

Reading Guide for Jeremiah 36, 45

The Scroll is Written (36:1-8)

The first part of this narrative takes place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was 605/4 B.C. Earlier that same year (May/June), Nebuchadnezzar had defeated the Egyptian army at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Babylon then moved south to take the territory that had been controlled by Pharaoh Neco since the death of Josiah (609 B.C.). It may have been this impending Babylonian invasion that prompted Jeremiah to dictate the word of the Lord to Baruch, giving Judah one last chance to repent and turn to the Lord for deliverance. The scroll was to be read on a fast day, when the people would be gathered in the temple.

The Scroll Read and Destroyed (36:9-26)

It was not until the ninth month of Jehoiakim's fifth year (December, 604 B.C.) that a fast was declared, and, therefore, the scroll could be read. The occasion or reason for the fast cannot be determined with any certainty. After Baruch read the scroll in the temple, it steadily made its way to the king through various hearings. This is reminiscent of the book of the Law taken and read to Josiah after it was found in the temple (2 Ki 22). Unlike Josiah's positive response, however, Jehoiakim responds by burning the scroll and calling for Baruch's arrest.

- a) *First Reading: To the People at the Temple (36:9-10)*
- b) *Second Reading: To the Officials in the Secretary's Chamber (36:11-19)*
- c) *Third Reading: To the King in His Court (36:20-21)*
- d) *Result: Jehoiakim Burns the Scroll (36:22-26)*

The Scroll Rewritten (36:27-32)

Although Jehoiakim tried to thwart God's purposes by destroying the scroll, God's word endures. What God has purposed will be accomplished. To make this clear, the Lord commands Jeremiah to rewrite the scroll with an added indictment against Jehoiakim. The king's refusal to repent will not only mean punishment to him and his offspring, but spells the end of the Davidic kingship until the birth of Jesus.

- a) *Command to Rewrite the Scroll (36:27-28)*
- b) *Oracle Against Jehoiakim (36:29-31)*
- c) *The Scroll is Rewritten (36:32)*

Baruch's Complaint and Response (45:1-5)

This brief episode is linked to the events in chapter 39, as it takes place around the same time and provides some insight into Baruch's emotions. Perhaps in anticipation of the persecution that will be directed at him as a messenger of God's word, Baruch offered a complaint to the Lord, as Jeremiah had done several times before. The Lord's response to Baruch's cry of pain and unrest is that the word carries with it so much power and consequence that one's own personal desires do not and must not outweigh it.

- a) *Baruch's Complaint, as reiterated by the Lord to Jeremiah (45:1-3)*
- b) *The Lord's Response to Baruch, delivered to Jeremiah (45:4-5)*