

## TERROR ON EVERY SIDE

### **TEXT: JEREMIAH 20:1-18**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In chapter 19, we see that the prophet Jeremiah was told to go and take a potter's earthen bottle and break the bottle to symbolize that God was going to smash Jerusalem and Judah (19:1, 2, 10-13).
2. There was a man named Pashur who was very unhappy with this prophecy. Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, was the chief officer in the temple (20:1, 2).
3. We do not know much about this man Pashur, other than he was also a false prophet (20:6).
4. Pashur hit Jeremiah the prophet, and then put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD (20:2).
5. Again we are reminded that the fiercest persecution usually comes from the religious crowd. It was the religious crowd that persecuted our Lord and had Him crucified. It was the religious crowd that persecuted the apostles. And it has always been this way.
6. J. Vernon McGee said, "This physical persecution of Jeremiah began in the organized religion of his day...Today the Word of God is being hurt and hindered the most by the organized, liberal church which has rejected the Word of God" (*Thru the Bible*).

#### **I. JEREMIAH'S PERSECUTION**

1. Up until this point, Jeremiah has been threatened but this is the first time he was actually arrested (cf. 11:19).
2. Verse 2 says the stocks were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the temple. Warren Wiersbe says, "The stocks were located at a prominent place in the temple area, in order to add shame to pain" (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*).
3. After he had him in stocks over night, Pashur released Jeremiah the next day (20:3).
4. At this time Jeremiah said to Pashur, "The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib" (20:3).
5. The *Scofield Study Bible* says this means, "Terror on Every Side" (20:3, 4).
6. The LORD made Pashur a terror to himself and to all his friends (20:4).
7. Being beaten and put into stocks was the first of several occasions when Jeremiah was persecuted by the religious leaders of Jerusalem.
8. In chapter 26, the priests and the prophets threatened to kill him. In Jeremiah 26:8 they told him, "Thou shalt surely die."

9. Jeremiah 37:15 and 16 says, "Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days."
10. In chapter 38, he was put into a pit. Jeremiah 38:6 says "they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire."
11. In Jeremiah 38:13, "they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison."
12. He remained there in the court of the prison until he was set free by King Nebuchadnezzar (39). King Nebuchadnezzar told the captain of the guard, "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee" (39:12).

## **II. JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY**

1. Jeremiah 20:4 is the first time that Jeremiah mentions Babylon by name. Back in chapter 1, Jeremiah said the invading army would come from "out of the north" (1:13, 14, 15).
2. In Jeremiah 4:6, the LORD said, "I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction."
3. There were many other warnings but this is the first specific reference to Babylon. From here to the end of the book of Jeremiah, Babylon is mentioned 149 times.
4. Interestingly, over one hundred years earlier, during the reign of King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah had already identified Babylon as the invader (cf. Isa. 39:6).
5. In addition to Jeremiah's prediction that the king of Babylon would come and take them away into captivity, Jeremiah also warned Pashur that he and his family would be taken to Babylon and would die there (20:4-6; cf. 14:14-16).
6. These prophecies would soon be fulfilled.
7. In 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar plundered the temple and took King Jehoiakim (the son of King Josiah -- 1:1-3) and his noblemen into Babylon.
8. In 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar took 10,000 people into captivity.
9. In 586 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar burned down the temple and the city of Jerusalem and left it in ruins.

## **III. JEREMIAH'S DISCOURAGEMENT**

1. Jeremiah was by nature a tenderhearted and sensitive man, and he was often discouraged. He expressed his feelings of discouragement and grief, both in the book of Jeremiah and in the book of Lamentations (cf. 20:7, 8; cf. 12:1-4; 15:10, 18).
2. Perhaps his lament here in chapter 20 was because of the beating he took and his night in the stocks (20:2).
3. In his despair Jeremiah thought the LORD had deceived him (20:7). The LORD had promised to deliver him from his enemies but he had to spend the night in the stocks (1:19).
4. Jeremiah's message was one of "violence and spoil" (20:8), and it grieved him that the people refused to repent.
5. Jeremiah was in great anguish, and he said, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name" (20:9a).
6. Jeremiah felt that God had overpowered him, and that God had given him a message that was overwhelmingly negative and offensive, and that it brought him nothing but heartache.
7. This is the great theme that runs throughout the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah had a fire in his bones. His message was a message from God. It was a message that men did not want to hear. It was a message of doom and judgment. But he could not hold it in (Jeremiah 6:11).
8. Being a sensitive man, Jeremiah bewailed the fact that God's message resulted only in constant reproach and derision (20:8).
9. Preachers today do not want to be scorned the way the people scornfully mistreated Jeremiah. They want to be popular with the worldly crowd. This is one of the reasons why our country is in such bad shape!
10. Jeremiah felt he had to stop preaching (20:9a). But God's Word burned in his bones. God would not let him stop because the Word of God was a burning fire shut up in his bones and so he had to keep preaching (20:9).
11. Jeremiah heard "the defaming (whispering, spreading slander) of many" (20:10), and this too must have been very discouraging.
12. His enemies took the name the LORD gave Pashur, "Magor- missabib," and mocked him -- "Fear ("terror") on every side. Report...and we will report it" (20:10).
13. Even his "familiar" (friends) sought ways to entice him, and prevail against him, and take their revenge on him (20:10).
14. During this trial, Jeremiah took his eyes off his problems and looked to the LORD for his protection and deliverance (10:11-13).
15. Jeremiah came to understand that the LORD was testing him (20:12; cf. 11:20).

16. Jeremiah praised the LORD for his deliverance (20:13). F.B. Meyer said, "Jeremiah's nature reminds us of the Aeolian harp, which is so sensitive to the passing breeze, now wailing with sorrow, now jubilant with song; so delicately strung, so sympathetic, so easily affected by every passing circumstance, was the soul of the prophet. The whole book mirrors the changefulness of his mood, as the ocean the perpetual heavens outspread above it -- now blue as the azure sky, and again dark with the brooding storm" (*Jeremiah*).
17. The chapter ends with another "dark brooding storm," another one of Jeremiah's lamentations (20:14-18).
18. H.A. Ironside said, "Who would suppose that the same man would be in this truly blessed state of soul at one moment, and perhaps immediately afterwards be plunged into the abyss of the few remaining verses? Ah, it is an experience common to most of the children of God. While faith is in exercise, all is bright. When self is looked to, all becomes dark. In the verses we have been considering, the Lord has been before the prophet's soul. In those to follow, it is with himself he is occupied" (*Jeremiah*).
19. Merrill Unger says, "It shows the humanness of the prophet and gives insight into the depths of his anguish and suffering" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).

### **CONCLUSION:**

The prophet Jeremiah had to preach. Harry Ironside said, "A burning fire must have vent, and if the word of God be thus surging up in one's breast he simply *must* preach" (*Jeremiah*).