

Jeremiah: Torn Down to Build Up

A Bible Study with the Francis Asbury Society

SESSION 11

Jeremiah 19–20

Background:

- "Stiff-necked" (Jer 7:15) describes an animal that will not be led. It digs in its hooves and stiffens its neck.
- The Hebrew for "Terror on Every Side" is *magor missabîb*. Perhaps it is a pun on *pašḥur*, a common priestly name, whose consonants can mean "tear away." Perhaps Jeremiah is saying something like, "I'll tell you what your name really means." Pashhur was apparently exiled to Babylon in 598, because another priest appears after that. Notice that the phrase appears again in Jeremiah 20:10, where it seems to be used in mockery.

1. Look at Jeremiah 7:30–34 for a very similar statement about the Valley of Hinnom, what took place there, and what would take place there.

2. Why do you think God directed Jeremiah to take the pot out to the valley and to smash it there? Couldn't he just have spoken the words of judgment and let it go?

3. Why do we humans need to be led, and why do we resist it so?

4. Why do you think Pashur responded so harshly toward Jeremiah (20:2)? We do not know the historic setting but suppose it is about 601 BC. The annual tribute to Babylon takes much of each year's produce, and the amount has been increasing. Add to that the fact that Babylon had just suffered a serious defeat on the border of Egypt. The town hotheads are all for revolt, sure that the Babylonians will not be able to quell it. How do Jeremiah's words compare to that?

5. How could Jeremiah have imagined that Yahweh had deceived him (20:7)? Have you ever felt that way? If Yahweh didn't deceive you, perhaps a preacher did?

6. Why could Jeremiah's "friends" take revenge on him if he were "deceived" (20:10)? See Deuteronomy 18:20.

7. How are we to "square" Jeremiah 20:11–13 with Jeremiah 14–18? See, for example, Job 19:13–27.