

Jehoiakim Burns the Word of God

by C.I. Scofield

The word of God is indestructible, and men's attempts to destroy it will ultimately fail because of its faithfulness and authority.

Scripture: Psalm 119:89, Jeremiah 36:27, John 10:35, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 3:16

Topics: "Divine Authority", "Biblical Integrity"

Description

C.I. Scofield delivers a sermon on the indestructibility of the word of God and the relentless efforts of men throughout history to destroy it. The sermon reveals the inner reason behind this desire to eradicate God's word, which stems from the book's testimony against the pride and evil of the human heart. It emphasizes the unique enmity directed towards the Bible due to its claim of divine authority, leading to gradual attacks on its core teachings and truths by modern interpretations.

Transcript

(Jer. xxxvi. 21-32.)

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Two thoughts dominate this lesson: the indestructibility of the word of God, and the way men seek to destroy it. Incidentally, also, the inner reason why men desire to destroy the word of God is disclosed. In the present instance, "the roll of a book" which Jeremiah had dictated to Baruch, the scribe, contained "all the words" that Jehovah had spoken "against Israel and against Judah, and against all the nations"; and the roll of the words was written in the hope of Judah's repentance. "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

But Jehoiakim had no mind to accept humbly the rebuke of his sins, nor to forsake them. Perhaps he thought that by destroying the indictment he might escape the judgment.

And just there is the reason for all the attempts of men in all the ages to destroy the book of God. It testifies against the pride and evil of the human heart, and asserts the sovereign right of God to the implicit obedience, love and worship of all men.

In no other way is it possible to account for the ceaseless enmity which this one book alone of all the books in the world has encountered. Why else, should this one book be singled out for human hatred?

And observe: It is not so much the book itself which provokes the hatred of the human heart as the claim which it makes to be authoritative. Once concede that it is a human production, written along through the ages by a people "with a genius for religion"--as other people have a genius for art, or for invention--and the Bible, thus deprived of its divine authority, is tolerated. That is the distinctive note of present-day assaults upon the Scriptures,

And, secondly, the lesson discloses the method of the warfare against the Bible--by little and little. "And it came to pass that when Judah had written three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was upon the hearth."

Wholesale denunciations of the Bible are out of fashion. On the contrary, the modern Jehoiakim will say beautiful things about the Bible. He freely concedes to it the first place among the so-called "sacred books" of the nations, and affirms that in a greater degree than any of them it has "caught true concepts" from God.

But when this is said, then the penknife work begins. We must cut out the biblical conception of the being and character of God. He is not, the modern Jehoiakim says, capable of wrath, nor does he "punish" sin. Sin punishes itself. Therefore there is no hell, no eternal punishment.

We must, too, cut out the whole Bible conception of man as having been created upright and innocent--an innocency from which the first man fell. Man began as protoplasm or as a "primeval germ," and blundered up and is still blundering up.

That makes it necessary to cut out the Bible view of sin. Sin is only traces of the lower forms through which man has emerged--traces for which "he is no more responsible than a puppy is for its tendency to destroy things."

But, thirdly, the word of God is absolutely indestructible. When Baruch's roll lay a heap of blackened ashes on Jehoiakim's hearth, the king imagined, no doubt, that the matter was ended; but--

"Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying: "Take thee again another roll and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll."

No: "The Scripture cannot be broken." "Forever is my word settled in the heavens." But the faith of millions in that word may be broken, and is being broken by the penknife work of Jehoiakim's successors.

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