

**Jer. 20:1 ¶** 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.

**Jer. 20:2** 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.

These verses flow right in context from the previous chapter. Pashur the son of Immer the priest, the person in authority over the temple, heard Jeremiah's prophecy at the temple courts. He didn't like what he heard. He used his authority to personally strike Jeremiah and have him put in stocks (painful and humiliating) in public view at the gate of Benjamin. The Benjamin Gate is either a reference to one of the temple entrances or to the gate of the city that was close to the northern entry to the temple complex. The Hebrew does allow the possibility that "the stocks" was just a term for prison; however, in chapter 29 Jeremiah uses the terms more specifically.

*Jeremiah 29:26 "The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks."*

**Jer. 20:3** 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.

**Jer. 20:4** 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.

The next day Pashur took Jeremiah out of the stocks. In spite of the proven animosity and authority of Pashur, Jeremiah immediately speaks out against him. He declares that God's name for Pashur is "Magormissabib," terror or fear all around. This is not a statement regarding his authority; it is a prophecy regarding the terror that will result from his false prophecies and refusal to listen to the true prophet of God. Jeremiah's message would be proven true, and they would all fall into the hands of the enemy. The LORD now specifically identifies Babylon as the enemy, and declares that many will be carried captive to Babylon and many will be killed.

**Jer. 20:5** 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.

**Jer. 20:6** 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.

The LORD goes on to declare through His prophet that He will give all the treasures of Jerusalem/Judah to the king of Babylon. He states specifically that

Pashur and his family will be taken captive and will die in Babylon. He has no hope of being buried in Judah. These events will prove Pashur as the false prophet and Jeremiah as God's true prophet.

**Jer. 20:7** ¶ 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.

**Jer. 20:8** 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.

It seems that Jeremiah gives in to depression regarding his circumstances at this point. He voices the thought that the LORD has deceived him by letting him fall victim to such persecution. He has become a laughing stock before the people because of his faithfulness to declare God's prophetic message.

The Hebrew for the word "deceived" also includes the idea of being persuaded, and the next phrase "thou art stronger than I" gives strength to that being the correct idea. Jeremiah is declaring that he is experiencing this persecution because he was too weak in light of God's power to refuse to serve Him.

I think it is important to note that God had been clear in telling Jeremiah that he would be opposed in his ministry. God did not deceive him. It was Jeremiah's perceptions and/or expectations regarding the extent of the opposition he would encounter that were in error.

*Jeremiah 1:17–19 "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: **be not dismayed at their faces**, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. **And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee**; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee."*

**Jer. 20:9** 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*.

Jeremiah admits that he had decided to stop prophesying since he was being so persecuted—but he could not control himself. God's message was like a fire in his bones, his body, and the only way he could get relief was by proclaiming God's truth.

**Jer. 20:10** 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.

Jeremiah prophesied boldly in the face of his enemies. I think the NLT translation paints a good word picture: *I have heard the many rumors about me.*

*They call me "The Man Who Lives in Terror." And they say, "If you say anything, we will report it." Even my old friends are watching me, waiting for a fatal slip. "He will trap himself," they say, "and then we will get our revenge on him."*

The people considered Jeremiah to be the ultimate pessimist. Even former friends were just waiting for an opportunity to exact vengeance on him.

Jeremiah's situation is not unique; many of the prophets and faithful servants of God encountered the same attitudes. This reminds me of the words of Jesus regarding those who embrace His message and choose to follow Him in faith and obedience. Those who live in obedience and faith before God will always encounter opposition.

*Matthew 10:32–36 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."*

*John 15:18–19 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."*

**Jer. 20:11 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.**

**Jer. 20:12 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.**

**Jer. 20:13 Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.**

At this point Jeremiah seems to find a light shining in the darkness; it reminds me of many of the psalms of David. In spite of his circumstances, he knows that the Lord is on his side and that his enemies will be defeated according to God's promise. Their future is one of eternal shame and disgrace. Jeremiah knows that God tests those who serve Him, and He even knows the motives behind their actions. He knows that when God examines him, his call for vengeance on his enemies will be answered. His cause is in sync with God's cause. In verse 13 Jeremiah erupts with praise to the LORD, the deliverer of the poor/ needy from the wicked. Jeremiah's focus had changed from his circumstances to the "hope" that is his in the LORD.

**Jer. 20:14 ¶ Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.**

**Jer. 20:15 Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad.**

**Jer. 20:16** 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;

**Jer. 20:17** 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*.

**Jer. 20:18** Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

It is really hard to understand these verses in light of the preceding three verses. One can't help but be reminded of similar words from Job as one reads these verses, and I think they might be in Jeremiah's thoughts as well.

*Job 3:11–17 “Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.”*

Jeremiah knows that God's word is true. Just as surely as He will deliver Jeremiah, He will just as surely judge Jeremiah's people. I think that is the thought that grieves him at this point. If he had never been born, he would never have to experience such wickedness and sorrow.

I relate to those feelings. I am so excited for the coming of the LORD to take me home and for Him to come and establish His kingdom, but my heart grieves at the thought of family and friends that might not get to experience that with me. I grieve at the thought of the evil that is yet to be released on planet earth—in my country—evil that will impact my life personally and the lives of those I love until that time comes.