

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

God commands Jeremiah to write down in one roll or volume all the predictions he had uttered against Israel and Judah, and all the surrounding nations, from the day of his vocation to the prophetic office, that the house of Judah might have abundant warning of the dreadful calamities with which their country was about to be visited, if not prevented by a timely repentance, Jeremiah 36:1-3. The prophet employs Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, to write from his mouth all the words of the Lord, and then to read them publicly upon a fast day in the Lord's house, Jeremiah 36:4-8. A general fast is proclaimed in the following year, viz., the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim; upon which occasion Baruch, in obedience to the prophet's command, reads the words of Jeremiah to all the people at the entry of the new gate of the temple, Jeremiah 36:9, Jeremiah 36:10. The princes, hearing of this, send for Baruch, who reads the roll to them; at the contents of which they are greatly alarmed, and solemnly resolve to give information to the king, at the same time advising both the prophet and his scribe to hide themselves, Jeremiah 36:11-19. Jehoiakim likewise having sent for the roll, Jehudi reads to him a part; and then the king, though advised to the contrary by some of his princes, having cut the leaves, throws the whole into the fire, Jeremiah 36:20-25, and orders Jeremiah and Baruch to be seized; but they could not be found, because a special providence of God had concealed them, Jeremiah 36:26. Jeremiah is commanded to re-write his prophecies, and to denounce the judgments of God against the king who had destroyed the first roll, Jeremiah 36:27-31. Baruch accordingly writes from the mouth of Jeremiah a new copy, with numerous additions, Jeremiah 36:32.

## Verse 1

And it came to pass in the fourth year - About the end of this year, see Jeremiah 36:9. This discourse also bears its own date, and was probably delivered at a time when the people enjoyed peace, and were about to celebrate one of their annual fasts.

## Verse 2

Take thee a roll of a book - Take a sufficient quantity of parchment; cut and stitch it together, that it may make a roll on which to write the words that I have already spoken, that they may serve for a testimony to future generations. The Jewish rolls, several of which now lie before me, were made of vellum, or of sheep-skins dressed in the half-tanned or Basil manner. These were cut into certain lengths, and those parts were all stitched together, and rolled upon a roller. The matter was written on these skins in columns or pages. Sometimes two rollers are used, that as the matter is read from the roll in the left hand, the reader may coil it on the roller in his right. In this form the Pentateuch is written which is read in the synagogues.

## Verse 3

It may be that the house of Judah will hear - It was yet possible to avert the judgments which had been so often denounced against them. But in order to this they must -

1. Hear what God has spoken.

2. Every man turn from his evil way.

3. If they do so, God graciously promises to forgive their iniquity and their sin.

## Verse 4

Then Jeremiah called Baruch - This man, so useful to the prophet, and so faithfully attached to him, was by office a scribe; which signifies, not only a writer, but also a man in office; a chancellor, secretary, etc., a learned man; one acquainted with laws and customs.

## Verse 6

Upon the fasting day - A day when multitudes of people would be gathered together from all parts to implore the mercy of God. This was a favorable time to read these tremendous prophecies.

## Verse 7

Present their supplication - "Let their supplication fall," that they may fall down before God, and deplore their sins.

## Verse 9

In the ninth month - Answering to a part of our December.

#### Verse 10

In the chamber of Gemariah - He was one of the princes of Judah. See Jeremiah 36:12.

#### Verse 17

How didst thou write all these words? - At his mouth? - So the text should be pointed. They wished to know whether he had not copied them, or whether he wrote as Jeremiah prophesied.

#### Verse 19

Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah - They saw that the king would be displeased, and most probably seek their lives; and as they believed the prophecy was from God, they wished to save both the prophet and his scribe; but they were obliged to inform the king of what they had heard.

#### Verse 22

Winterhouse - A warm apartment suited to the season of the year, (December), when in Palestine there is often snow upon the ground, though it does not last long. A fire on the hearth - a pan or brazier of burning coals. This is the case to the present day. In cold weather the rich burn wood in brass or earthen pans, placed in any part of the room; the indigent burn sticks on the floor.

#### Verse 23

When Jehudi had read three or four leaves - Rather columns; for the law, and the sacred Hebrew Books, are written in columns of a certain breadth.  $\text{לַחֹתָם}$  (delathoth), signifies gates or openings between column and column, or between section and section.

He cut it with the penknife -  $\text{כַּסֵּפֶה שֶׁלִּכְתָּב}$  (bethaar hassopher),  $\text{כַּסֵּפֶה}$  the knife of the scribe, properly enough penknife.

And cast it into the fire - To show his contempt for God's words.

#### Verse 25

Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah - Three of the princes wished to save the roll, and entreated the king that it might not be burnt. They would have saved it out of the fire, but the king would not permit it to be done.

#### Verse 26

But the Lord hid them - They had, at the counsel of some of the princes hidden themselves, Jeremiah 36:19. And now, though a diligent search was made, the Lord did not permit them to be found.

#### Verse 28

Take thee again another roll - There was no duplicate of the former preserved; and now God inspired the prophet with the same matter that he had given him before; and there is to be added the heavy judgment that is to fall on Jehoiakim and his courtiers.

#### Verse 30

He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David - He shall have no successor and himself shall have an untimely end, and shall not even be buried, but his body be exposed to the open air, both night and day. He who wishes to hide his crimes, or take away the evidence which is against him, adds thereby to his iniquities, and is sure in consequence to double his punishment. See the threatening against Jehoiakim, Jeremiah 22:19 (note), and the note there.

#### Verse 32

There were added - many like words - All the first roll, with many other threatening and perhaps more minute declarations which were merely of a temporary importance and local application; and the Holy Spirit did not think proper to record them here.