

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XLI: The Great Value Of Jeremiah's Personal Struggle With His Persecutions (Jeremiah 20:7-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Though Jeremiah rightly handled being persecuted by the chief officer of the temple, Pashhur, at the time the persecution occurred, later in private, the incident bothered him, creating a struggle of faith in Jeremiah.
- B. We view that struggle in Jeremiah 20:7-18 in light of its context in the rest of Scripture for edifying insight:

II. The Great Value Of Jeremiah's Personal Struggle With His Persecutions, Jeremiah 20:7-18.

- A. Jeremiah initially privately complained to the Lord about the persecutions he had faced, Jeremiah 20:7-10:
 - 1. After interacting with Pashhur, Jeremiah privately complained to the Lord that God had deceived him in letting him be ridiculed by Pashhur and the people for his message, Jer. 20:7a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1154. Jeremiah had known from the beginning that all his hearers would oppose him (Jer. 1:18-19a), but he was not aware that they would ridicule him, what was especially horrible for Jeremiah to face!
 - 2. Jeremiah added that whenever he spoke, he cried out, proclaiming violence and destruction, but speaking this message of the Lord had only brought him insult and reproach all day long, Jeremiah 20:7b-8.
 - 3. Discouraged by it all, Jeremiah considered not mentioning the Lord or speaking of His name again. However, trying to do that only created an intolerable tension as the Word of God within was like a fire shut up in Jeremiah's bones to where he would be weary of holding it in, so he would speak it, Jer. 20:9.
 - 4. To complicate matters, Jeremiah heard many people whispering "magor-missabib," meaning "terror on every side" in mocking Jeremiah's message to Pashhur that the Lord called him "magor-missabib" in judgment for rejecting God's message to Judah through Jeremiah, Jeremiah 20:10a with 20:3-4.
 - 5. Even Jeremiah's friends "were watching for him to slip up, perhaps by uttering a wrong prediction, so they could take revenge on him as a false prophet" and thus execute him (Deut. 18:20), Jer. 20:10b, *Ibid.*
- B. Nevertheless, by returning to rely on the Lord, Jeremiah shifted from dismay to hope, Jeremiah 20:11:
 - 1. He acknowledged that the Lord was with him as a mighty warrior so that his persecutors would stumble instead of their seeing Jeremiah slip up so that they would not overcome him, Jeremiah 20:11a.
 - 2. The prophet's foes would not succeed, and their dishonor would never be forgotten, Jeremiah 20:11b.
- C. Thus, Jeremiah called on the Lord of hosts Who tested men's hearts and Who saw what is in them to render vengeance for him on his enemies, for Jeremiah was committing his cause unto the Lord, Jeremiah 20:12.
- D. Jeremiah followed this prayer request to the Lord with an outburst of praise, trusting that God had delivered his life as a needy man from the hand of evildoers, Jeremiah 20:13.
- E. However, the prophet then lapsed into a struggle of unbelief, discouraged over the mocking, Jer. 20:14-18:
 - 1. He cursed the day he was born and he who brought his father news that he had been born, Jer. 20:14-15.
 - 2. Jeremiah desired that this man be like the cities the Lord overthrew without pity, that he might hear a cry in the morning and an alarm at noon because he had not killed Jeremiah in the womb, making his mother his womb so that her womb would be forever great for not letting Jeremiah be born, Jer. 20:16-17 *ESV*.
 - 3. The prophet then asked why he was born to see toil, sorrow and spend his days in shame, Jer. 20:18 *ESV*.
- F. This deep struggle between faith and unbelief in Jeremiah the prophet may humanly seem to make his effort to serve the Lord a futile exercise, but Jesus in Matthew 5:11-12 clarified the great value of such suffering:
 - 1. Jesus later told His disciples how blessed they were when men reviled and persecuted them and said all sorts of evil against them falsely for His sake, Matthew 5:11.
 - 2. Such believers were to rejoice and be glad when experiencing such persecution, for great was their reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets [like Jeremiah] who were before them, Matthew 5:12.
 - 3. In other words, in view of **eternity**, all of Jeremiah's persecution sufferings worked for an enormous reward from God that would last forever in striking contrast to the destinies of his persecutors!

Lesson: *Jeremiah suffered a lot of pain under persecution, what he struggled to counter by a life of faith in God's final vindication and an awareness of the Lord's present help amid persecution. However, Jesus revealed the great eternal reward one obtains from God for such persecution, making it a blessing for one to face it, cf. Acts 5:40-42.*

Application: *May we handle difficult, unjust persecution not only by trusting God to deal justly with it in the end and noting God's help in the persecution, but also knowing our reward in heaven is great for facing such trouble.*