***Jeremiah 36:1-15 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2“Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. 3It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” 4Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord which He had spoken to him. 5And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I am confined, I cannot go into the house of the Lord. 6You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written at my instruction, the words of the Lord, in the hearing of the people in the Lord’s house on the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities. 7It may be that they will present their supplication before the Lord, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord has pronounced against this people.” 8And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the Lord in the Lord’s house.***

***9Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10Then Baruch read from 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 upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the Lord’s house, in the hearing of all the people. 11When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the book, 12he then went down to the king’s house, into the scribe’s chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people. 14Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, “Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come.” So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15And they said to him, “Sit down now, and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read it in their hearing.***

We’re with Jeremiah tonight, again in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, just as we were the last time. This is the year 605 BC. We recall that Nebuchadnezzar was threatening and that God has already warned Judah by many prophets and in various ways. Theologians generally agree that this was at or near the end of the siege by Nebuchadnezzar. This would place it near the end of the 4th year. Chapter 36 is likely a follow through on what we studied in chapter 35. Jeremiah is bringing to the men of Judah the word of the Lord, concerning their disobedience and the coming judgement.

 Verse 1 *Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:* Jeremiah now receives the word of the Lord. Jeremiah does not speak of the siege, but instead prepares for Baruch, a scribe, to address an assembly of people gathered in Jerusalem from surrounding cities. This indicates strongly that the siege has ended.

 Verse 2 *“Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day.* In those times, the manner of recording or writing was on long rolls of parchment. In Luke 4:18-19, we know that Jesus read from a scroll of Isaiah. Reading from a scroll would have been very familiar to the people as they gathered in the Temple. Jeremiah is instructed to take a scroll, fit to be written on, blank in other words, and *write therein all the words that I have spoken against Israel and Judah –* Jeremiah prophesied against both Israel and Judah. Though Israel had already been taken into captivity, Jeremiah is to record their sins just as Judah’s. This warns Judah with the example of the justice God delivered upon Israel. But the warning is not just for Israel and Judah, but *against all the nations –* We know, from Jeremiah 25:15-16, that all nations will drink the wine of wrath from God. *From the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah –* Write the revelations that God has given to him for the last 22 years of his ministry. God wants his prophecies recorded, so that the truth of them might be recorded as God brings them to pass. No one can say – Jeremiah wrote them down after the fact, as they will be recorded and read to the people before they come to pass.

 Verse 3 *It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”* Perhaps, it may be, that the house of Judah will hear and see the examples and turn and repent. God has complete knowledge and knows that the people of Judah will not repent, but He is giving every opportunity. He does not take free will. The people will know, as they hear, that they have been given the opportunity and still refused.*That I may forgive their iniquity and their sin –* God wants restoration and relationship. God seeks to forgive. We must seek forgiveness. The shortcoming is not on God’s part, but on mans.

 Verse 4 *Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord which He had spoken to him.* Baruch was a faithful disciple of Jeremiah’s. He served as a secretary/scribe all the years of Jeremiah’s ministry, until Jeremiah’s death. Recall with me that Baruch is writing down what Jeremiah speaks from his mouth. It’s not limited to the last few years but covers 22 years. Jeremiah was divinely enabled to recall all that he spoke for those 22 years. God undoubtably brought these things to his remembrance and enabled Baruch to take them down as dictated. This is a work of the Spirit of God.

 Verses 5-6 *And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I am confined, I cannot go into the house of the Lord. 6You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written at my instruction, the words of the Lord, in the hearing of the people in the Lord’s house on the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities.* Jeremiah is confined in some way, though we don’t know if it was prison or some other kind of restraint. Baruch is to go therefore and read. There is a day that has been appointed as a national fast, by Jehoiakim. This would have been a National Day of Prayer and fasting to avert some calamity from the land. It could have had to do with the Chaldeans, or it may have had to do with some natural calamity. Regardless, this will draw many people from a wide area to the Temple and Jeremiah knew this. He chose this day that Baruch will read from the scroll the writings of Jeremiah. It would have probably been read twice, as was the practice of that time, to allow as many people as possible to hear. Baruch would have read openly these prophecies and reminded the people of their evil and God’s merciful goodness.

 Verses 7-8 *It may be that they will present their supplication before the Lord, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord has pronounced against this people.” 8And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the Lord in the Lord’s house.* It may be that the people will prostrate themselves in supplication and submission before God, falling to their knees in humble repentance. *Great is the anger and fury* – this has the idea in Hebrew of heavy judgement and wrath, as a consequence of the evil ways that the people have been following willfully. We are reminded that prayer and supplication are the ways that the wrath of God is turned from the people. We saw this in the book of Jonah, when the people repented and God turned from His wrath and did not destroy Ninevah.

 Verses 9-10 *Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10Then Baruch read from 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 upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the Lord’s house, in the hearing of all the people.****In the fifth year*** *–* It was customary for the Jews to hold fasts in memory of great calamities. Examples can be found in the book of Zechariah. chapters 7 and 8. Calamities such as Nebuchadnezzar taking Jerusalem the first time, the Temple being burned, and the memory of the siege of Jerusalem. *Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord –* The House of the Lord did not just include the sanctuary, but all of the extended Temple complex. *In the chamber of Gemariah the scribe –* This chamber would have been located in the great outer court, near the Eastern Gate. Baruch likely read from a window overlooking this area of a balcony, so as to be heard most clearly. Many entered through this gate, so his audience would have been very large. Jeremiah, by God’s Spirit, knew this and instructed Baruch accordingly.

 Verses 11-15 *When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the book, 12he then went down to the king’s house, into the scribe’s chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people. 14Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, “Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come.” So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15And they said to him, “Sit down now, and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read it in their hearing.* ***When*** *Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard –* Shaphan’s family were great men in the court. They were well respected and very close to the king. He heard and *went down into the king’s house –* Michaiah may have had good motives, or malicious motives. It’s unknown his intent. Regardless, *then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard –* He declared the substance of what he had heard from Baruch. *Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi –* These princes that heard sent a messenger commanding Baruch to appear before them. These may have been in part Sanhedrin. Baruch was instructed to bring the scroll with him as well so he could read the scroll in their hearing. *And they said to him, “Sit down now and read it. So Baruch read it –* Baruch shows great faithfulness and courage. He is now standing before the council in the king’s house reading the words which threaten heavy judgements and wrath, not only on all the people, but specifically the king and his court. Jehoiakim was known as a king with a vindictive spirit, who persecuted the prophets of God. Baruch is not afraid but boldly proclaims what Jeremiah the prophet has spoken over the last 22 years. He reads the prophecy faithfully in the hearing of these princes, knowing that they likely did not have good intentions toward him, but malicious motives in mind.

 And so we leave Baruch this evening, as he faithfully reads the scroll to this audience. God is seeking repentance and a restoration of relationship. It’s like the princes are seeking a cause to silence Baruch and Jeremiah. God has other plans. In Matthew 10:17-20 Jesus tells us- *But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.* ***18****You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.****19But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you****.* Baruch knew that it was not he, but God speaking through Jeremiah and ultimately through him. He remained faithful. Likewise, we must remain faithful as we speak as witnesses for Jesus. We may be delivered to those in power, wishing to persecute us. We stand firm. It is not us, but the Spirit of the Father who speaks in us.