of diversity and inclusion.

And, of course, inclusion meaning the exclusion of the Word of God. Remember, God's Word stands forever. And I pray that as we look at this chapter today, that we'll actually be encouraged.

- [ 3 : 52 ] That, yes, as we see here and as we look around, we're reading there and seeing as it were the burning of God's Word. Where we're seeing the removing or the attempt to remove the Word of God from the land.
- Be encouraged. Because that will not succeed. Just look at other lands where authorities are trying to remove God's Word only for the Word to increase. And to do so more and more in these countries.
- So, as we turn to this section of God's Word here in Jeremiah 36. Be encouraged. Yes, despite, as we see here, despite the actions of an evil king. Be encouraged.
- Be encouraged by what we see here of the actions of faithful men of God. Men such as Jeremiah, such as his secretary Baruch and others who we'll mention in a minute.
- Be encouraged. Because God is sovereign. And God will not allow His Word to be removed. Certainly not altogether. So, let's take a look at this passage.
- [ 4 : 56 ] Three headings that you've got in your notes there. Let's look firstly. Well, before we look firstly at the believer's faithfulness in the face of hostility. Let's get the background. We need to get the context.
- Because remember, as we read at the start of this chapter and we saw last week. Jeremiah the prophet's been given this task by God to proclaim a warning. A warning of judgment against the people of Judah.
- Because remember, the people have been so disobedient against God. I mean, time and again, Jeremiah has been warning the people that, you know, they can't remain spiritually stubborn against God and not face God's punishment.
- And in this latest word from God to the people, God informs Jeremiah that he's to write on a scroll the warnings. With the threat of the invading army from the north, the army from Babylon.
- Which God says will come and destroy Judah if the people persist in the rebellion against him. So Jeremiah is given this word and he dictates it to Secretary Baruch.
- [ 6 : 03 ] He faithfully writes it down and then he's given the task to read the word in the temple. Because Jeremiah, remember, has been banned from going to the temple. So Baruch does read from the scroll.
- Everything that God has spoken concerning judgment to come unless the people repent. So that's the background. So what about the passage?
- Well, we read the whole chapter. It was a fairly long chapter. At first, perhaps, we might have thought, oh, this is just a whole lot of names with a very dramatic conclusion at the end.
- But remember, this is God's word. It's his word to us. To instruct us. To tell us about him. To give us knowledge about God. To help us the more appreciate his sovereign purposes.
- That his purposes are fulfilled despite the opposition of men. And we see here then, we see the faithfulness of God's people in the face of hostility. So that's surely for our encouragement.
- [ 7 : 06 ] And it's for your encouragement. For you to remain steadfast in your witness and obedience. Even when it hurts. Even when, humanly speaking, you don't know what the outcome of your faithfully standing for truth is going to be.
- When you don't know how people are going to react to your words. When you tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ. When you tell them of the warnings that God's word gives us.
- Warnings against turning our backs on God and refusing to repent. Well, what about that faithfulness? The believer's faithfulness in the face of hostility.

Well, if you who are reading this together, you'll notice there are actually a number of faithful servants mentioned here. Well, of course, there's Jeremiah the prophet.

He's been God's faithful prophet. He's been proclaiming God's word to the people for over 20 years. And he's been hated for it.

[ 8 : 07 ] And then there's Baruch, the man we were looking at last week. This well-educated member of the Jewish nobility. This man whose dreams of high public office are going to be dashed when the Babylonians come.

But then there's the names of these officials in verse 12 and verse 25. And when you look at what's said of them, they are faithful. They're genuine in their desire to protect Jeremiah and Baruch from the king's wrath.

And they even try and persuade the king to stop what he's doing, to stop cutting the word and burning it. But I want particularly to focus on Baruch and these officials.

Because there are important lessons for us to learn. Particularly concerning, you know, our responsibilities before God and before man. And above all, to see God's faithfulness towards the servants, even in times of threat and danger.

So, let's take Baruch, as we see from verse 9. Here's a man, he's not a prophet, he's not a priest, he's not an official.

[ 9 : 14 ] He's not an official, certainly in the king's service. He's an educated scribe whose gifts have been used in God's service. He's acted as a writer, a reader and a speaker of God's word.

He's been gifted and he's not going to hide his light. He's going to use the talents that God has given him in God's service. Even though he'll face indifference and even opposition.

And notice from verse 9, notice how he uses his gifts. He reads, he reads from the scroll of God's word. And actually does it on two separate occasions. And he reads the whole thing in full.

Not one word is omitted. All that he's been given to say, he says. And he repeats. Firstly to this vast congregation in the temple.

And then to a smaller group of the king's officials. And remember what he's reading. He's reading words of judgment. He's reading of grave matters.

[ 10 : 18 ] Firstly to the people in the temple. You see there from verse 9. And then verse 15 to the king's officials. So he's reading to people from all walks of life. He's reading to all sections of society.

Who must hear God's word proclaimed. That word that tells of God's anger against sin. Words that, yes, will sound offensive to all who don't want to listen to God's word of judgment.

I don't think it was easy for Baruch to read from the scroll. It's never comfortable to proclaim God's judgment. But it falls on those who've been given a particular work to do.

To proclaim the whole counsel of God. Including God's words of warning. Warning of judgment to come against all who refuse to come to him in repentance.

It's far easier, humanly speaking, to say nice things to nice people. Humanly speaking, it's far easier to go with the flow. By going with the flow when the flow is heading for a lost eternity.

[ 11 : 25 ] It's an error of the greatest magnitude. We're not called to be comfortable Christians. We're called to die to the world. Even when that dying means taking that stand for truth.

For the word that stands forever. And remember this. Something I think we can easily forget. It's through the great love of God.

That God warns us of his judgment to come. It's in God's love that God has revealed the consequence of our turning our backs on him and his word. When we prefer that broad road that leads to destruction.

It's love. It's out of God's love that he gives these warnings. It's out of God's love that he's given even to you this morning. A word of warning.

So don't put your hands to your ears. Don't try and close out these warnings. Take your hands away from your ears. And open your heart to him. And listen and heed and obey his word for the sake of your precious soul.

[ 12 : 31 ] Well, Baruch certainly was faithful in proclaiming difficult truths. But proclaiming them for the well-being of those who would hear him speak the very word of God.

But actually, he's not the only faithful person in this passage. Because we mentioned others. Certainly in verse 12 and 25. And they were certainly no enemies of Jeremiah and Baruch.

They want to hear the word that Baruch read in the temple. They want to hear it for themselves. And what do we find in verse 16 when they hear the word read to them? They're afraid.

They fear. Because they know that this is God speaking. And that God is giving a warning. And if that warning isn't heeded, then there's going to be destruction in the land.

Disaster's going to come. So the king's going to have to hear these words. Because the concern is kingdom. And it's the response of these officials to Jeremiah and Baruch.

[ 13 : 31 ] And then later when they try and stop the king burning the scroll. That really we need to pay some attention to. Look firstly at verse 17. They ask Baruch about the composition of these words.

How did you write these words down they say to him? In other words, was it him? Well, they all knew who he was. Jeremiah. So in other words, the officials want to make sure that the words that Baruch read aren't his own.

But they're from God. They're from God through his prophet Jeremiah. So they all knew Jeremiah. They all knew he was God's prophet. So if Jeremiah dictated these words, then they must come from God.

And if they've come from God, they're going to be true. They know. They know that the king, or certainly the king in all likelihood is not going to accept them. You may know this has happened before.

You go back to chapter 26. And you read of another prophet. The man called Uriah. And when the same king heard Uriah proclaim against the city of Jerusalem and against his kingdom.

[ 14 : 36 ] The king had Uriah put today. And it was only the quick thinking actions of an official, another official, who actually saved Jeremiah's life at that time from a similar happening.

Well, as you see here, the quick thinking of other officials certainly ensured that Jeremiah and Baruch are kept safe from the king's wrath. And the king hears these words.

Because you see, they're concerned. These officials, they're concerned for the safety of God's spokesmen. They're going to risk their lives to support Jeremiah and Baruch. But after all, Jeremiah certainly had risked his life on many occasions.

And he'd do it again. But these officials have a desire for the sake of God's truth. And yes, they're telling them to hide.

Jeremiah and Baruch are going to be out of the way for some time. And if you look at the chronology, it seems that it's actually for some years that they were out of the way, as it were. But they're going to be preserved. They're going to be strengthened.

[ 15 : 41 ] They're going to be kept for further work ahead that God's going to bless them with for his sake. One of the aspects of the course I'm teaching at ETS concerns the great German reformer, Martin Luther.

Luther himself had stood against many, many mighty opponents in his defense of Scripture alone. Scripture alone is the only rule to direct us how we might glorify God.

And Luther faced battle after battle against the powers that be. At one point, he was declared an outlaw. His life was in real danger. And it was actually some friends of his that kidnapped him to help him to hide in the famous Wartburg Castle.

Where he stayed for ten weeks. He took a new identity. He became known as Sir George. Or Knight George. So, was this going to be the end of Luther?

Was this going to be the fizzling out of the Reformation? Absolutely not. Because in that castle, Luther translated the New Testament into German from the original Greek.

[ 16 : 51 ] Something that had never happened before. And that testament in itself helped others translate the New Testament and the Bible into the languages of the common people.

So, God used Luther's stay in that castle to further the cause of the Kingdom of God. So, from a situation that seemed hopeless and helpless, God enabled His Word to flourish.

Luther there in that confinement in that castle. To others, it might have seemed almost the end. No. God using that time so that His Word would be translated to be understood by the ordinary peasant as much as the educated elite.

And you know, there will be times when God's people are sidelined. Maybe through illness. Maybe just rest. Rest from the battle. Giving time to recuperate in spirit.

Giving time to wait on the Lord. To be strengthened for more tasks ahead. And I'm going to suggest that it's for God's people to help in that way.

[ 18 : 01 ] To give brothers and sisters in Christ times of rest. Now, ministers have sabbaticals. It's given to help the minister recuperate. To recover even.

To be given a particular time of rest. To do particular work in God's service. I know one congregation that even gives office bearers sabbaticals. But you know, all Christians need rest.

Jesus rested. Yes, Jesus rested in that Sabbath rest. But He rested at times away from the crowds. No soldier's going to fight continually, battle after battle, campaign after campaign, unless he's not going to be fit for service.

So please, allow God's servants times of rest. Times of leave. So that they'll be the more equipped for the further battles ahead in God's time. Jeremiah certainly would face more battles ahead.

After this particular time of hiding. Hiding from this king. Hiding from a king who showed faithlessness. In the face of holiness.

[ 19 : 09 ] You see in verses 20 to 26. I think this is one of the saddest sections in the whole of the Old Testament. This king. This king, the son of a godly king.

This king who's turned his back on the word of God. That now he thinks nothing of hearing God's word bit by bit. Bits that he's offended at. The parts he can't stomach.

Because they speak against his ways and his will. And he's so hateful of the holiness of God that he's actually prepared to cut the word that God's given.

Cut it bit by bit. And throw it into the fire. You know when we read at the start of the chapter there. We read his name. Jehoiakim son of Josiah.

Again that brings to us the tragic aspect of this story. Because of course Josiah was that king. That good king. He brought in many reforms in the worship of God.

- [ 20 : 09 ] The same king when the law of Moses was found in the temple. The king tore his clothes as that expression of humility before God. And now some years later his son tears.
- Well he doesn't tear his clothes in humility and repentance. But he tears the word of God. And you know even in the context of today. Pray for children of our parents.
- Our godly parents and grandparents. Pray that they don't turn from the God of their fathers. Pray that they'll be faithful to the testimony of previous generations.
- Generations who love the Lord. Who love the very word of God. Because you know when we see children of godly parents turn from God.
- In utter disobedience. It grieves. It grieves. It grieves the heart of all who truly love God. The Lord and his word.
- [ 21 : 09 ] You know when the word is treated with contempt. Greatest. We see here Jehoiakim treat the word of God with such scorn. I mean just picture the sea. There's his official.
- This man Yehudi. This man. It's not Baruch now. Of course he's hiding. Yehudi reads a section from the scroll. The king simply goes up to the reader with the knife.
- And chops it. Little by little. Chops it. Bit by bit. But he's giving this demonstration of his hatred for the word of God. And even when the officials beg him. You know please stop.
- He continues. Because he's got such complete determination to be rid of the message that God's giving. He keeps up this pattern of behavior until the whole scroll's burned.
- I mean what we're seeing here is really quite shocking. Because you see this is the king of Judah. This is the Lord's covenant king. This is the king who owes his position to God.
- [ 22 : 09 ] To be king over God's people. But this king wants to be independent of God. This king wants to be autonomous. He wants to do it his way.
- Not God's way. And it's that autonomy of thought. That independence of thought and conduct. That we see so widely today. Even in our own churches. Even in our governments.
- Even in our media. Even in ourselves. You know when we hear the cry. We will not have this man to rule over us. We won't have this man to be king. We won't have the Lord Jesus as king.
- We'll be kings ourselves. We'll decide how we should live. Not God. Not the Bible. But by the way that we think. Isn't that the tragedy of modern man?
- That's the same tragedy that caused King Jehoiakim. To do what he did against the scroll of God. The tragic actions that we see so often around us. When God's word is sidelined.
- [ 23 : 08 ] For that autonomy of living. That excludes God from every area of life. You know that this very physical action that the king did here against the scroll.
- Is the kind of behaviour that actually happens more than we realise. Even on our own day. Some of you I'm sure know the actor Sir Ian McKellen. He's very famous. When he goes to hotels.
- He rips out parts of the Gideon's Bibles that are there in the hotel. He rips out pages that he doesn't like. That offend his orientation.
- And then there are the gender neutral advocates. Even in other denominations. Who don't want to see God referred to in the masculine. Don't want to call him him. Him.
- His. Or he. Whatever. Then there are the cults. Who want to speak of Jesus as a God. Instead of God. Is that tearing out of scripture.
- [ 24 : 09 ] What God has placed in his word. So that we know him. But then. You know this desire just to rip these bits out. But don't. Don't we often even do the same ourselves. No.

Don't. Aren't we so often selective in what we read. That in effect we can be cutting off God's word. The word bits we find difficult. Remember what Paul told Timothy. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

That's what our confession affirms. Of every one of the 66 books of the Bible. All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. And we ignore these books.

From the book of books. We ignore them at our peril. Because God won't be mocked. That's what we see finally. And briefly. At the end here. At the end of the passage.

We see a saviour's faithfulness. In the face of hatred. Because you see the remainder of the story. Tells of a faithful saviour.

[ 25 : 08 ] The saviour. Yes. Of Jeremiah. The saviour of Baruch. The saviour of the world. The king commands. What do we read here?

The king commands us men to seize Jeremiah and Baruch. Because these are the ones who brought the message. God's message to. But what do we read in verse 26? We read that the Lord hid them.

Notice. But the Lord. In other words. Despite the intentions of all who were hostile to God and the servants. The Lord. Had the upper hand. God's not going to be thwarted.

Jeremiah and Baruch. Have got further work to do. God's going to keep them safe for that work. He's going to use them again for his service. And we rejoice.

At our Lord and saviour. We rejoice. At our saviour. The Lord Jesus. Who delivers his people. For his service. God had saved Jeremiah and Baruch.

[ 26 : 06 ] For further service. If you know the Lord Jesus as your saviour. Remember he saved you. He saved me. For his service. And done so by his grace. By his love.

A love that we don't deserve. So that you. Yes are hidden. But hidden in him. Hidden in Christ. To honour him. To glorify him. To follow him. To follow in faithfulness.

Even against a bitter enemy. Well the faithfulness of God the saviour. Here is seen not just in his hiding. These. These two servants. But in the provision of his word.

What do we find? A new scrolls prepared. Jeremiah and Baruch. Again. These are the two. Who are the. The means by which God will speak to the people. The scrolls written on. And now there's actually more information put on it.

The extra words are now. Particularly condemning the king. They tell of that terrible judgment. That awaits the king. Because of his burning the scroll of God's word. Why?

[ 27 : 05 ] God's not going to be mocked. And yes. As we've been saying. Throughout this morning. The word of God is. Still today being dismissed. It's been destroyed.

But it's not going to go away. And try as others might do. What King Jehoiakim did. God's word will remain. It will stand.

And it does stand forever. These years. We were looking at here. The. What? 2,600 years ago. So.

They were dark days then. They were dark days now. But be assured. God's word will not fall. God's word will not be so destroyed. Never to return. No. Because it's the living word of God.

It's God's word. So it's for you. It's for me. To read it. To love it. To live by it. To know God through it. To know yourself through it. To tell others of it. So don't be ashamed of God's word.

[ 28 : 05 ] You. Know him through his word. Follow the Lord Jesus each day. Each day that you learn of him. You learn of him through his word. May you know and love that word.

And be amongst those who delight to know that word. And to tell others of the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus found in this word. To live by it. Go with it.

Love it. As you love your saviour. Amen. Let us pray. Lord bless. We pray your word to us. May we delight in it. May it not be a closed book.

But rather may we truly so live by it. That word. That gives light to our hearts. That word that opens our eyes. So that we may see wonderful things.

From it. That word. Go before us. Lord we pray. Bless our fellowship. One with another. Go before us. For the remainder of this day we pray. We ask these things. In Jesus name. Amen.

[ 29 : 09 ] Well let's close. In Psalm 119 again. In page 165. Singing from verse 129 to 136.

Your statutes Lord are wonderful. So I obey them from the heart. Your words as they unfold give light and truth to simple minds in part. 129 to 136.

To God's praise.