

But God does not always protect His messengers in this way. About 20 years ago a great discovery was announced in Palestine. In Palestine there was found in Lachish, the second greatest city of Judah, there was found in an excavation a number of potsherds in which there was writing with ink. As we read these potsherds we find they come from the time of Jehoiakim. One of them says about a man like Jeremiah who gave similar preaching, and it tells how the king was determined to destroy this man, and the man fled to Egypt, and the sherd that has been found tells how the king sent a man, one with the very name of one of these princes we have here in the Bible, that man the king sent clear down to Egypt in order to pursue the man who had been preaching that God was going to bring punishment upon the nation because it turned against God. And he was able to make an arrangement with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, so that he turned over that prophet and brought him back and Jehoiakim killed him.

But God still had work for Jeremiah to do, and so God protected Jeremiah through this crisis. Now Jehoiakim may have thought that he had gotten rid of the Word of God. He had cut it with his penknife, thrown it in the fire, but we read that God enabled Jeremiah to dictate not only what was in there but additional statements of God's Word. Not only for his people then but for his people in all subsequent days. In days of difficulty and apostasy God's people have found in the book of Jeremiah solace and blessing and assurance that God reigns no matter what wicked men may do.

The Word of God may seem for a time to be crushed and to disappear but God keeps it alive and God causes that it again becomes established because God sits in the heavens, and he reigns. Men in the end can do nothing against God even though for a time they seem to be victorious.

When I was a student in seminary (a seminary which has since departed from the faith, but which at that time was standing quite true to the Word of God), I ran on to a young man who had been a very earnest preacher of the gospel. This man had not yet had his full education at that time. He had gone to Yale Divinity school for advanced training. A friend of his told me about him and what an earnest Christian he had been before going there, and urged me to stop and see him so I did.

The young man told me about his experiences there. He said he would be in a class and when he came back to his room he felt he must cut the Gospel of John out of his Bible because they had destroyed its historical value in that class. Then he said he'd come back and he'd feel he must cut out half of Matthew. And he'd come back and feel he must cut out most of Luke. And the next class he'd go to he'd come back and feel he must cut out the Book of Deuteronomy because they said that was not by Moses at all but was written centuries after Moses' time.