

Jeremiah 20:9 *Then I [Jeremiah] said, I will not make mention of him [God], 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 [holding God's Word inside], and I could not stay [keep from speaking it].*

1. Introduction

- a. Earth was originally created perfect & very good
- b. But man sinned & brought physical & spiritual death into universe
- c. Decay-to-death also includes diseases (COVID-19)
- d. This world will never be a perfect place, despite human effort
- e. Jeremiah was writing this verse during times of revival under good King Josiah
- f. Isaiah 26:3-4 *Thou [God] wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed [focused] on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*

2. Universal Collapse

- a. Jeremiah prophesied of coming destruction
- b. He preached against Israel's hard heart & sinful ways
Jeremiah 4:22 For my people [Israel & Judah] is foolish, they have not known me [God]; they are sottish [foolish] children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.
- c. He foretells of coming captivity to Babylon because of their stiff necks (stubborn) to not hear God's word – Jeremiah 19:15
- d. God details Jerusalem's destruction (Jeremiah 20: 4-5)

3. Unrelenting Criticism

- a. Jeremiah mentally prepared for the coming destruction according to God's words
- b. He did not anticipate or fear personal criticism or persecution
- c. Pashur (chief governor of Temple) was offended
 - i. He was upset by Jeremiah's preaching in Temple courtyard – Jeremiah 19:14
 - ii. Pashur was observing the rituals & forms of custom, but his heart was far from God
- d. Pashur placed Jeremiah in stocks at city gate near temple to humiliate him (verse 2)
1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
- e. Jeremiah protests to God (verses 7-8)
 - i. He felt deceived, mocked, derided, & reproached

- ii. He received personal non-stop criticism

2 Timothy 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

- f. Jeremiah suffers persecution serving as example for all of us

James 5:10 *Take [for example], my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

4. Underlying Condition

- a. Jeremiah tries to stay silent, but he could not stop speaking

- b. He must prophecy; he could not hold it back

- c. Other examples of attempts to stop God's words

- i. Jesus death & burial

- Jesus was put to death in attempt to silence his criticism of religious leaders (like Pashur)
- Placed in tomb guarded by Roman soldiers
- But unseen inside rock walls He came alive from the dead

- ii. Apostles commanded to stop preaching in Jesus' name, but they obeyed God instead

- Acts 4:19-20 *But Peter and John answered and said unto them [religious leaders], Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken [listen] unto you more than unto God, judge ye [decide for yourselves]. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*
- Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.***

- d. God's Word compared to flame of fire

- i. Children of Israel saw God's glory as a devouring fire

Exodus 24:17 *And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount [Sinai] in the eyes of the children of Israel.*

- ii. Moses described God Himself as a consuming fire

Deuteronomy 4:24 *For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*

- iii. David described his heart as hot like fire burning before he spoke God's words

Psalms 39:3 *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing [meditating on God's words] the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,*

- iv. Jeremiah again spoke of God's Word as a fire & like a hammer

Jeremiah 23:29 *Is not my [God] word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

- v. Paul must preach & felt as a necessity
1 Corinthians 9:16 *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me [God gave me this job personally]; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*
- vi. And the author of Hebrews describes God as a consuming fire
Hebrews 12:29 *For our God is a consuming fire.*

5. Conclusion

- a. But God gives more grace to overcome challenges
 - i. Jeremiah suffered trial common to man, and sometimes much more
1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation [to sin] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [not yield to] it.*
 - ii. Grace is multiplied more where temptation is more
Romans 5:20 *Moreover the law entered [was given], that the offence might abound [be fully aware of their sin before God]. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*
- b. Every Christian has heaven's resources to share God with others
 - i. In every Christian heart is a greater presence
1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [false prophets]: because greater is he that is in you [the Holy Spirit], than he that is in the world [the spirit of antichrist].*
 - ii. God's Holy Spirit is a burning fire within each Christian
Acts 2:3 *And there appeared unto them [the believers in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost] cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat [came to rest] upon each of them.*
 - iii. God's love compels (drives) us
2 Corinthians 5:14-15 *For the love of Christ constraineth [controls, motivates] us; because we thus judge [reason in this way], that if one died for all [Jesus], then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth [from now on] live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*