

Jer. 19:14-20:6, The Pashur Episode
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Overview

1. Structure of 18-20
An alternation of three levels.
 - a) Object lessons of pottery: 18:1-10; 19:1-13
 - b) The people reject the Lord and his Messenger: 18:11-18; 19:14-20:6.
 - c) Jeremiah's laments: 18:19-23; 20:7-18.
2. Now we have Jer's final lament, in two parts.
 - a) A psalm of lament, expressing his pain and crying to the Lord for deliverance, following the pattern of biblical psalms;
 - b) A curse on himself, reflecting in strong poetic language his shock at the viciousness of the judgment he has been called to proclaim.
3. These culminate two series of very personal conversations between Jer. and the Lord.
 - a) The earlier series is that in which Jer, standing by the side of the people, mourns with them over the announced coming judgment: 4:19-21; 14:17 (God commands him to mourn); Lamentations; etc. Need a complete list of these; is this the last? Prob. not (Lam.). Culminated in the self-curse, which is perhaps the most hyperbolic way one could describe this.
 - b) The later series is his laments for his own suffering as a persecuted prophet. This is the last of his laments in the book, and as one might expect of a climax, seems the most intense. Interestingly, he will suffer more later than he has up to this point, but after this he knows how to bear his suffering silently. Culminated in the psalm of individual lament. Others:
 - 1) 11:18-12:6
 - 2) 15:10-21 // 17:5-18 (see on Jer. 17:5-18)
 - 3) 18:19-23 // 20:7-18.

A. 7-13 Individual Lament

The first part of his lament follows a recognized literary form. First we describe the pattern, then show how it fits this passage.

1. Literary Forms

A *literary form* is a set pattern of elements that usually grows out of a distinctive life setting. Modern examples of literary forms include prayers (Address, Praise, Request, "In Jesus' Name, Amen") and letters (Return Address, Inside Address, Salutation, Body, Complementary Close, Signature). This example strongly resembles a number of psalms, and follows a form that has been

called "individual lament," which is a prayer by an individual to God for help in time of trouble. The basic elements of such a lament are

- a) *Address* to God,
- b) *Lament* describing the troubles at hand, usually with three characters: my foes oppress me, I suffer pain, you have abandoned me.
- c) Expression of *certainty* that God will hear
- d) *Petition* to the Lord
- e) *Praise* to the Lord for hearing and answering.

2. Trace these elements in this passage

- a) 7-10, Address and Lament

Three successive paragraphs, alternating between the burden the Lord has laid on him and the mockery he receives from the people for delivering that burden. Notice how each part of the complaint grows more intense as we move through the lament.

- 1) Overwhelmed:

- a> At first, he is "persuaded" (not "deceived") by the Lord. "You persuaded me to be a prophet, and your arguments prevailed against me." Suggests that he was willing at the time, though perhaps not as perceptive as he should have been about the problems he would face. But there is no complaint against the Lord here.
- b> Then, v.8, "Whenever I speak [the Word of the Lord], I utter a silent protest, 'Violence and spoil!'" He feels that the Lord has taken him over violently, going beyond his will in the matter, and is using him to say things he would not say on his own.
- c> Finally, v.9, he tries to abandon his prophetic calling, but finds he cannot.
- d> *Application*: These protests show us how very conscious Jer. is of being "borne along by the Spirit," as Peter tells us. He knows that his words are inspired of God; he cannot keep them from coming.

- 2) Mocked:

- a> 7b, he is mocked by those around him.
- b> 8b, reproach and derision. Suggests a more deliberate, intelligent rejection.
- c> 10. First part from Ps. 31:14, threatening him with "terror round about," physical threats on his life and well-being. Now they are seeking revenge on him.

- b) 11, Certainty of being heard.

Because the Lord is with me, my enemies shall fail. The Lord is compared with a "terrible warrior." He is often called a "warrior," but this is the only time he is described as "terrible," an adjective that otherwise is reserved for the wicked and the foreign nations. The point is that he can pay back in kind whatever Jer's enemies dish out to him.

c) 12, Petition.

On the basis of this certainty, he asks God to be his avenger.

d) 13, Praise.

Now he invites his listeners to join with him in praise for the deliverance.

e) *Application*: A good pattern for us to use in bringing our petitions before God. Describe the problem; reflect on God's ability to save, then ask him, and finally thank him in faith for his deliverance. Cf. Phil. 4:6, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

B. 14-18, the Self-Curse

At first, a very difficult section to understand. Why is he so depressed, after just exhorting us to praise God? But consider some features of this section.

1. The day of his birth is not just his entry into life, but the inauguration of his ministry (ch. 1). Suggests that what he may be bemoaning here is not his own suffering; God has comforted him for that. Rather, he is mourning the suffering that will come on his people, and of which he is the implement. (Remember that the prophetic word does not just foretell what will happen, but actually brings it about, Isa. 55:10,11.
2. The curse on the messenger brings to mind God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, cf. 23:14, where Jerusalem is described in this way. The "cry" and "shouting" that he is to hear are war whoops; the second is "sound of war" in 4:19, and for the times of day, cf. 6:4-5. Around the clock, the city will be under attack, because this man permitted to live the prophet who brought this judgment.
3. "Labor," "sorrow," and "shame" in 20:18 describe Jer's sorrow over the sufferings to come to the people, and their shame before their enemies, not his own sufferings; see Clines and Gunn.

C. Summary

Thus the last lament has sorted out two aspects of Jer's sorrow: his own suffering as the persecuted messenger of God, and his sympathetic sorrow with his people for the judgment that is coming on them. For his part, he has come to trust in God to deliver him. But there can be no hope for his people, short of repentance, and he mourns their suffering in hyperbolic language by cursing his own birth, God's implement for bringing judgment on them.

Application: May the Lord give us such a heart of compassion toward the lost. They will persecute us for our witness, and too often we are so preoccupied with our own suffering that we lose sight of the suffering that awaits them. God would have us grow in faith in him so that we can look beyond the sorrow they give us in persecution. Then we can see clearly the suffering from which only God can deliver them, and motivated by pity and love, bring them to him.

Analysis

20:7-18 Jer. complains to the Lord

A. 7-13 Individual Lament (Clines and Gunn)

1. 7-10, Address and Lament: Alternation: YHWH has overwhelmed me to cause me to prophesy, and people mock and reject me for the resulting message.

a) Overwhelmed:

- 1) 7 P.IT.IYT/ANIY Y:HWFH
- 2) WF/)EP.FT
- 3) X:AZAQ:T./ANIY
- 4) WA/T.W.KFL

b) Mocked:

- 1) HFYIYTIY LI/&:XOWQ K.FL-HA/Y.OWM
- 2) K.UL.OH LO("G L/IY

c) Overwhelmed: temporal p

- 1) time: 8 K.IY-MI/D."Y):ADAB."R
- 2) text: amplification
 - a>)EZ:(FQ
 - b> XFMFS WF/\$OD)EQ:RF)

d) Mocked: K.IY-HFYFH D:BAR-Y:HWFH L/IY L:/XER:P.FH W./L:/QELES
K.FL-HA/Y.OWM

e) Overwhelmed:

- 1) quote p
 - a> quote f: 9 W:/)FMAR:T.IY
 - b> quote:
 - 1> LO)-)EZ:K.:R/EN.W.
 - 2> W:/LO)-):ADAB."R (OWD B.I/\$:M/OW
- 2) must prophesy
 - a> W:/HFYFH B:/LIB./IY K.:/)"\$ B.O(ERET (FCUR
B.:/(AC:MOT/FY
 - b> W:/NIL:)"YTIY K.AL:K"L
 - c> W:/LO))W.KFL

f) Mocked:

- 1) AQ p
 - a> AQ f: 10 K.IY \$FMA(:T.IY D.IB.AT RAB.IYM
 - b> quote:
 - 1> MFGOWR MI/S.FBIYB
 - 2> HAG.IYDW.
 - 3> W:/NAG.IYD/EN.W.
- 2) AQ p

a> AQ f: K.OL):ENOW\$ \$:LOWM/IY \$OM:R"Y CAL:(/IY
 b> quote:
 1>)W.L/AY Y:PUT.EH
 2> W:/NW.K:LFH L/OW
 3> W:/NIQ:XFH NIQ:MFT"NW. MI/M./EN.W.

2. 11, Certainty of being heard: result p: Because the Lord is with me, my enemies shall fail.

a) text: 11 WA/YHWFH)OWT/IY K.:/GIB.OWR (FRIYC

b) result:

- 1) (AL-K."N ROD:P/AY YIK.F\$:LW.
- 2) W:/LO) YUKFLW.
- 3) B.O\$W. M:)OD
- 4) K.IY-LO) HI&:K.IYLW.
- 5) K.:LIM.AT (OWLFM LO) TI\$.FK"XA

3. 12, Petition: reason p: Lord, deliver me

a) text: address p

- 1) vocative: 12 WA/YHWFH C:BF)OWT B.OX"N CAD.IYQ RO)EH
 K:LFYOWT WF/L"B
- 2) text:)ER:)EH NIQ:MFT/:KF M"/HEM

b) reason: K.IY)"LEY/KF G.IL.IYTIY)ET-RIYB/IY S

4. 13, Praise: reason p: Praise the Lord because of his deliverance.

a) text: coordinate p:

- 1) 13 \$IYRW. LA/YHWFH
- 2) HAL:LW.)ET-Y:HWFH

b) reason: K.IY HIC.IYL)ET-NEPE\$)EB:YOWN MI/Y.AD M:R"(IYM S

B. 14-18, the Self-Curse

1. Curse on the day (cf. Job 3)

a) 14)FRW.R HA/Y.OWM):A\$ER YUL.AD:T.IY B./OW

b) YOWM):A\$ER-Y:LFDAT/:NIY)IM./IY)AL-Y:HIY BFRW.K:

2. Curse on the messenger: reason p

a) text: ampl p

- 1) text: 15)FRW.R HF/)IY\$):A\$ER B.I&.AR)ET-)FB/IY L"/)MOR
 YUL.AD-L/:KF B."N ZFKFR &AM."XA &IM.:FX/FHW.
- 2) ampl:

a> 16 W:/HFYFH HF/)IY\$ HA/HW.) K.E/(FRIYM):A\$ER-HFPAK:
 Y:HWFH W:/LO) NIXFM
 b> W:/\$FMA(Z:(FQFH B.A/B.OQER W./T:RW.(FH B.:/("T
 CFH:FRFYIM

b) reason

- 1) 17):A\$ER LO)-MOWT:T/ANIY M"/RFXEM
- 2) WA/T.:HIY-L/IY)IM./IY QIB:R/IY W:/RAX:MFH H:ARAT (OWLFM

3. Question: 18 LFM.FH Z.EH M"/REXEM YFCF)TIY LI/R:)OWT (FMFL
 W:/YFGOWN WA/Y.IK:LW. B.:/BO\$ET YFMFY P