

Jer. 26:1 ¶ In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying,

Jer. 26:2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:

Sometimes I wish Jeremiah's prophecies were recorded chronologically. The prophecy of this chapter is dated after the death of Josiah in the beginning of the reign of his son Jehoiakim—approximately 609 BC.

Jeremiah was instructed to go to the temple and proclaim God's word to all the cities of Judah as represented by those who came to the temple to worship. Several sources observe that this probably occurred in conjunction with a feast day, a day when many throughout Judah would have come to the temple to worship. Point is made that the LORD intends for ALL of his words to be heard; Jeremiah was not to leave out a single word.

I believe that is God's intention for those who are pastors in the church today—to proclaim the whole counsel of God. When only part of God's word is taught, the people suffer. It's like choosing to testify at a trial only according to the facts that promote a specific conclusion—not necessarily the truth. If the truth is what is being sought, one need not fear presenting all the available testimony. This principle is declared in other parts of scripture.

Deuteronomy 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Proverbs 30:5–6 "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

Revelation 22:19 "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Jer. 26:3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

This message is actually one resulting from God's mercy and grace. He is declaring through Jeremiah that if the people will repent of their evil doings, His judgment against them will be deferred.

Scripture is full of examples that show the heart of God toward the sinner as expressed by Ezekiel and Peter.

Ezekiel 18:32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

Jer. 26:4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,

Jer. 26:5 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened;

Jer. 26:6 Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Even as grace and mercy are extended, the LORD is clear regarding the consequences of rejecting Him. He has been faithful to send His servants the prophets to urge the people to listen to YHWH and follow Him in obedience. They have stubbornly refused to pay attention to the prophets. If they choose to continue in their wicked ways and refuse to repent, the LORD is going to make the temple like Shiloh and the city of Jerusalem a curse, a place of contempt to all the nations on earth.

Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was located when the people took possession of the Promised Land.

Joshua 18:1 “And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.”

It was in Shiloh that Samuel served as an apprentice to Eli. Scripture does not detail the destruction of Shiloh, but research indicates that it was destroyed around 1050 BC.

Jer. 26:7 ¶ So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

Jer. 26:8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

Jer. 26:9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

Jeremiah boldly declared God’s message to the people and emphasizes the fact that the priests and prophets, the spiritual leaders of the people, heard it along with all the people. At the end of his message, all the spiritual leaders and the people were ready to kill Jeremiah. They didn’t like his message of possible destruction of the temple and their city.

Jer. 26:10 When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house.

Jer. 26:11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

When the princes, the governmental leaders, heard what was going on, they came from the palace to the temple and took a position at the new gate entry to the temple. This was evidently the place of trial and judgment. The spiritual leaders then gave testimony to Jeremiah's prophecy against Jerusalem. They also recommended that Jeremiah be killed for such blasphemy.

"as ye have heard with your ears" – Would have to be referencing the people, not the princes.

Jer. 26:12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

Jer. 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Now Jeremiah speaks out in his own defense. He testifies that he was only declaring the message that was given to him by the LORD. He again boldly encourages the people to repent of their evil ways and turn back to the LORD in faith and obedience. If they do, the LORD will defer His judgment against them.

Jer. 26:14 As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.

Jer. 26:15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Jeremiah then goes on to submit himself to the governing authorities. He warns them, however, that if they kill him, they will be guilty of shedding innocent blood because he is only acting in obedience to the LORD.

The following verses seem to indicate that Jeremiah's persistence in declaring God's word in spite of the threat of death made an impact on the people.

Jer. 26:16 ¶ Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man *is* not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

Jeremiah's testimony seemed to find resonance with the audience. It seems that they finally realized that he was actually speaking in the name "of the LORD our God."

Jer. 26:17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

Jer. 26:18 Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

Jer. 26:19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

At this point some of the elders of the land shared their insight. They reminded the people of the ministry of Micah the Morasthite that prophesied when Hezekiah was king—about 100 years earlier. He too prophesied that the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed, but Hezekiah did not put him to death. Hezekiah listened to Micah’s message and responded in holy fear of the LORD and prayed for God’s deliverance and the LORD deferred judgment at that time. If they were to kill a true prophet of God, they stood in danger of reprisal from the LORD.

Jer. 26:20 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah:

Jer. 26:21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;

Jer. 26:22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *certain* men with him into Egypt.

Jer. 26:23 And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

The information in this section of verses seems to be information for the reader of Jeremiah’s record, and doesn’t seem to have been part of the discussion pertaining to judgment. Or--Maybe this story was used by the elders to serve as a warning against repeating the same offense against another prophet of God.

We are told that another prophet named Urijah was declaring God’s word during this same time period. He too prophesied of judgment against Jerusalem and Judah. When King Jehoiakim heard of his prophecy, he determined to kill the prophet. Urijah evidently got wind of the king’s anger and fled to Egypt. He did not possess the courage of Jeremiah in light of the danger to his life. The king sent a delegation to bring Urijah back from Egypt. He was then executed upon his return and his body wasn’t given the honor due a prophet of God.

What are we to learn from this record? We are to serve according to God’s will. We are to trust in Him to provide for us according to His purposes. We are not to fear death in light of our eternal inheritance. Believers today are blessed to

have more promises to claim than did the prophet's of old in that regard. Scripture is clear in stating that the LORD will honor those who honor Him.

1 Samuel 2:30 "... but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour...."

Isaiah 49:23 "...and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

Romans 10:11 "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

Jer. 26:24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

Kings 22 identifies Shaphan as a scribe that served under King Hezekiah. This father and his son (Ahikam) and grandson (Gedaliah, Jer. 39, appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar) all are presented as faithful servants before the Lord. They are all identified as serving men who honored God. It would seem that Ahikam still had quite a bit of influence in the government and was able to prevent the execution of Jeremiah.