

Jeremiah 20:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

This verse introduces Pashur son of Immer, identified as 'priest' (kohen, כהן) and 'chief governor in the house of the LORD' (paqid nagid, פָּקִיד נָגִיד). The title indicates Pashur held high authority over temple administration and security—essentially the chief temple police. The phrase 'heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things' connects to chapter 19, where Jeremiah proclaimed Jerusalem's coming destruction, smashing a potter's vessel as symbolic act. Pashur represents the religious establishment's opposition to God's true word when it threatens institutional power and popular opinion. His priestly office made his opposition particularly heinous—he should have been defending God's word, not persecuting God's messenger. This pattern repeats throughout Scripture: religious leaders opposing God's prophets (1 Kings 22:24-27, Matthew 26:57-68, Acts 5:17-18). Pashur's actions demonstrate that official religious position guarantees neither spiritual insight nor faithfulness to God. Indeed, institutional religion often becomes God's fiercest opponent when prophetic truth threatens its power, prestige, or financial interests.

Historical Context

Pashur son of Immer was a member of a priestly family (1 Chronicles 24:14) holding significant power in Jerusalem's temple establishment during King Jehoiakim's reign (609-598 BC). As 'chief governor,' he had authority to arrest and punish those deemed threats to temple order. Jeremiah's prophecy of Jerusalem's

destruction directly challenged the theology of Zion's inviolability—the popular belief that God would never allow His temple to be destroyed. This theology, based on misunderstanding passages like Psalm 46 and 48, had become an excuse for ignoring covenant obligations. The priests benefited financially and politically from temple worship, making Jeremiah's message especially threatening. Archaeological evidence from this period shows the temple system was economically significant, with vast treasuries and extensive sacrificial commerce. Pashur's persecution of Jeremiah illustrates how economic and political interests can corrupt religious leadership, causing them to oppose God's actual word in favor of popular, profitable theology. The exile would prove Jeremiah right and Pashur wrong, but at terrible cost.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Pashur's example warn us that religious position or theological education does not guarantee faithfulness to God's word?
2. In what ways might church leaders today be tempted to suppress or soften biblical truth that threatens institutional interests or popular opinion?
3. What safeguards can help us distinguish between defending essential biblical truth and merely protecting our own religious preferences or power?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁמַע עַ	פָּשָׁחֹור	בֶּן	אֶמְרֶר	בְּפִתְחָה	וְהִיא	פָּקָד
heard	Now Pashur	the son	of Immer	the priest	H1931	who was also chief
H8085	H6583	H1121	H564	H3548		H6496
גָּovernor	in the house	of the LORD		אֲתָּה יְהוָה	אֲתָּה יְהוָה	אֲתָּה נָבָע אֲתָּה
H5057	H1004	H3068	H853	H3414	H5012	H853
these things				that Jeremiah prophesied		
בְּאַלְהָה: בְּזֶבֶב יְמִ						

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 24:14 (Parallel theme): The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,

2 Kings 25:18 (Parallel theme): And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: