

Cutting Up God's Word

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3:00 PM

In Jeremiah 36:2, the prophet was commissioned by God to "take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah." Baruch the scribe "wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord" (vv. 4) and because Jeremiah was unable to go into the temple, Baruch was sent to perform the task of proclaiming the words of the scroll unto the Israelites in the temple (vv. 5-8).

In the fifth year of Jehoiakim's reign, during the fifth month, Baruch "read...in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the ears of all the people" (vv. 10). A man by the name of Michaiah heard the words of the Lord and sent for the princes (vv. 11). After the princes heard Baruch read the scroll, they told the king and urged him to listen to the words of the Lord (vv. 14-20).

"So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber, and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king" (vv. 21). How did the king respond? According to verse 23, "it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the earth."

Can you believe it? The king of Judah actually cut up the word of God and burned it! How could anyone be so disrespectful and cold? That's about as low as anyone can go...to take the precious words of the Living God and destroy them without hesitation.

Most people would read this story in Jeremiah 36 and react with similar shock...but little do they know, they do the same thing with the word of God. Allow me to illustrate.

Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and 1 Peter 3:21 says "baptism doth also now save us." These verses clearly teach that baptism is a part of God's plan of salvation. In other words, one must be baptized if they want to be saved! Yes, faith and repentance precede baptism, and yes, we are saved by the blood of Christ, but those facts do not lessen the significance of these two verses. Other verses such as Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 teach that we are "baptized into Christ." The scriptures leave no room for any honest person to doubt. Yet a majority of the religious world says that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. How are these people any different than Jehoiakim? He cut up God's word because it didn't suit his fancy, and that's exactly what people do today with the above verses. They may not literally cut these verses out of their Bibles, but in essence, that's exactly what they do.

But it's not only the purpose of baptism that gets shredded. Consider also Matthew 16:18. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church." This verse teaches that the church was eternally purposed by God (Eph. 3:11). In other words, it was not an afterthought. It was a part of God's plan all along to establish the church...and this church was built by Christ, and purchased by the blood of Christ (Ac. 20:28). Furthermore, Jesus didn't promise to build a whole slew of denominations. He promised to build a church, His church. That's why Paul says there is just one church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). So where does this leave the denominations of men? It leaves them outside of the will of God, and Matthew 15:14 says that "every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." While

people today say "join the church of your choice," the message of the Bible is "join the church of *God's* choice!" So denominational folks are in essence cutting these verses out of their Bibles, just as Jehoiakim cut up God's word!

Let's consider one more example--the kingdom. Jesus said in Mark 9:1, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Some of the people that heard these words would still be alive when the kingdom was established! That means it had to have been set up in the first century...in that generation. According to Acts 2:30, Jesus ascended into heaven to reign as king, and He is called "King of kings" in 1 Timothy 6:15. The Colossians had been transferred into the kingdom in the first century (Col. 1:13-14), and John said that he was in the kingdom in Revelation 1:9. While many people today argue that Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth when He returns, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:24-25, "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." When Jesus returns, He will give the kingdom back to the Father, and He will end His reign. This is the opposite of what "religious scholars" today are saying. So yet again, the word of God is shredded and burned up.

These are only three of the many, many issues we could examine. Just like Jehoiakim, religious people today disrespect God's word by cutting it up and throwing it into the fire. What they don't like they simply discard. If only we would cease the hypocrisy. Let's not condemn Jehoiakim until we have examined our own attitude towards the scriptures!