

Journey through Jeremiah Part 22 Persecuted by Pashur

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, May 17, 2017

† Jeremiah 20:1-18

The events in tonight's message happen immediately after Jeremiah prophesied about the Potter's earthen vessel and pronounced the judgement of God upon the people. In fact, the way it reads it probably occurred WHILE Jeremiah was yet still prophesying.

(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.

We are now introduced to a man named Pashur. This was a popular name in that day and there are 5 different men with the name of Pashur in the Bible, in fact, 3 of them are mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah, this one, one in Chapter 21, and another one in Chapter 38.

The name Pashur means "deliverance, or freedom." This Pashur is a priest because he is the son of a priest. Just as Jeremiah was the son of a priest. So, Pashur is what we consider to be a religious man. The Bible says that he was also "Chief governor in the house of the LORD." That means that he was the head of the temple police. Those that kept order in the house of the LORD.

Let's not forget that the last thing we read in Jeremiah 19 was that Jeremiah had moved from the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to the court of the Temple:

Jeremiah 19:14-15: Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people, (15) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

So, Jeremiah was there at the Temple where this Pashur was the Chief Governor, and he is pronouncing judgment upon the people, and Pashur heard him.

(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.

Naturally, with Pashur being the man in charge of security of the Temple, he takes action against Jeremiah. You would think with him being a so-called "religious man," and the fact that he works in the LORD's Temple, that he would be sensitive to the message being delivered by Jeremiah and listen and take into consideration what he is saying. But, that's not the case.

Pashur springs into action and has Jeremiah arrested. The Bible says that he "smote" Jeremiah. That means "to strike or beat." He beats Jeremiah and the Jewish law was that he could not beat him more than 40 times, but he beats him and then has him put in stocks.

The stocks were made out of pieces of wood that had holes cutout for your hands, feet, and head to go through and they would clamp these down and keep you in a distorted position. This is a very painful way to be locked up.

They leave him locked up like that in the gate of Benjamin so that everyone that is passing in and out could mock him, slap him, spit on him, or whatever they wanted to do to him. It was designed to humiliate the prisoner.

(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 Magorissabib.

They left Jeremiah like that for the rest of the evening and all night long and into the next day. Finally, Pashur lets him out of the stocks and has him stand before him to answer for what he has done.

I don't think Pashur was quite ready for what Jeremiah was going to say. Instead of Jeremiah apologizing and trying to be nice, he immediately begins pronouncing judgement upon him. The prisoner is sentencing the warden instead of the other way around. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magorissabib. What a slap in the face to Pashur. He went from his name meaning "freedom," to meaning "terror on both sides."

(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.

Not only does God change Pashur's name, but he also pronounced a harsh sentence on him and everyone around him. He along with his friends and all of those that persecuted Jeremiah and defied the LORD, will find themselves prisoners of Babylon. God's going to do to them what they did to Jeremiah only 10 times worse.

I would like to point out that this is the first usage of the name "Babylon," in the Book of Jeremiah. All times before he has referred to it as the land of the North, the kingdoms of the north, or the north country, but now he specifically says "Babylon," so there is no mistaken this is from where the enemy comes from.

(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.

God will allow Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty army to invade, conquer, destroy, plunder, and drag away everyone into Babylonian captivity.

(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.

Not only will Pashur be a prisoner in Babylon but he will die there and be buried there in a foreign pagan land. This would have been very humiliating to Pashur, the big shot Chief Governor. He would expect to be able to be buried in the Land of his people, somewhere in Jerusalem or in the Land of Benjamin where the priestly tribes were from.

(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. (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.

Now we see Jeremiah being overcome with grief over what he is going through. Jeremiah feels that he has been deceived into thinking that his job as a prophet is a noble one. He gladly accepted the call of God to be His spokesperson, but he had no idea that things would get this far out of hand.

He cries out to the LORD that he is “in derision daily,” and “every one mocketh me.” He has become a laughing stock to the inhabitants of Judah. They do not respect him or believe him. They treat him like a bumbling idiot and it has overwhelmed Jeremiah. He says that **the word of the LORD was made a reproach** unto him. That means that God’s Word has become nothing but something to laugh at and mock.

(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.

Look, the job that the LORD called Jeremiah to do was very difficult. Jeremiah is going through a whole range of emotions. He wanted to quit, he wanted help, he was in a constant state of depression, Jeremiah was a basket case.

He declares that he had made up his mind not to mention the LORD or prophecy anymore in the LORD’s name. He had literally come to a point in his life that he had decided he would just walk away from the ministry.

Hey, I understand how Jeremiah feels. I feel the same way nearly every Sunday and I’ve not been through half of what Jeremiah has been through.

Then we read the word “But.” That little word “**but**,” is one of the most powerful words in all the Bible or in human language.

“I was going to quit... BUT...”

“I was going to leave... BUT...”

“I was going to throw in the towel...BUT...”

“I was going to walk away from the ministry...BUT...”

As hard as Jeremiah tried and as badly as he wanted to give up there was something inside of him that would not allow him to... “The Word of God.” It’s the same thing that keeps me in the ministry. It’s the same thing that keeps most men in the ministry, The Word of God.

Jeremiah said “**BUT, his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.**” If you’ve never felt it before then you have no idea what Jeremiah is talking about but it is like an unquenchable fire inside of you that cannot be suppressed. You cannot hold it in. It has to make its way out of you because it is too powerful to hold inside. That’s why he went on to say “**and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.**”

He could not refuse the Word of God any longer. It was written on his heart and it was burning like a fire inside of him. He became so weary trying to suppress it that he could no longer hold it in.

(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.

Here Jeremiah speaks of how the people hate him so much that they are getting together talking about ways that they can ruin him. He said he heard the “defaming.” That means that they were slandering him and making up lies about him to try and destroy him. They are encouraging each other to report him and tell lies to his family and friends (**familiars**). They will say anything to try and get him arrested, beaten, and killed because they want “**revenge on him.**”

(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.

He states that no matter what they do, they will not prevail because the LORD is with him. Jeremiah has not lost his faith in God despite all of the mental and physical exhaustion he has been going through. This is a sign of true man or woman of God. Despite their own physical well-being they will trust in the LORD and proclaim Him as LORD of their lives despite their circumstances.

(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.

Jeremiah is seeking the LORD’s vengeance on them, not for his own personal satisfaction, but because he wants God to take vengeance and be glorified for who He is. That is why he says “let me see THY vengeance, not MY vengeance.

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

Despite Jeremiah’s mental state he still praises the LORD. In his prayer to the LORD he lifts up a song of praise. I’m reminded of Paul and Silas when they were wrongfully accused, beaten, shackled and thrown down in the bottom of that Philippian jail and the Bible says in **Acts 16:25: And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.**

Despite your circumstances, no matter what you may be going through in this life you can always reach down inside of you and find praises for the LORD. He is worthy of them.

(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 tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. (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 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) Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

I do not think these last 5 verses occurred immediately after Jeremiah was singing praises to the LORD. I think this happened at a different time, perhaps right after being shackled by Pashur.

It seems that he is quoting from the Book of Job chapter 3, where Job cries out in similar fashion and curses the day he was born.

Job 3:3-5: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. (4) Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. (5) Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Job 3:11 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible