

CHAPTER 36

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 36

This chapter gives an account of an impious action of King Jehoiakim's burning the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies read unto him, and the consequence of it. The order to write this roll, the time when, the contents and use of it, are in (²⁸⁹¹Jeremiah 36:1-3); the writing of it by Baruch, the order of the prophet to read it to the people on such a day, with the view he had in so doing, (²⁸⁹⁴Jeremiah 36:4-7); the reading of it by Baruch to the people first, (²⁸⁹⁸Jeremiah 36:8-10); then to the princes, being sent for by them, upon a report made to them, (²⁸⁹¹Jeremiah 36:11-15); the king being acquainted with it, Jehudi was sent to fetch the roll, who read it to the king, (²⁸⁹⁶Jeremiah 36:16-21); who having heard part of it, burnt it, notwithstanding the intercession of some of his princes to the contrary, (²⁸⁹²Jeremiah 36:22-25); and who also ordered the apprehension of Jeremiah and Baruch, who could not be found, (²⁸⁹⁶Jeremiah 36:26); upon this a new roll is ordered to be written, (²⁸⁹⁷Jeremiah 36:27,28); which was done with some additions to it, respecting the destruction of the land, and the people in it, by the Chaldeans; and particularly the death of the king, and his want of burial, (²⁸⁹³Jeremiah 36:29-32).

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,* etc.] Eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem:

[that] this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord; the following order to write in a roll all his prophecies he had hitherto delivered:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 2. *Take thee a roll of a book,* etc.] A roll of parchment, which being wrote on, and rolled up, was called a book; but books, in those times, did not consist of leaves cut and stitched together, and bound up, as our books are, but sheets of parchments being written upon, were glued together, and then rolled up; hence such writings were called volumes; which name we still retain, and give to books, though the same practice is not used:

and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah; for though Israel was carried captive before the times of Jeremiah, and his prophecies were chiefly directed against Judah; yet as there were some of the ten tribes mixed with them, they were included in these prophecies, and therefore mentioned:

and against all the nations; such as Egypt, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, (^{-249B5}Jeremiah 9:26);

from the day that I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day; that is, from the time the Lord called him to prophesy in his name, which was in, the thirteenth year of Josiah, who reigned one and thirty years; and this being the fourth year of Jehoiakim, it must be the three and twentieth year of his prophesying, and the a course of full two and twenty years; (see ^{-240D2}Jeremiah 1:2 25:3); now all the sermons, discourses, and prophecies, he had delivered out against one and another, during this time, must all be written in one roll or book, that that they might be read. Kimchi says their Rabbins^{f687} would have it that this roll was the book of the Lamentations, called by them “Megallah”, or roll.

Ver. 3. *It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them*, etc.] Not that there was any uncertainty in God as to the knowledge of future events, any more than a change in his purposes: he had purposed to bring evil upon them, which purpose would not be disannulled; and he knew that the Jews would not hearken to the prediction of it, or be concerned about it, and repent of their sins, and reform; but this method he was pleased to take, as being, humanly speaking, a probable one to awaken their attention, and which would leave them inexcusable:

that they may return every man from his evil way; repent of it, and reform:

that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin; by not inflicting on them the punishment and ruin threatened: where repentance is, remission of sin is likewise, and both are the gifts of divine grace, when spiritual and evangelical.

Ver. 4. *Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah*, etc.] One of his disciples, and whom he had before made use of in the purchase of a field of his uncle’s son, and to whom he gave the evidence of the purchase, (^{-249D2}Jeremiah 32:12); he was probably a better penman than the prophet, or

a quicker writer; however, he thought proper, for quicker dispatch, to make use of him as his amanuensis:

and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book; it seems that Jeremiah had not committed any of his prophecies to writing; and yet it cannot be thought that by the mere strength of memory he could repeat every discourse and prophecy he had delivered in the space of two and twenty years; wherefore it must be concluded, that that same Spirit, which first dictated the prophecies to him, brought them fresh to his memory; so that he could readily repeat them to Baruch, who took them down in writing on a roll of parchment.

Ver. 5. *And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I [am] shut up,* etc.] In prison, according to Jarchi; but this is not likely, for then there would have been no occasion for an order to take him, (^{287b}Jeremiah 36:26). Grotius thinks he was obliged by the king's order to stay at home; possibly he might be restrained by the Spirit of God, or had not freedom in his own mind to go abroad; there might be a restraint, an impulse upon his spirit, by the Spirit of God. Some think he was under some legal pollution, which made him unfit to go into the temple: for it follows:

I cannot go into the house of the Lord: labouring either under some bodily infirmity, or ceremonial defilement, or was forbidden by the king. What was the true cause is not certain; but so it was, that either he was discharged, or disabled, or disqualified, from going into the house of God.

Ver. 6. *Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth,* etc.] The roll being finished, Baruch is ordered to read it, which was the end of writing it: and since the prophet could not go himself, he sends another in his room, to read

the words of the Lord in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house, upon the fasting day; the day of atonement; the great fast, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; and so a different time of reading from that in (^{287b}Jeremiah 36:9). This was a very proper time to read it in, when the people were fasting and humbling themselves before the Lord; though some think this was a fast proclaimed by Jehoiakim, to avert the vengeance threatened by the Chaldean army:

and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities; to keep the feast of tabernacles; as they did five days after the

fast, or day of atonement; and this seems to be the second reading of the roll enjoined.

Ver. 7. *It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord*, etc.] Or, “perhaps their supplication will fall”^{f688}; they will present it in an humble manner before him; alluding to the prostration of their bodies, and dejection of their countenances, in prayer:

and will return every man from his evil way; not only pray for mercy, but repent of sin, and reform; without which mercy is not to be expected:

for great [is] the anger and fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people; a very sore judgment, no less than the utter destruction of their city, temple, and nation.

Ver. 8. *And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him*, etc.] Here follows Baruch’s obedience to the prophet’s commands; which he considered no doubt as the will of the Lord, who directed the prophet to give the orders he did; and which he punctually observed, in all respects, as to things, time, and place:

reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord’s house; the prophecies of Jeremiah, which came from the Lord, and which he had transcribed into a book from the mouth of the prophet; these he read before the people in the temple, a first, if not a second time, before the reading of it recorded in the following verses.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month*, etc.] This was a different time of reading the book from the former, enjoined by the prophet, and performed by Baruch, (²⁸⁸⁶Jeremiah 36:6,8); that was on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; this was in the fifth year of his reign, and in the ninth month of the year, a year and two months after the former, as it should seem; but Jehoiakim’s fifth year beginning in the seventh month after the day of atonement, this ninth month is to be reckoned not from the beginning of his fifth year, but from the beginning of the ecclesiastical year in the spring; so that this was but two months after the former reading:

[that] they proclaimed a fast before the Lord: this was not an ordinary fast, or a common annual one of divine appointment, which came in course, but an extraordinary one, upon some particular occasion. Some

think it was on account of the dearth, drought, and famine in the land, (²⁴⁴⁴Jeremiah 14:1); and others, which seems most likely, take it to be on account of the calamity threatened the nation by the Chaldean army. This fast was not in course, but was proclaimed by the order of the king and his council; and it may be at the request of the people, at least they, greed and consented to it, and indeed are represented in the text as the proclaimers; for so the word “they” is explained in the following clause, which should be rendered, not

to all the people, but even “all the people in Jerusalem”^{f689},

and all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem: these proclaimed the fast; they applied to the government for one, or however obeyed the king’s orders, and published and proclaimed a fast; not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those who came from other cities on business, or for safety, or for worship.

Ver. 10. *Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord*, etc.] The prophecies of Jeremiah he had taken from him in writing on a roll of parchment; these he read in the temple, in a part of it, after described:

in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe; not a scribe of the law, or an officer of the temple, but the king’s chancellor or secretary of state; for this is the title, not of Gemariah, who had a chamber in the temple here mentioned, in which Baruch read his roll, and was an officer there, but of Shaphan, as the accents show, and as his title runs elsewhere, (¹²²¹⁹2 Kings 22:9,10); which chamber was

in the higher court; it looked into it, which some say was the court of the priests; but into that Baruch, not being a priest, could not enter: rather, according to Dr. Lightfoot, it was the court of Israel, on the same ground with it, though parted from it, and divided from the court of the women by a wall, to which they went by an ascent of fifteen steps; so that it might with great propriety be called the higher court:

at the entry of the new gate of the Lord’s house; the eastern gate, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it: here Baruch read his roll,

in the ears of all the people; that were in the court; so that being in a chamber, he must read out of the chamber window, or in a balcony before it.

Ver. 11. *When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan,* etc.] Who was present when Baruch read in the roll to the people in his father's chamber; but his father was absent, and was with the princes in the secretary's office at the same time, as (^{2BR2}Jeremiah 36:12) shows: the son seems to be a more religious man than the father, unless he was placed as a spy, to hear and see what he could: however, when he

had heard out of the book all the words of the Lord: which were spoken by the Lord to Jeremiah, and which Baruch read out of the book he had written in his hearing; for it is a vain conceit of Abarbinel, that Micaiah did not hear these words from the mouth of Baruch reading, but out of the book which he looked into; for then it would have been said, which he had "seen" or "read" out of the book, and not "heard".

Ver. 12. *Then he went down into the king's house,* etc.] The royal palace, which was not upon the mountain on which the temple stood, but lay lower, and therefore Micaiah is said to go down to it; with what design he went thither is not certain, whether out of ill will to Jeremiah and Baruch, or out of good will, being affected with what he had heard, and desirous that some steps might be taken by the government to prevent the calamities coming upon them, according to these prophecies; which latter seems most probable, since no charge or accusation is brought by him; and since his father, with others, to whom he gave the account afterwards, interceded with the king that the roll might not be burnt, (^{2BR2}Jeremiah 36:25); however, immediately after he had heard the roll read, he went to the king's house:

into the scribe's chamber; the secretary's office; formerly his grandfather Shaphan's, now Elishama's:

and, lo, all the princes sat there; some of them are mentioned by name:

[even] Elishama the scribe; or secretary; the prime minister, the principal secretary of state, and therefore named first, in whose chamber or office they were:

and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah; who this person was, or his office, is not known; he is nowhere else made mention of; and who his father was is not certain:

and Elnathan the son of Achbor; the same that Jehoiakim sent to Egypt to fetch Uriah from thence, (^{2BR2}Jeremiah 26:22);

and Gemariah the son of Shaphan: who was Micaiah's father, and in whose chamber Baruch read the roll:

and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah; of this prince also no account is given elsewhere:

and all the princes; the rest of them, who were either members of the great sanhedrim, or courtiers; it appears from hence that this court was very profane and irreligious; for though they had proclaimed a fast, to make a show of religion, or at the importunity of the people; yet they did not attend temple worship and service themselves, but were all together in the secretary's office, very probably about political affairs.

Ver. 13. *Then Micaiah declared all the words that he had heard*, etc.] The sum and substance of them; for it cannot be thought that he should retain in his memory every word that he had heard; though, as it is very probable he was much struck and affected with what he had heard, he might remember and declare a great deal of it:

when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people; and this he also declared, no doubt, that what he had heard, and then related, were read by Baruch out of a book; as is clear from the princes sending for Baruch, and ordering him to bring the roll along with him, as in (~~2884~~ Jeremiah 36:14).

Ver. 14. *Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi*, etc.] Who, according to Junius, was the king's apparitor: he is described by his descent,

the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi; him the princes sent, being not one of their body, but a servant at court:

to Baruch; who was very probably still in the temple, where Micaiah left him:

saying, take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come; that is, to the king's palace, to the secretary's office, where they were, and bring the roll along with him he had been reading to the people, and of which Micaiah had given them some account; and which had such an effect upon them, as to make them desirous of hearing it themselves;

so Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them; which showed great boldness and intrepidity in him, to go at once, without any hesitation, to court, and appear before the princes with his roll,

which contained things so very disagreeable to the king and his ministry; but as he had not been afraid to read it publicly before the people in the temple, so neither was he afraid to read it before the princes at court.

Ver. 15. *And they said unto him, sit down now*, etc.] Or, “pray sit down”^{f690}; they received him very courteously, and treated him with great humanity, and showed much respect to him, in beseeching him to sit down by them:

and read it in our ears; as he had done in the ears of the people, with an audible voice, clearly and distinctly, that they might be able to hear it, so as to understand it:

so Baruch read [it] in their ears; without any fear or dread, though in the king’s palace, and before an assembly of princes; nor did he excuse himself on account of weariness, having just read it to the people; or upbraided the princes with not being in the temple, where they might have heard it.

Ver. 16. *Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words*, etc.] In the roll or book read by Baruch; they heard them read patiently, which was what the king afterwards would not do:

they were afraid both one and another; both good and bad; for there were some of both sorts among them: or, “a man to his friend”^{f691}; they looked at one another, and knew not what to say to each other, as men amazed and astonished; they trembled at what they heard, the threatenings were so terrible, and the calamity threatened so great; and they consulted together what they should do with this roll, or what course they should take to avert the threatened vengeance, and particularly whether they should acquaint the king with it or not; and which they thought the safest and most prudent part to do:

and said unto Baruch, we will surely tell the king of all these words; this they said, not to terrify Baruch, or out of any ill will to him; but partly for their own security, lest they should incur the king’s displeasure, should he come to the knowledge of it any other way; and chiefly hoping it might have some effect upon him, to cause a reformation; though of this they were dubious, and rather feared it would exasperate him; and therefore desired that Baruch and Jeremiah would hide themselves, (²⁸³⁹Jeremiah 36:19); this was the sense of some of them, of those that were good men among them, and wished things were otherwise than they were.

Ver. 17. *And they asked Baruch,* etc.] The following question, which may seem at first sight an odd, needless, and trifling one, as some have called it:

saying, tell us now, how didst thou write all these words at his mouth? this question does not regard the manner of writing them, whether with ink or not, for that they could see with their eyes, and yet Baruch's answer seems to have respect to this, as if he so understood them; nor barely the matter of them, as whether it was the substance of what was contained in the roll that Jeremiah dictated, and that only, leaving it to Baruch to use what words he would, or whether the express words were dictated by him; but rather it seems to have regard to the possibility of doing it: by the question it appears, that Baruch had told the princes that the prophet had dictated all these things to him, and he had taken them down in writing from his mouth; now they wanted more satisfaction about the truth of this matter. It was a difficulty with them how it was possible for Jeremiah to recollect so many different discourses and prophecies, delivered at different times, and some many years ago, and so readily dictate them to Baruch, as fast as he could write them; wherefore they desire he would tell them plainly and faithfully the truth of the matter, how it was, that so they might, if they could, affirm it with certainty to the king; since, if this was really fact which he had related, these prophecies originally, and the fresh dictating of them, must be from the Spirit of God, and would certainly have their accomplishment.

Ver. 18. *Then Baruch answered them,* etc.] At once, without any hesitation, plainly and fully:

he pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth; that is, the Prophet Jeremiah delivered by word of mouth, not the substance only of this roll, but the express words of it, and everyone of them, and that clearly and distinctly, without any hesitation, or premeditation; by which it is plain it was by the Spirit of the Lord he did it; neither matter nor words were Baruch's, but were exactly as they were delivered:

and I wrote [them] with ink in the book; as they saw with their eyes, and which was the manner of writing with the Jews so early; Baruch had no further concern in this matter than to provide pen, ink, and parchment, and to make use of them as he did, just as the prophet dictated and directed him.

Ver. 19. *Then said the princes unto Baruch*, etc.] Being satisfied with his answer:

go hide thee, thou and Jeremiah, and let no man know where ye be. Some of these princes at least seem to be good men, and believed what was read to them, and had a value for the prophet and his scribe, and were concerned for their welfare; and knowing the furious temper of the king, and his little regard to the prophets; and fearing he would resent what had been so publicly read to the people, provided against the worst; and in point of prudence advised Baruch and his master to abscond, and not let anyone know, no, not their nearest friends, where they were, lest they should be betrayed; nor did they, the princes, desire to know themselves. Jeremiah might be in prison, as some have thought, at the first reading of the roll, which was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and be at liberty now, which was in the fifth year; (see ^{<2811>}Jeremiah 36:1,9).

Ver. 20. *And they went in to the king into the court*, etc.] The inner court, the king's court, where he usually resided; though very probably they did not rush in at once; but first sent to know whether the king could be spoke with, or would admit them, they having something to communicate to him; which they might do by the person in waiting, by whom they were introduced:

but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; they did not take it with them, but left it in the secretary's office; and, no doubt, put it up safe in some chest or scrutoire, as something valuable, and not to be exposed to everyone; or to be thrown about, torn, or trampled on, as a book of no use and value: very probably it was with the consent of Baruch that it was left with them: and this was a point of prudence in them not to take it with them when they went to the king:

and told all the words in the ears of the king; that is, the sum and substance of them; for it cannot be thought they should remember every word in the roll; but the main of it they did, and rehearsed it in a very audible manner.

Ver. 21. *So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll*, etc.] The same person the princes sent to Baruch to come to them, and bring the roll with him, (^{<2814>}Jeremiah 36:14). This the king did, out of curiosity, and to satisfy himself of the truth of what the princes said; and by this it appears they had

told him of the roll, which contained what they had given him a summary of, and where it was:

and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber; or, “out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe”; who knew where it was, being present at the reading of it in the secretary's office, and saw where it was laid; or, however, was directed by the secretary where it was, and might have the key of the chest or scrutoire given him in which it was laid:

and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood by the king: as he doubtless was ordered; and which he did so loudly, clearly, and distinctly, that the king and all the princes could hear; which princes were those who had heard it before, and were come to the king to acquaint him with the substance of it; and who stood by the side of the king, or about him, in honour to him; though there might be also others besides them, who were before with the king, and waiting on him; and Abarbinel thinks that other princes distinct from those that went to the king are meant. When it is said that Jehudi read the roll in the hearing of the king and princes, it must be understood of a part of it only, and not the whole; as (^{<2B73>}Jeremiah 36:23) shows.

Ver. 22. *Now the king sat in the winter house, in the ninth month*, etc.] The month Cisleu, which answers to part of November, and part of December; and so was the midst of winter, and a proper time for the king to be in his winter house; though, as this was a fast day, it would have been more proper for him to have been at the worship of God in the temple, (^{<2B1D>}Jeremiah 36:9). This winter house probably was a winter parlour, as distinguished from a summer parlour, (^{<47B1>}Judges 3:20); and both might be under the same roof, or parts of the same house; only the one might be more airy and cool, and the other more close and warm. Kings had their summer and winter houses; (see ^{<41B5>}Amos 3:15); this circumstance is mentioned for the sake of what follows, the burning of the roll; and accounts for there being a fire at hand to do it:

and [there was a fire] on the hearth burning before him; there was a stove, or some such vessel or instrument, in which a large fire of wood was made, at which the king sat to keep himself warm while the roll was reading, and about which the princes stood.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves*, etc.] Either three or four of the breadths of parchment, which were

glued together, and rolled up; or three or four of the columns in those breadths. The meaning is, he had read a few of them. The Rabbins^{f692} would have it, that three or four verses in the book of the Lamentations are meant:

he cut it with the penknife; that is, he cut the roll to pieces with a penknife he had in his hand, or lay near him. It is difficult to say who it was that did this; whether Jehudi that read the roll, or Jehoiakim the king that heard it; most interpreters understand it of the latter; but the connection of the words carries it to the former; for the nearest antecedent to the relative he is Jehudi; though it is highly probable he did it at the king's command; or, however, saw by his countenance and behaviour that such an action would be grateful to him; and that he was highly displeased with what had been read, and could not hear any longer with patience:

and cast it into the fire that [was] on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that [was] on the hearth; that is, he cast it into the fire, and there let it lie, until it was wholly consumed; a very impious action, to burn the word of God; a full evidence of an ungodly mind; a clear proof of the enmity of the heart against God, and of its indignation against his word and servants; and yet a vain attempt to frustrate the divine predictions in it, or avert the judgments threatened; but the ready way to bring them on.

Ver. 24. *Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments*, etc.] They were not struck with horror at such an impious action as the burning of the roll; nor afraid of the judgments and wrath of God threatened in it; nor did they rend their garments in token of sorrow and mourning on account of either, as used to be when anything blasphemous was said or done, or any bad news were brought. The Jews from hence conclude, that whenever a man sees the book of the law torn or cut to pieces, he should rend his garments^{f693}. The persons here meant are not the princes that first heard the roll read in the secretary's office, for they were afraid, (²⁸⁶⁶Jeremiah 36:16); unless they now dissembled in the king's presence, or had shook off their fears; however, if they are included, three must be excepted, whose names are mentioned in (²⁸⁶⁵Jeremiah 36:25); and those who are more especially designed are expressed in the next clause:

[neither] the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words; not all that were in the roll, for they only heard a part; but all that were in that part, which was enough to make them fear and tremble; but they were

hardened in their sins; and by the hardness and impenitence of their hearts treasured up wrath against the day of wrath. These servants of the king seem to be those in waiting, and not the princes that came to him; however, they were not all of this complexion and character, since it follows:

Ver. 25. *Nevertheless, Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah,* etc.] Three of the five princes mentioned in (²⁸⁸²Jeremiah 36:12);

had made intercession to the king, that he would not burn the roll; or suffer it to be burnt; this they did either at first, as soon as the roll was brought, that if the king should not like it, yet they besought him that he would not destroy it; or rather when they saw what Jehudi was going to do with it, either by the express order, or at the connivance of the king; then they humbly entreated that such an action might not be done, which gave them a secret horror, though they might endeavour to hide it as much as possible:

but he would not hear them; or he would not receive it of them, as the Targum; that is, their supplication and intercession; but either cast the roll into the fire himself, or permitted Jehudi to do it; nor would he suffer it to be taken out till it was all consumed.

Ver. 26. *But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech,* etc.] Or, “the king’s son”, as the Targum; though it rather seems to be the proper name of a person, one of the king’s servants; since it is not probable he would send his own son on such an errand; and had he, he would rather have been called his own son than the king’s son; besides, Jeconiah, who succeeded him, seems to be his eldest son, and yet he now could not be more than twelve years of age; whereas this Jerahmeel must be a man grown; and had he been an elder son, as he must, he would have succeeded him, unless it can be thought that he died before his father:

and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; in order to bring them before the king, or to imprison them, or put them to death, for which they might have the king’s warrant; the one for prophesying, and the other for writing out and reading his prophecies; though Baruch may be called a scribe, not for being the amanuensis of Jeremiah; but because he was one of the scribes of the law, or doctors of the people:

but the Lord hid them; the princes advised them to hide themselves, and they did, very probably in a house of some of their friends; but this would not have been sufficient, had not the Lord took them under his protection; there was no doubt a special providence concerned for them; but by what means this preservation was is not known. Kimchi suggests that these messengers sought for them in the very place where they were, and could not find them; and conjectures that the Lord set darkness about them, or weakened the visive faculty of those that searched for them, that they could not see them.

Ver. 27. *Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah*, etc.] In the place where he was hid; the Lord knew where he was, for he hid him, and therefore could send his word to him:

after the king had burnt the roll; either with his own hands, or had ordered it to be burnt, or connived at the burning of it:

and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah; hence the Jews^{f694} gather, that when a man sees the book of the law burnt, that he is bound to rend his garments twice; once for the burning of the paper or parchment, and again for the burning of the writing; but no other is meant than the roll, in which the prophecies were written, Baruch took from the mouth of Jeremiah:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 28. *Take thee again another roll*, etc.] Or a piece of parchment; or rather several pieces of parchment glued or rolled up together:

and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burnt; just as when the two tables of the law were broken, two others were made, and the same laws written on them; and so here the same Spirit of God, which brought to the mind of the prophet all his former discourses and prophecies, so that he could readily dictate them to Baruch, could and did renew them again; wherefore Jehoiakim's burning of the roll signified nothing: all attempts to destroy the word of God are in vain; they always have been, and will be; for the word of the Lord endures for ever.

Ver. 29. *And thou shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah*, etc.] Or, "concerning"^{f695} him; since the prophet was hid, and he was in quest of him; nor was it safe for him to appear in person before him; though this

may be understood as what should be put into the second roll, and in that he addressed to him:

thus saith the Lord, thou hast burnt this roll; or “that roll”; or had suffered or ordered it to be burnt, giving this as a reason for it:

saying, why hast thou therein written; what the king would have to be a great falsehood, and which he thought never came from the Lord; but was a device of Jeremiah, to whom he ascribed the writing of them, though it was Baruch’s, because dictated by him:

saying, the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? by killing some, and carrying off others, so that the destruction should be complete. He takes no notice of himself and his family, as if his concern was only for the nation; and that he took it ill that anything should be said which expressed the ruin of that, and might dishearten the inhabitants of it.

Ver. 30. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, of Jehoiakim king of Judah,* etc.] Or, “concerning”^{f696} him; for Jehovah is not here said to be “the Lord of Jehoiakim”, though he was, being King of kings, and Lord of lords; but as speaking concerning him, and threatening him, as follows:

he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; that is, none of his issue that should reign after him, or succeed him in the throne of David and kingdom of Judah; for his son Jeconiah reigned but three months, which is reckoned as nothing, and could not be called sitting upon the throne; and, besides, was never confirmed by the king of Babylon, in whose power he was, and by whom he was carried captive; and Zedekiah, who followed, was not his lawful successor, was brother to Jehoiakim, and uncle to Jeconiah, and was set up by the king of Babylon in contempt of the latter; and as for Zerubbabel, he was no king, nor was there any of this family till the Messiah came:

and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. The sense is, he should have no burial but that of an ass, (²²²⁸Jeremiah 22:18,19); should be cast into a ditch, and be exposed to the heat of the sun in the daytime, and to nipping frosts at night, and so putrefy and become nauseous; and though the body would be insensible of it, yet would it be very reproachful to the character of a prince, and shocking to any to behold; and very disagreeable and dreadful for himself to hear and think of.

Ver. 31. *And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity*, etc.] In cutting the roll pieces, and burning it, as Abarbinel interprets it; which either was done by himself, or by his order, and with his connivance; and at which perhaps his sons were present, and expressed a pleasure in it; and his servants that stood by assented to it, excepting three; nor were they afraid of the judgments of God for it, nor in the least shocked at it, (^{2Rm2}Jeremiah 36:24,25); though this may be understood of all their iniquities they had been guilty of, the singular being put for the plural:

and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; the sword, famine, and pestilence; the destruction of their land, city, and temple; and their captivity in Babylon:

but they hearkened not; to what was said to them, neither in the first nor in the second roll.

Ver. 32. *Then took Jeremiah another roll*, etc.] Of parchment; several sheets joined together, which made up a roll or volume:

and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who was by office a public notary or scribe of the law, as well as the amanuensis of the prophet:

who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt in the fire; not one was lost; all were recovered again, through the fresh inspiration of the Holy Spirit, under which Jeremiah dictated the selfsame things in the same words to Baruch again; so that the king got nothing by burning it, but an addition of guilt, and a heavier denunciation of wrath and vengeance, as follows:

and there were added besides unto them many like words; of the same nature and argument, of the threatening kind more especially. The Rabbins^{f697}, who take the roll to be the book of Lamentations, very triflingly observe, that the first roll had only the three alphabets, in the first, second, and fourth chapters that the addition is the treble alphabet, in the third chapter the whole of the fifth chapter. Here it may not be amiss to insert the testimony of Eupolemus^{f698}, an Heathen historian, concerning Jeremiah and his prophecies in the times of Jehoiakim.

“Joachim, (for so he calls him,) in his times Jeremiah the prophet prophesied, being sent of God, to take the Jews sacrificing to a golden idol, called by them Baal, and to declare unto them the

calamity that was coming upon them; but Joachim would have laid hold on him, and burnt him alive; then he (the prophet) said that with those sticks they should prepare food for the Babylonians, and that they should dig canals from the Tigris and Euphrates when carried captive; wherefore, when Nebuchadnezzar king of the Babylonians heard what was prophesied by Jeremiah, he besought Astibares, king of the Medes, to join his forces with him; and having gathered and joined together the Babylonians and Medes, a hundred and eighty thousand foot, and a hundred and twenty thousand horse, with ten thousand chariots, first destroyed Samaria, Galilee, Scythopolis, and the Jews that inhabited Gilead; and then marched to Jerusalem, and took alive Joachim king of the Jews; and having taken out the gold, silver, and brass in the temple, sent it to Babylon, excepting the ark and the tables in it, for this remained with Jeremiah;”

compare with this (~~3078~~Jeremiah 22:18 25:1-27:22 ~~1241~~2 Kings 24:1-4).