

In the previous chapter 18, Jeremiah took a field trip to the Potter's house, to watch the Potter working with clay. Now there is a sequel in chapter 19, where Jeremiah took another field trip to the dump, where all of the broken pottery was thrown away.

Jeremiah's actions displayed God's wrath and His call for sinners to repent.
1. Buy a finished pottery jar, and gather the people at the pile of broken pottery. (v. 1-2)

Remember how Jeremiah had prayed viciously at the end of the previous chapter? God's response was silence, until now in chapter 19. In verse 1, God instructed Jeremiah to go back to the potter's house, and this time to buy a finished jar, that had already been baked in the oven. In verse 2, God sent Jeremiah to the dump, the valley known in the New Testament as the Valley of Gehenna. The word for hell. It was the place where broken pottery was found. It was the place where trash and the bodies of dead animals were left to rot. Even the bodies of criminals were dumped there after execution, so that they were deprived of a proper burial. It was a vile and stinking place.

Jeremiah was to gather the elders and the high-ranking priests there at the dump to deliver a message from God. That brings us to our second point.

2. Warn the people that God threatens to empty them, because of their idolatry. (v. 3-9)

In verse 3, God's message in the dump was to the leaders, to the kings, but also to the inhabitants, to all the people, that God was bringing disaster upon them for turning away from God.

Remember that Jeremiah had in his hand a finished jar. The Hebrew word for a jar was a BAQBUQ. It sounds sort of like the gurgling sound that water makes, when being poured out of the jar – BAQBUQ, BAQBUQ. The people are the jar, and God was going to empty their lives out in that dump, that Gehenna, that picture of hell.

Why would God send people to hell? We get a list of reasons. In verse 4, three reasons were given. 1) because they had forsaken God, 2) because they had profaned the land by making offerings in the land of God to other gods, and 3) because they had filled the land with the blood of innocents! In verse 5, two more reasons were given. 1) because they built the high places (high places were places of worship) to Baal 2) because they burned their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to the false god Baal. Wait. Stop. What was that 2nd reason again? Yes, they killed their own children as a part of worship to the false god. What was God's reaction to that? God said two things 1) God had not commanded child sacrifice! 2) child sacrifice never even entered the mind of God. God is the one who created all

babies, and both baby boys and baby girls are created in God's image. In verse 6, God would react so strongly that the name of that place would be changed. Instead of being called Topheth, which means "spit" (already a place of derision), it will be changed to worse – now called The Valley of Slaughter. Maybe we would call it Death Canyon. But it will not be called that because the people killed their children there. No. Verse 7 makes it clear that it was the plan of the people to sacrifice their children there, but God had other plans. People make plans, but human plans always shatter when they come up against the plans of God. God said that He would make void their plans, and instead would "*cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies...*" and further that God would "*...give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth.*" And in verse 8, God will make "*the city [of Jerusalem] a horror...*" It will not be a horror because of the people's sins, but instead because of God's judgment upon them. "*Everyone who passes by it... will hiss because of all its wounds.*"

This prophecy was fulfilled literally and precisely, a few years later when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar surrounded the city of Jerusalem and attacked the city. The lack of food in the city became so severe that the people even fulfilled what God said in verse 9 and resorted to cannibalism of their own children. Such horror happened in siege of 586 BC, and it is confirmed in Lamentations 2:20 and Lamentations 4:10. The enemy army from Babylon broke down the gates of the city of Jerusalem, and knocked the whole city to the ground. The city of God and God's people became such a scene of destruction that anyone who passed by was amazed and horrified by its destruction. It was not the plans of the people to live such evil lives that got fulfilled, but rather the plans of God to destroy those people. God emptied them, like liquid pouring out of a jar. BAQBUQ, BAQBUQ! Now to our 3rd point.

3. Smash the jar, anticipating how God will break the people, not to be mended. (v. 10-15)

In verse 10, God instructed Jeremiah to "*break the flask*" in the sight of the religious leaders gathered at that dump. Jeremiah was to take the jar in his hands - a picture of the people in God's hands - Jeremiah was told to violently smash the jar into pieces, which would make God's warning to the people visual, emotional, and memorable.

The smashing of a jar was a familiar action in the ancient world showing victory, like today the Gatorade splash is a familiar action showing victory. Psalm 2:9, there is singing that God is going to win against the enemies when God will "*dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*" The surprising thing in Jeremiah 19, is that God will do this to His own people. It is because His own people became the enemies of God, when they followed other gods, and would not repent.

Verse 11, God says, “*So will I break this people and this city....so that it can never be mended.*”

Verse 12, God will make Jerusalem like Topheth, which is spit.

Verse 13, the houses, because on their roofs people practiced worship to false gods by pouring out drink offerings – then the people and their houses will be poured out and defiled.

In verse 14, God moved Jeremiah from the town of Topheth, to Jerusalem’s temple courts. Now Jeremiah preached to not just the leaders, but to all the people. Verse 15 contains that message – God is bringing disaster, because the people refused to hear God’s word to repent.

Where was Jeremiah standing? In the temple courts. Think of the courage of Jeremiah. It was one thing in verse 1 to take his enemies to a public place like the Broken Pottery dump, out in public, and speak a message that would anger them. But it was another thing to take the same message right into the headquarters of all the forces arrayed against Jeremiah. To stand in the court of the temple and to preach that the temple would be destroyed, was Jeremiah just asking for trouble. And trouble, is what Jeremiah got, as we will discover in chapter 20. Does this ring a bell? The man of God standing in the temple of God preaching that the temple would be destroyed? Was there a later preacher who stood in that same place?

CONCLUSION: Let me conclude. There is one application. Repent.

The application is to repent and turn from our sins to Christ to receive life instead of death!

The very generation of people who lived in Jerusalem that day, and who saw the jar smashed by Jeremiah, would never be reassembled. But because of God’s covenant with the nation as a whole, the nation of Judah would come back from the exile, newly constituted. The people who would make up the new Judah, or the new Israel, would gather again to hear the Word of God read to them (such as Nehemiah 8:1-18), and the new Israel would admit that their ancestors during the days of Jeremiah strayed from the will of God. (Read in the Book of Nehemiah 9:1-37). The punishment of this generation to whom Jeremiah preached was irrevocable, but the future of the nation remained very bright, because of the promise of the new covenant. (Jeremiah 31). In this period of Judah’s history, there was a shift from corporate responsibility to individual responsibility. (We will see in Jeremiah 31:27-30). No longer would the next generation suffer for the sins of their ancestors. The sinner needs to stand before God in a state of sin like a piece of fragile pottery, and needs to be broken into small pieces that cannot be reassembled as the sinner that he was. However, now that soul is in the hands of the Potter as a piece of clay all over again, and the person who is repentant can be re-shaped. Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*”

Have we forgotten about serving the one Living and true God? Have we not yet put into practice the lessons God showed us? Have we followed other gods? Money, sexual pleasure, power/control/influence/attention, pleasure in any form, food, your personal beauty, or chasing the beauty of another, your success, or being enamored by the success of another, your comfort, or seeking to make another person comfortable, or just having yourself as the center of your existence instead of God? Or how about children? Not only abortion, but also harming children by our neglect of them, and harming children by our poor example, and failing to point them to Christ and teach them God's Word. Have we stopped following God with our whole hearts in our lives and the lives of our families? The prophet holding up the jar is God calling us to repent. The prophet listing the sins is God calling us to repent. The prophet smashing the jar is God calling us to repent. The prophet standing in the courts of the temple calling on everyone to repent is supposed to point us beyond Jeremiah to another prophet.

Jesus has provided the only way for us to escape the wrath of God. When Jesus was teaching on this Jesus said that He will invite His sheep into the eternal life in the kingdom prepared for them, and He will banish the goats to eternal punishment. Then we read this in Matthew 26:1,2, *“When Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.’”*

God the Father delivered Jesus up to be crucified because our sins were transferred to Christ. Jesus received the judgment and wrath of God instead of us. We are cleansed.

For sinners who repent and believe, Christ is the jar that was emptied – BAQBUQ, BAQBUQ, while He was on the cross and bleeding out. Christ is the jar that was smashed in judgment on the cross, so that we remain jars in God's hands to be used. Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, He was able to do what no one else could do – to take the smashed pieces of his life that could not be mended, and to rise again anyway! The resurrection of Jesus is the source of our life and hope. What could not be healed any other way, is healed by Jesus conquering death. Because He lives, we live in Him by faith.

We are jars in God's hands that God will not smash, but will use for holy and noble purposes in building His kingdom.

The key is for us to respond to God's call to repent and to turn from our sins unto Christ.

Paul wrote about this in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, *“Now in a large house there are not only jars of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a jar for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”*

Paul also wrote about the change that God gives us when God grants us the gift of repentance in Ephesians chapter 2, *“we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

We used to be children of wrath. Jars in God’s hands ready to be smashed.

But now we are children of God. Jars in God’s hands, alive in Him, and having an important part in the world-wide spread of God’s kingdom.

We are jars in God’s hands.

In all eternity future, God will show how much grace and kindness He showed to us in Christ Jesus. Any good that we have done, we will pour out before God in praise of His name. Like a jar that is pouring out praise with the sound BAQBUG, BAQBUG.

Hebrews 13:15, *“through [Jesus] let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”*

Repent. And tell everyone the treasure you have found, that makes you who you are. 2 Corinthians 4:7, *“...we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”*