

Journey through Jeremiah Part 21 The Broken Potter's Vessel

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, May 10, 2017

† Jeremiah 19:1-15

Last week we looked at the previous chapter which detailed the analogy of the Potter and the Clay. The LORD had sent Jeremiah to the Potter's house and told him he would give him the words to say. Jeremiah noticed that the Potter found a blemish or mar in the clay and instead of just smoothing it out he actually made something new out of the clay. We understand that to be how the LORD has the power to completely make anew a person. He is the Potter and we are the Clay.

Tonight here in Chapter 19 we are dealing yet again with something the Potter has made.

(1) Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;

The potter's earthen bottle is a very familiar thing to the Jews. You would find one of these hanging beside every well. There is a big difference between the potter's clay from the previous chapter and this chapter. In the previous the clay was still workable, pliable, and able to remake into something new. But his clay, this earthen bottle is already hardened. There is no remaking it now. It is what it is and there is only one thing that can be done to it.

The LORD tells Jeremiah to take the "ancients of the people and the ancients of the priests." These are the elders of the people and the elders of the priests. They are representatives of each group. God has a message that He intends to be heard by everyone and the best way to relay it is to give it to the elders who will pass it along to everyone else.

(2) And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

The east gate of the entry to the valley of the son of Hinnom, is where all broken pottery and garbage was thrown and burned. You could call it the town dump. But it was also known as the place where human sacrifices were burned. This is the location where they would force the children to pass through the fire of Molech. The LORD has specifically chosen this place as a symbol of their idolatry and what is going to become of them.

(3) And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

The LORD tells Jeremiah what to say when he addresses the ancient people (elders). It's not going to be good. In fact it is going to be so bad that when people hear about it their ears will tingle.

We see this same thing mentioned in **2 Kings 21:10-12: And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, (11) Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: (12) Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.**

That was when the LORD was pronouncing judgement upon them because of the sin and idolatry that Manasseh had brought into the land.

If you have ever been in the presence of a large thunderclap or if anyone has ever shot a shotgun right beside your head, you will understand the tingling of the ears reference. It's a shock to the entire system and has such an impact on you that it causes your ears to tingle. God's judgment is going to be so fierce that people will be shocked beyond belief.

(4) Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

"blood of innocents" Here we see the significance of the location. It was where God's people had worshiped strange gods and had performed sadistic rituals and child sacrifices as part of their sick god worship.

One thing is for sure friends, God is not pleased with the taking of innocent lives. All of these little babies that are being aborted every single day, it is the blood of the innocents and God is not pleased.

(5) They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:

We talked about this when we were studying in Chapter 7 but one of the very worst things that was going on in Judah at that time was the worship of the fire god, Molech, which required the sacrifice of children. This took place in the valley of Hinnom and Tophet was on the outer edge of Hinnom. We read about it in **2 Kings 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.** Molech is another name for Baal. He was also called Chemosh.

Burning their sons with fire as a burnt offering unto Baal. You cannot get any lower than they have gotten. Jeremiah is standing just at the entrance of this sadistic ritual ground where the Lord only knows how many innocent little children were offered up as a sacrifice to a god that doesn't even exist except in the mind of the person worshipping.

God tells them right quick that this kind of thing never came into HIS mind to do to little children. He didn't command it and he never even imagined it.

(6) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

"Tophet" That comes from the Hebrew word "toph," which means "drum." The sick ritual they would perform consisted of loud beating on drums to cover up the screams of those little innocent children as they were roasted alive on the altar to Baal and Molech. "The valley of the son of Hinnom" is the same place the Lord Jesus refers to as Hell Fire in the New Testament. He describes it as a place of eternal punishment and burning and it comes from the Greek word Gehenna which is the same as the Hebrew "Hinnom." It's actually pronounced with a "Ga-Hinnom."

The LORD says that now the valley is going to be known as “The valley of slaughter.” Because that is where the bodies of the dead of Judah will be thrown in heaps.

(7) And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

This is further description of the awful sentence that is pronounced upon the inhabitants of Judah. Dead bodies will be laying everywhere for the buzzards to come and pick the flesh off of their bones until there is nothing left of them.

(8) And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

This is similar to what we read in chapter 18 of how people will walk by the city of Jerusalem and hiss in astonishment. It will be nothing but a city of debauchery, death, and disease. Not even fit for humans to live in.

(9) And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

I certainly do not want to make anyone sick in here tonight but this is in the Bible and we must address it. It is very important that we understand how God sees sin and idolatry.

Because of the Judah's idolatry and evil ways the LORD is going to punish them as they have never been punished before. They were warned long ago that this day would come if they every forsook the LORD. If you want to read what God said He would do if Israel forsook him, just look at: **Deuteronomy 28:53-57: And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: (54) So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: (55) So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. (56) The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, (57) And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.**

Now, some people will try to downplay this and make you believe that when the Bible talks about eating of the flesh of their sons and daughters, and eating the fruit of your own body that it is not speaking of someone literally eating a person's flesh.

Listen, the Bible is very clear that this is speaking of cannibalism. It's the very lowest form of human depravity and desperation as one can get. Jeremiah witnessed it with his own two eyes and he writes about it in his Book of

Lamentations 4:9-11: They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. (10)The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people. (11)The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.

Jeremiah is saying that even the tender-hearted women that normally have such loving care and compassion, turned into hellish beasts. The hunger and misery became so bad that they resorted to murdering their children and eating them.

Our text in Jeremiah 19:9 says that they will eat their sons, daughters, and friends. If you want to see just how far sin can take you, look no further than this right here. Ezekiel also writes about it in **Ezekiel 5:11 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.**

Cannibalism was rampant during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans in Jeremiah's time and also when Jerusalem was invaded by Titus in 70 AD. The Jewish Historian, Josephus, writes in his book, Jewish Wars, about a lady named Mary of Bethzuba who was so starved she killed her infant son and roasted him and ate him.

(10) Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, (11) And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.

The LORD gives Jeremiah the message that he wants to send and even gives him a prop to use so that it sinks into their minds really good. He is to take the potter's vessel and smash it in front of them so they can see it broken into hundreds of pieces. No way to reconstruct it and no way to mold it into something else. It is forever broken.

The message in the bottle, if you will, is that God will do the same to Judah. There will be so many deaths that they will fill up the valley of hinnom (Tophet).

(12) Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet: (13) And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

The entire city will be like Tophet, nothing but a burning garbage dump. Their homes will be defiled and destroyed, made uninhabitable because of their idolatry.

(14) Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people, (15) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible