

## September 14

**Scriptures:** Read Jeremiah 35 & 36

**Key Verse:** “write all the words that I have spoken that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their sin.” (Jeremiah 36:2, 3)

### Overview

Chapter 35 reveals the obstinate disobedience of the people of Judah which Jeremiah exposed during the reign of Jehoiakim, several years before the events in the preceding few chapters. The nomadic clan of the Rechabites had been forced to take refuge within the city walls of Jerusalem because of the many raiding bands that had come to attack and plunder them (cf. 2 Kings 24:2). The Lord used a test of the Rechabites’ loyalty and obedience as an object lesson to show the people of Judah how seriously they had sinned against Him, that they might feel guilty, be put to shame, and hopefully repent.

The Rechabites were a clan of Kenites whose forefather was Jonadab, the son of Rechab (1 Chron. 2:55). Jonadab was zealous for the Lord and had helped King Jehu eradicate Baalism from Israel (2 Kings 10:15-23). Three hundred years later, Jonadab’s descendants were still living in the way he had commanded them; a way that was honouring to God and pleasing to Him. By living as nomads, roaming about in wilderness areas with their herds of goats and sheep, they were not influenced by the corruption in the city. By abstaining from strong drink, they stayed far from the idolatrous cults in which intoxicating drinks played a major role. The Nazarites, which they may or may not have been, took a similar vow, which signified their consecration to God (Num. 6:1-21).

Believers today, who want to lead consecrated and obedient lives to God must likewise be separated from this world, for we too are as sojourners, just passing through, until we receive our eternal inheritance. God showed how pleased He was with the Rechabites and even their forefather Jonadab, by promising them that in every generation He would have Rechabites as His children, and even some who would stand before Him as a holy priesthood because of their faith in the Lord Jesus.

In chapter 36, we see that the inspired Word of God will ultimately prevail over any attacks of the enemy. We also see the way in which we have come to receive much of our Holy Scripture (36:17-18). Jeremiah dictated the words as the Holy Spirit led him, and they were recorded by a man who was more than just a secretary; he was a godly, faithful, courageous, and learned man by the name of Baruch (meaning “blessed”), whom we have already seen to be as a trusted friend of Jeremiah (cf. 32:12-16). He not only wrote down Jeremiah’s words but also preached them, which took tremendous boldness and trust in God. The Lord desired the written word to be an instrument whereby the people would come to repentance (36:3).

It appears that Jeremiah had been forbidden to go into public places to speak his prophetic words. The rulers were likely afraid that his words, predicting the coming invasion and destruction by the Babylonians, would weaken the people’s morale, for at the time they were already threatened by the Babylonians. Jehoiakim proclaimed a religious fast, likely to boost the people’s morale,

but the Lord found these insincere and external fasts to be an abomination. God used the opportunity of the people's gathering, however, to declare His words, which are likely the words we find recorded in chapter 25 (compare 36:1; 25:1). We do not read here the reaction of the people, but most assuredly it was that of unbelief (cf. 25:3). The elders ("princes"), however, showed that they respected Jeremiah (likely the same group of elders we read of in 26:16-17, 24); but as Baruch noted, they did not react as they should have, with mourning and repentance, as did Josiah when he heard the words of the Lord (36:24; cf. 2 Kings 22:11).

Though the wicked King Jehoiakim burned the scroll in an attempt to prevent Jeremiah's prophecies from influencing the people, and though he tried to find him and Baruch, possibly to kill them as he did Urijah (26:20-23), his plans did not succeed. The Lord Himself hid His servants from the wicked king (36:26), and the Lord once again inspired Jeremiah to rewrite the same words, with the addition of more words, which likely included the prediction of Jehoiakim's disastrous end; a judgment he brought upon himself for his despising the truth of the Lord (36:30-31; cf. Prov. 13:13; Ps. 50:16-21). Even today, judgments will come upon those who have tried to destroy the Word of God and those who have cut away the truth by twisting or even rejecting the words of Jesus recorded in the gospels. True believers, however, have a solid faith built upon the Rock and therefore they will not be shaken by the attempts of the world to destroy the biblical truth (cf. 2 Thess. 2:11-15; 1 John 4:4-6; Rev. 22:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Matt. 5:18-19; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

## **Prayer**

Father in heaven, teach us to hear what You are saying to us through Your prophets of today. Help us to forsake the lure of worldliness and offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Your work.