

Jeremiah 20 - The Word of God to Pashur; Jeremiah's Unpopular Ministry

II. Thirteen prophecies of judgment upon Judah (Jer 2:1—25:38)

(2) Pashur abuses Jeremiah (20:1-18)

(A) Pashur's abuse (20:1-2)

(B) Jeremiah's prophecy to Pashur (20:3-6)

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Jeremiah 20

(2) Pashur abuses Jeremiah (20:1-18)

(A) Pashur's abuse (20:1-2)

1 When Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief overseer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things,

1 When Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things,

1 When the priest Pashhur, Immer's son, who was the officer in charge of the LORD's Temple heard Jeremiah prophesying these words,

1 Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

- Pashur is not the same guy in Jer 21:1 or 38:1 (Cf. 1 Chr 9:12).

- It is possible that the word Pashur is as much a title as it is a name, analogous to an executive priest. He is the governor of the house of the Lord. He is apparently number two in charge and is in charge of keeping order.

— He has, at his command, the Temple guard. Pashur himself, as a result of what he does to Jeremiah, is going to end up being judged by God and will be taken captive about 597 BC (recorded in Jer 29:25-26, and in 2 Kings 24:15).

Incidentally, the timing of Jer 19 might have been analogous to the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC where Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, is in charge

of the forces of Babylon that are against both Judah and Egypt, and defeats Egypt at the battle of Carchemish. Because of Jeremiah's prophecies, he is going to be denied access to the Temple (Jer 36). Jeremiah is a threat to Pashur because Pashur, even though he is a priest, has also falsely assumed the office of a prophet in his duty (Cf. Amaziah in Amos 7:10-17).

2 Pashhur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put him in the stocks that were at the upper Benjamin Gate, which was by the house of the LORD.

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2 Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks that were at the upper Benjamin Gate of the Temple.

2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.

- Pashur had him beaten.

— The Benjamin gate was the northern gate at the upper part of the Temple Court.

- "...him in the stocks" - Heb. *mahpeket*, which means "causing distortion." His ankles, wrists and neck were in this, but in such a way as to be very uncomfortable. This is a public thing, and, according to the Hebrew, painful.

— These stocks were designed for torture (2 Chr 16:10).

(B) Jeremiah's prophecy to Pashur (20:3-6)

3 Then on the next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "Pashhur is not the name the LORD has called you, but rather Magor-missabib.

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3 The next day, Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, and Jeremiah told him, "The LORD has not named you Pashhur, but rather Magor-missabib.

3 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib.

- Pashur may mean *prosperity* and Magor-missabib means *terror on every side*.

— This phrase, *Magor-missabib*, actually 6x in Jer 6:25; 20:3,10; 46:5; 49:29 and once in Lam 2:22.

4 For this is what the LORD says: 'Behold, I am going to make you a horror to yourself and to all your friends; and while your eyes look on, they will fall by the sword of their enemies.

So I will hand all Judah over to the king of Babylon, and he will take them away as exiles to Babylon and will kill them with the sword.

4 For thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I am going to make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and while your eyes look on, they will fall by the sword of their enemies. So I will give over all Judah to the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will carry them away as exiles to Babylon and will slay them with the sword.

4 For this is what the LORD says: 'Look, I'm going to make you a terror to yourself and to all your loved ones. They'll fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes will see it. I'll give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He will take them into exile to Babylon, and he will execute them with swords.

4 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold *it*: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

5 I will also give all the wealth of this city, all its produce and all its valuable things—even all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will hand over to their enemies, and they will plunder them, take them away, and bring them to Babylon.

5 I will also give over all the wealth of this city, all its produce and all its costly things; even all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give over to the hand of their enemies, and they will plunder them, take them away and bring them to Babylon.

5 I'll turn over all the wealth of this city, all its possessions, all its valuables, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah right into the hands of their enemies, and they'll plunder them, capture them, and take them to Babylon.

5 Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.

6 And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into captivity; and you will enter Babylon, and there you will die and there you will be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have falsely prophesied."

6 And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into captivity; and you will enter Babylon, and there you will die and there you will be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have falsely prophesied."

6 You, Pashhur, and all those living in your house will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon and there you will die. There you and all your loved ones to whom you have falsely prophesied will be buried."

6 And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

- There is more to this than the fact that he is a false prophet, he is a priest, he is not supposed to prophesy. God very diligently separates the roles of prophet, priest and king, except in one person, Jesus Christ.

- Pashur has assumed the office of prophet and has prophesied lies. He beats up Jeremiah, puts him in the stocks, and next day turns him loose and, Jeremiah, rather than being humble and quiet, makes this speech on behalf of the Lord, that we have just read. Pashur was probably also the head of the pro-Egypt group in Judah.

Incidentally, v4 first mentions Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as the conqueror of Judah and that causes us to think that this is prior to the battle of Carchemish. That is why the announcement in Jer 19 and this incident in Jer 20 may be at or just prior to the battle of Carchemish in which Nebuchadnezzar has his major final victory over the Egyptians that makes Babylon the world power at that time. It also happens that while he is laying to the first siege of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar dies and make Nebuchadnezzar king. This first deportation is where Daniel and his friends are taken captive. It is the second siege when Ezekiel and Mordecai get taken, and the third siege is when the city is leveled. There is a space of nineteen years between the first and the third siege. Pashur is exiled and Zephaniah replaces him.

In the next few verses, we are going to find the last of what is Jeremiah's so-called confessions. Jeremiah is going to lay out his heart before the Lord. The main insight here is to recognize the reality of this man and his feeling and his candor in pouring out his guts before the Lord.

(C) Jeremiah's complaint to God (20:7-18)

(a) Jeremiah says that God has made him an object of derision (20:7-8)

7 LORD, You persuaded me and I let myself be persuaded; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me.

7 O LORD, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me.

7 You deceived me, LORD, and I've been deceived. You overpowered me, and you prevailed. I've become a laughing stock all day long, and everyone mocks me.

7 O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

- He says, God has deceived me. God does not deceive. The word there is *patah*, it almost carries more like the word, seduced. A more precise way to say it is that you over-

persuaded me.

— The Lord told him it was going to be a tough time, he is sort of saying, Lord you didn't tell me the half of it. Jeremiah never publicly winces at declaring God's word. Privately, he is very upset.

8 For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the LORD has resulted In taunting and derision all day long.

8 For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the Lord has resulted In reproach and derision all day long.

8 Indeed, as often as I speak, I cry out, and shout, "Violence and destruction!" For this message from the LORD has caused me constant reproach and derision.

8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

(b) Jeremiah's compulsion to preach (20:9)

9 But *if* I say, "I will not remember Him Nor speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am tired of holding *it* in, And I cannot endure *it*.

9 But if I say, "I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding *it* in, And I cannot endure *it*.

9 When I say, "I won't remember the LORD, nor will I speak in his name anymore, then there is this burning fire in my heart. It is bound up in my bones, I grow weary of trying to hold it in, and I cannot do it!

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

– Every time Jeremiah opens his mouth publicly he catches it. He is not going to deny the Lord, but he tried to shut up and he can't; it is burning inside of him, it has to come out.

— You almost get the impression that he is almost unwillingly articulating God's word, because he knows that as soon as he opens his mouth, he will get beat up.

(c) Jeremiah's awareness of plots against him (20:10)

10 For I have heard the whispering of many, "Terror on every side! Denounce *him*; let's denounce him!" All my trusted friends, Watching for my fall, say: "Perhaps he will be persuaded, so that we may prevail against him And take our revenge on him."

10 For I have heard the whispering of many, "Terror on every side! Denounce *him*; yes, let us denounce him!" All my trusted friends, Watching for my fall, say: "Perhaps he will be

deceived, so that we may prevail against him And take our revenge on him."

10 Indeed, I hear many people whispering, "Terror on every side. Denounce him, let's denounce him!" All my close friends watch my steps and say, "Perhaps he will be deceived, and we can prevail against him and take vengeance on him."

10 For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say *they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

(d) Jeremiah's trust in God (20:11-13)

11 But the LORD is with me like a powerful champion; Therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be put to great shame because they have failed, An everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten.

11 But the LORD is with me like a dread champion; Therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, With an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten.

11 But the LORD is with me like a fearsome warrior. Therefore, those who pursue me will stumble and won't prevail. They'll be put to great shame, when they don't succeed. Their everlasting disgrace won't be forgotten.

11 But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: *their* everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

12 Yet, LORD of armies, who tests the righteous, Who sees the mind and the heart; Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have disclosed my cause.

12 Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, Who see the mind and the heart; Let me see Your vengeance on them; For to You I have set forth my cause.

12 LORD of the Heavenly Armies, who tests the righteous, who sees the inner motives and the heart, let me see you take vengeance on them, for I've committed my case to you.

12 But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, *and* seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

13 Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD! For He has saved the soul of the needy one From the hand of evildoers.

13 Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD! For He has delivered the soul of the needy one From the hand of evildoers.

13 Sing to the LORD, give praise to the LORD! For he saves the life of the poor from the hand of the wicked.

13 Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.

(e) Jeremiah regrets his birth (20:14-18)

14 Cursed be the day when I was born; May the day when my mother gave birth to me not be blessed!

14 Cursed be the day when I was born; Let the day not be blessed when my mother bore me!

14 Let the day on which I was born be cursed. Don't let the day on which my mother gave birth to me be blessed.

14 Cursed *be* the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.

15 Cursed be the man who brought the news To my father, saying, "A boy has been born to you!" *And* made him very happy.

15 Cursed be the man who brought the news To my father, saying, "A baby boy has been born to you!" *And* made him very happy.

15 Cursed is the person who brought the good news to my father, "A baby boy has been born to you," making him very happy.

15 Cursed *be* the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad.

16 But may that man be like the cities Which the LORD overthrew without relenting, And may he hear an outcry in the morning And an alarm for war at noon;

16 But let that man be like the cities Which the LORD overthrew without relenting, And let him hear an outcry in the morning And a shout of alarm at noon;

16 May that man be like the cities that the LORD overthrew without compassion. Let him hear a cry in the morning, and a battle cry at noon,

16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;

17 Because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother would have been my grave, And her womb forever pregnant.

17 Because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother would have been my grave, And her womb ever pregnant.

17 because he didn't kill me in the womb, so that my mother would have been my grave and her womb forever pregnant.

17 Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave,
and her womb *to be* always great *with me*.

18 Why did I ever come out of the womb To look at trouble and sorrow, So that my days
have been spent in shame?

18 Why did I ever come forth from the womb To look on trouble and sorrow, So that my
days have been spent in shame?

18 Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow, and to finish my life
living in shame?

18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should
be consumed with shame?

- Very unhappy guy. Don't take him too seriously, this is just his rhetorical way of
describing how unhappy he is. He does not mean this literally, he does not curse his
parents.

— This is just his Jewish way of describing how unhappy he is. He is not really cursing his
parents. This is all very parallel to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-3.