

# Sunday School Lesson

JUNE 15, 1947  
By Dr. Paul Caudill



Topic: Judah's Last Days  
Scripture: Jer. 36:2-8, 28-31; 2 Kings 24:1-4

It is too bad that Judah had to be afflicted with a king like Jehoiakim. A single verse of Scripture describes his tragic reign: "And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done" (2 Kings 23:37). Judah could not hope to endure for long as a nation under

such wicked leadership as she had experienced through Jehoiakim and others of his tribe. National calamity inevitably comes to any nation that manifests such blatant disregard for the purposes of God.

**Judah's Last Chance**  
Notwithstanding the evil days that were upon Judah because of the godless reign of men like Jehoiakim, God continued to manifest a forgiving concern on

his people. Even so, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim the king, God spoke to Jeremiah his prophet and instructed him to write down in a roll of a book his message "against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day" (Jer. 36:2).

Apparently, God wanted to give Judah one last chance to repent and turn from her evil ways. "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" (Jer. 36:3).

Jeremiah, accordingly, called Baruch, the son of Neriah, and had him write down the message that had come to him from Je-

hovah. When the message was completed he commanded Baruch to go and read in the ears of the people in the house of Jehovah upon the fast day the message that he had written. "It may be," he said, "they will present their supplication before Jehovah, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger and the wrath that Jehovah hath pronounced against his people" (Jer. 36:7).

Baruch did according to the command of Jeremiah, reading in the book the words of Jehovah in Jehoiakim's house.

When Micalah heard the reading of the book he went down to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and declared unto them "all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people."

The princess manifested a desire to hear the words themselves so Baruch read it "in their ears." Apparently, considerable fear sprang up in their hearts upon hearing the message and they went in unto the king and told him of the words which they had read.

### An Insolent King

Upon hearing about the roll and the message inscribed thereon, the king sent Jehudi "to fetch the roll" and requested him to read it in his presence as well as in the presence of the princes who stood beside the king.

The reaction of the king upon hearing the message of the roll affords one perfect insight into his insolent character.

The king, at the time of the reading, was sitting "in the winter house in the ninth month" by the fire that was burning in the brazier before him. Jehudi did not get to read very far before he was interrupted by the king who took the roll, cut it with his penknife, and cast it into the fire that was in the brazier until the roll was consumed by fire. And we read that they "were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of the servants that heard all these words" (Jer. 36:24).

Three of those present, however, Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah pleaded with the king not to burn the roll, but he would not hear them. Moreover, the king not satisfied with the burning of the roll, gave command that Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet be taken, "but Jehovah hid them."

### Divine Judgment

After the king had burned the roll, God spoke to Jeremiah saying, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll which Jehoiakim had burned. . . . Therefore, thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day, to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; 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, but they hearkened not" (Jer. 36:33).

The wages of sin is death. It was death in the days of Cain and of Samson and of Jehoiakim and of Judas. What is more, the wages of sin will ever be death.

If we do not somehow succeed in getting this truth across to people of every race and clime, woe be unto us in the ages to come.

Men in their liberal interpretation of the divine economy have all but read out the matter of divine judgment. They have talked not too much about the love of God, but not enough about divine judgment. Loving as He is, God must continue to pass judgment upon the perfidy of sinful man.

We cannot hope to enjoy divine favor when with unbridled insolence and brazen audacity we turn back upon every divine command.

### Retribution

The closing verses of our lesson present a graphic illustration

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tion of retribution. Jehoiakim had resisted with shameful impudence every effort of Jehovah God to lead him and his wayward people back into paths of repentance. He had even gone so far as to defy Delty by the blasphemous act of cutting up with his penknife the roll containing the message of Jehovah and burning it in the brazier before him.

Consequently, we read that it was "in his days" that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and that for three years he "became his servant." Following this, there came against him, at the hand of the Lord, "bands of the Chaldeans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against

Judah to destroy it, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by his servants the prophets" (2 Kings 24:1). Thus the tide of his wrong doing turned upon his own wicked life and he

paid the price for the innocent blood with which he had filled Jerusalem.

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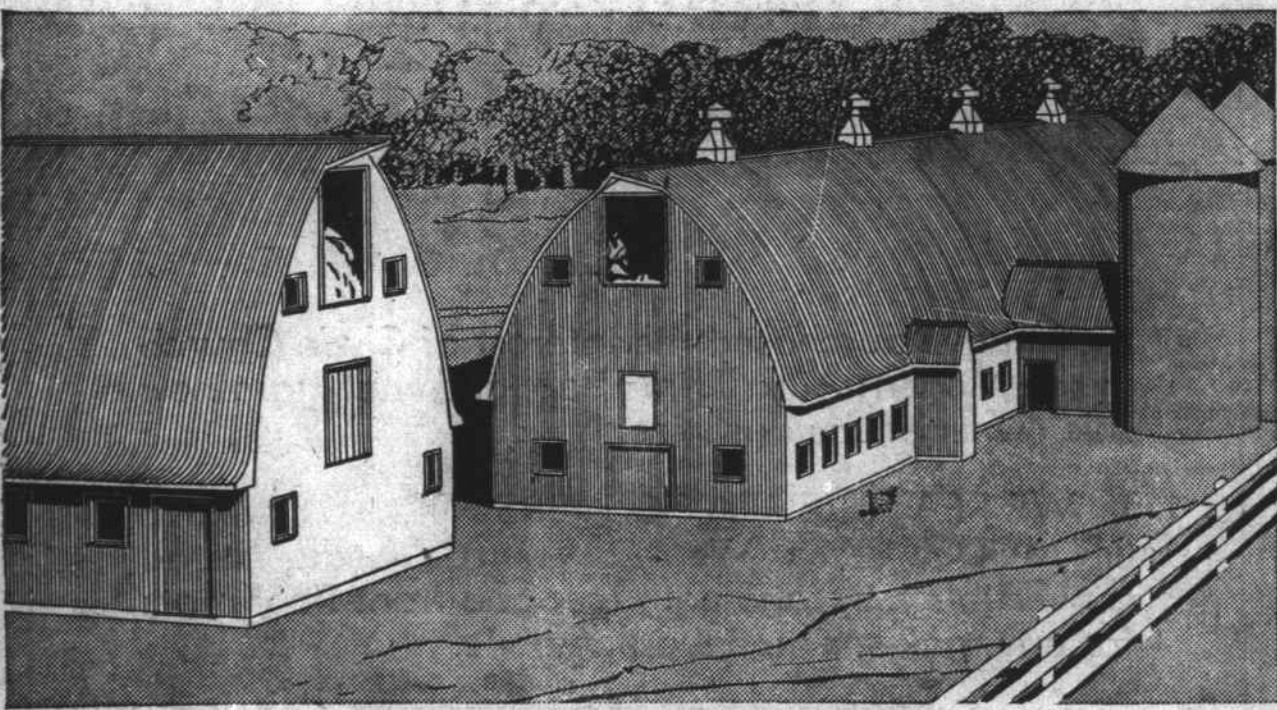
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TERMS: 1-3 CASH, BALANCE 1 AND 2 YEARS

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Near Highway 268 leading from North Wilkesboro to Elkin. This property is ideally located on an improved road leading off Highway 268. A splendid buy for people desiring nice home sites. This sale will take place on Saturday, June 21, at 1:30 P. M.

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