

Jeremiah 20:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 Magor-missabib.

Analysis

When released from stocks the next morning, Jeremiah immediately prophesies judgment on Pashur. The name change from Pashur to 'Magor-missabib' (מָגוֹר מִסְבָּב, literally 'terror on every side' or 'fear all around') functions as prophetic indictment and prediction. In Hebrew culture, names carried significance—changing someone's name declared their true identity or fate. This new name prophesied that Pashur would become a source of terror to himself and others—his actions would bring consequences making him fear. The phrase 'The LORD hath not called thy name' emphasizes God's sovereignty even over identity. Pashur may have held religious office, but God defines reality. This prophetic word-act demonstrates that God's word cannot be silenced through violence. Beating the prophet doesn't change the message; it only seals the persecutor's doom. The immediate pronouncement after release showed Jeremiah's courage and confidence in God's word—he didn't flee or remain silent to avoid further punishment. This models how God's messengers must speak His word regardless of consequences.

Historical Context

Name changes in Scripture often marked significant transitions or divine judgment: Abram to Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:28), or Babylonian renaming of Daniel and friends (Daniel 1:7). Here the name change is judicial—declaring Pashur's destiny. The phrase 'Magor-missabib' appears

elsewhere in Jeremiah (6:25, 20:10, 46:5, 49:29) describing the terror of coming judgment. History vindicated Jeremiah's prophecy: Babylon conquered Jerusalem in 586 BC, destroyed the temple, and exiled the leadership. As a prominent priest, Pashur would have witnessed Jerusalem's destruction, the temple's burning, and the exile he had dismissed as impossible. The terror he created for Jeremiah became his own fate. This pattern repeats in Scripture: persecutors often experience the suffering they inflicted (Haman hanged on his own gallows, Esther 7:10; Babylon destroyed by violence it used, Revelation 18:6). Divine justice ensures that rejection and persecution of God's word brings judgment.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does Jeremiah's immediate prophetic response after torture teach about the resilience and authority of God's word despite human attempts to silence it?
2. How does Pashur's fate ("terror on every side") illustrate the principle that persecution of God's servants brings judgment on persecutors?
3. In what ways does the name change from Pashur to Magor-missabib demonstrate that God, not human authority, defines ultimate reality and destiny?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי

H1961

וְמִתְחַנֵּב תִּהְיֶה

And it came to pass on the morrow

H4283

וַיַּצְא אֶת

brought forth

H3318

אֶת פָּשָׁחָור

Pashur

H853

H6583

לֹא יָרַמֵּי הוּא אֶלְעָד וַיֹּאמֶר מִן יָרַמֵּי הוּא

Jeremiah

H4480

out of the stocks

H4115

בְּמִתְהָפֵכְתִּי

Then said

H559

וַיֹּאמֶר

H413

Jeremiah

H3808

H3414

פָּשָׁחָור

Pashur

אֶל

H7121

וְהַיְהָ

H3068

שְׁמְךָ בָּ

H8034

מְגֹרְבָּר אֶם כִּי

H3588 H518

H0

מִתְבִּיבָּה:

but Magormissabib

H4036

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 20:10 (Parallel theme): 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.

Psalms 31:13 (Parallel theme): For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

Jeremiah 46:5 (References Lord): Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the LORD.

Lamentations 2:22 (References Lord): Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

Isaiah 8:3 (References Lord): And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

Jeremiah 6:25 (Parallel theme): Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side.

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