

THE BROKEN EARTHENWARE JAR

(Jer 19:1-15) 05/23/18

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I. JUDAH BROKEN MORALLY (Jer 19:1-5)

A. Jeremiah Purchased Pottery Jar (1)

1. Though Chapter 18 revealed both the Divine Potter and His longsuffering, Chapter 19 reveals both the Divine Potter and His irreversible judgment.
2. The Lord commanded Jeremiah to buy a clay **jar**. It was a vessel to hold water and its onomatopoeic name in Hebrew was *baqbuq*, the sounding of gurgling water while it was being poured.
3. To show the solemnity of this demonstration, Jeremiah was to take some of the **elders** and some of the **priests** along with him.

B. Jeremiah Proclaims the Lord's Message (2)

1. Then Jeremiah was instructed to go out to the valley of Ben-hinnom. The valley of Ben-hinnom was situated by the Potsherd Gate.
2. This gate was near the potter's house (Jer 18:2) and he would discard his waste outside the gate into the Hinnom Valley.
3. Many believe that the Potsherd's gate, which was located on the southern wall was the Refuse Gate (Dung Gate) (Neh 2:13; 3:13-14). It was also identified as such by the Targum,
 - a. The Targum is *the Aramaic translation of the Bible. It forms a part of the Jewish traditional literature, and in its inception is as early as the time of the Second Temple* (JewishEncyclopedia.com).
 - b. *The modern Dung Gate in Jerusalem is also located on the south of the city, but the present walls are several hundred yards north of the walls in Jeremiah's day.* BKC

C. Calamity Will Bring Tingling Ears (3)

1. The term **calamity** (*raah - that which is bad, evil, misery, or judgment*) is used 27 times in Jeremiah (Jer. 16:10 Jer. 18:8, 11, 17 Jer. 19:3, 15 Jer. 23:12, 17 Jer. 25:29 Jer. 26:3 Jer. 28:8 Jer. 29:11 Jer. 32:23 Jer. 36:3, 31 Jer. 40:2 Jer. 42:10, 17 Jer. 44:2, 23 Jer. 46:21 Jer. 48:2, 16 Jer. 49:37 Jer. 51:2, 60, 64).
2. Calamity will be the siege by the Babylonians, death, and captivity of Judah. It will be against the **kings** of Judah (over a period of time) and the **inhabitants** of Jerusalem.
3. It will cause the ears of those who hear of such judgement to tingle. **Tingle** is the Hebrew word *tsalal* and means to quiver, whirl or buzz. It is a figure of speech used in connection with the Lord's judgement (1Sa 3:11; 2Ki 21:12).
4. It quite possibly means that when a person hears of God's judgment it causes them to shudder inwardly. But such response was caused through what one has heard through the ears.

D. Because of Judah's Sin (4-5)

1. Why is judgment and the tingling of ears coming upon Judah? God answered this question throughout the book of Jeremiah (Jer 2:35; 3:9, 21; 4:17; 5:6; 6:19, 30; 9:13; 13:22, 25; 16:11; 17:13).
2. The Lord repeatedly stated that Judah had **forsaken Him** (Jer. 1:16 Jer. 2:13 Jer. 5:7, 19 Jer. 15:6 Jer. 16:11 Jer. 19:4).
3. If they **burned sacrifices** to other gods, then that meant they had forsaken the Lord. They had even surpassed their forefathers in their sinfulness.
4. They had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. Here "innocent" would refer to the poor, the needy, and the helpless.
5. They had also built "**high places**" (shrines) to Baal and sacrificed their children to him. Yahweh, the true God, never gave such an abominable command to sacrifice children. Those who would argue back and point to Abraham and Isaac only have to read the context to know that it was not God's purpose for Isaac to be literally sacrificed (cf. Gen 22:11-13).

II. JUDAH WILL BE BROKEN (Jer 19:6-11a)

A. Called the Valley of Slaughter (6)

1. Jer 19:5b-6 is virtually a repeat of Jer 7:31-32. At the southern end of Jerusalem lay the Hinnom Valley or **valley of Ben-hinnom**. It was the location of the Topheth, the place of sacrifice and burial, particularly child sacrifice.

2. Child sacrifice was not necessarily prolific among Israel, though one sacrifice was one too many. Nevertheless, it was an abomination that the Lord did not want Israel to copy from the pagans. Therefore, it was prohibited in the Law (Lev 18:21; Deu 18:10). Unfortunately, Israel and Judah made it part of their practice in their worship of false gods.
 3. Because God would bring judgement, there would be so much carnage that there would be no place to bury the dead. Therefore, the place would no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the **valley of Slaughter** (cf. Jer 19:11).
- B. Counsel of Judah Voided (7)
1. The **counsel of Judah** would be the city's leaders, including military leaders. They will have no counsel that stands against the Lord's plans.
 2. Judah will be given into the hands of the Babylonians and they will fall by the sword. As previously foretold, Judah's **carcasses** that were scattered all over the land would become food for jackals and scavengers ("**birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth**") (Jer 7:33; 16:4; 34:20; Deu 28:26).
- C. City of Desolation and Hissing (8)
1. Jerusalem will become a city a **desolation**, destruction, and death.
 2. The Lord reiterated that they would be objects of scorn. There will be **hissing** by those who hear and see the desolation (cf. Jer 18:16).
- D. Eat the Flesh of Children (9)
1. So bad would be the situation that some would resort to cannibalism and **eat** their own family members **flesh**, including sons and daughters.
 2. Yet they had been warned of such horror resulting from unrepentant sin (Lev 26:27–29; Deu 28:53–57; Lam 2:20; 4:10).
- E. Jeremiah Told to Break the Jar (10)
1. At that point Jeremiah was told to break the earthenware jar.
 2. The elders and the priests were there to observe and understand the analogy.
- F. Analogy of Jerusalem's Destruction (11a)
1. What was the analogy? The analogy was that even as Jeremiah broke the pottery jar, so the Lord would **break** Judah into pieces. Psa 2:9 speaks of the same imagery.
 2. Sometimes pottery is so broken that it **cannot be repaired**. Judah would be broken beyond repair.

III. JERUSALEM WILL BE LIKE TOPHETH (Jer 19:11b-15)

- A. Jerusalem Will Be Like Topheth (11b-13)
1. There will be so many dead bodies, that the only place they could bury them would be at Topheth, which would be changed to the valley of Slaughter.
 2. *The city itself would become like Topheth (cf. comments on 7:31–32); its once-beautiful dwellings would be reduced to rubble and the entire area would be defiled with decaying bodies of the slain.* BKC
 3. *Topheth was a place of uncleanness (cf. 7:31), made such by the detestable idolatry practiced there. So the homes in Jerusalem would be defiled by corpses just as their idolatries had made Topheth even more a place of defilement (Jer 19:12; cf. Jer 33:5; 2Ki 23:10).* EXP
 4. God's people forsook Him and all of the **rooftops** of the houses in Jerusalem **burned sacrifices** to false gods.
 5. These are dangerous practices before the one true jealous and holy God.
- B. Jeremiah Prophesies to Jerusalem (14)
1. Jeremiah came from Topheth, where he had just smashed the earthenware jar, and stood at the temple.
 2. There he spoke before all of the people so that they would hear about the Divine Potter who would break Judah to pieces.
- C. Calamity Is Coming (15)
1. Instead of the message of "peace, peace" from the false prophets, Jeremiah continued to preach God's judgement against sin.
 2. **Calamity** and judgement were coming as the Lord had promised. The people had been repeatedly warned throughout their history concerning these things. But they remained **stiff-necked** people and did **not heed God's Word**.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. Not heeding God's Word is still a serious matter.

1. Culture that does not heed God's Word is a culture that does whatever is right in their own eyes.
 2. Sadly, believers who do not heed God's Word do whatever is accepted culturally.
 3. These are disastrous and dangerous practices.
- B. The killing of innocent children is still an abomination.
1. *[The President] has stood up for the humanity of the unborn child like no president in recent memory. And this is why so many Christian conservatives stick with him*
 2. *Any organization receiving Title X funds will be required to establish a bright line of both physical and financial separation between its family planning activities and any program or facility that performs or refers women for abortions.*
 3. *The Protect Life Rule is a victory pro-life Americans have been awaiting for three decades. President Ronald Reagan first issued a version of the rule in 1988, but pro-abortion groups challenged it in court. The George H.W. Bush administration fought them all the way to the Supreme Court and won: In 1991, the court upheld the Reagan rule in *Rust v. Sullivan*. But the ruling came too late; Bill Clinton soon took office and withdrew the rule. When George W. Bush was elected, he failed to reinstate the rule during his eight years in office. (Marc Thiessen).*
 4. The killing of innocent children, especially unborn children, is still an abomination to the Lord and should also be an abomination to believers.
- C. Preaching God's Word is still the right thing to do before the Lord.
1. Regardless of what others think or believe or how they react, preaching God's Word is still the right thing to do.
 2. In fact, it is the only thing to do.