

Jer. 19:1 ¶ 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;

Jer. 19:2 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,

Jer. 19:3 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.

This chapter begins with the LORD instructing Jeremiah in yet another object lesson. He is to go and get a piece of pottery, a clay jar, and then get some of the older leaders of the people and the priests to go with him to the valley of the son of Hinnom that is outside one of the eastern gates. This valley is notorious as the place of child sacrifices to the god Molech. The following quotes are in reference to wicked King Manasseh and good King Josiah respectively.

2 Chronicles 33:6 "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom...."

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."

Once they arrive at that location he is to declare his message from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel.

It was interesting to note that the Hebrew for "bottle" stated, "a bottle (from the gurgling in emptying)." It could be that the reference is to a filled bottle that will create a more vivid visual reference when the bottle is broken and he makes application to the intended message.

I believe the title "the LORD of hosts" is meant to draw attention to God's power and authority. The reference to "the God of Israel" is meant to remind them of their distinct position among the nations as God's chosen people. The message is addressed to the "kings of Judah" and the people living in Jerusalem.

The message—God is going to bring evil upon Jerusalem, an evil that should terrify those to whom it is delivered. The Hebrew for "tingle" also makes reference to causing the ears to redden with shame; in other words, the hearers should be ashamed that their actions had resulted in such a declaration from their God.

Jer. 19:4 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;

Jer. 19:5 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:

Jer. 19:6 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.

These verses detail the reason for God's message of judgment.

- The people have forsaken Him; they had deliberately chosen to disobey the God of Israel.
- They no longer honored the God of Israel with their actions; they had *estranged* the land by changing its original use as a place to honor God to a place where they burned incense in honor of false gods.
- They had filled this valley with the blood of innocents—a reference to the child sacrifices mentioned in the verses above and detailed in verse 5.

The LORD is emphatic in declaring that the sacrifice of children was never even a thought in His mind as being acceptable to Him. Though I find no biblical support for such a conclusion, I tend to think this statement was made in rebuke of those who might have tried to justify their sacrifices in light of God's testing of Abraham regarding his willingness to be submissive to the LORD and sacrifice Isaac whether it made sense to him or not. That would be similar to how the false teachers in the church today twist the truth of God's word to promote their own purposes.

(6/11) I was listening to Stephen Meyer re the reliability of the scripture, and he made a comment regarding verse 5 that enlightened me. My understanding of his statement: He understood God to be saying that He never gave a commandment against the sacrifice of children because it never entered His mind that they would sink so low as to participate in such practices. (cf 32:35) My thoughts: In light of God's omniscience, I think we need to understand that the Lord is speaking on a human level of thinking. In light of all God's other commands, it would seem unthinkable that the Israelites could ever consider such a practice justified or reasonable.

We can see from the reference from 2Kings 23 above and verse 6 that Molech and Baal were different names used in reference to one false god.

The LORD declares through Jeremiah that in the future this valley would be known as "The Valley of Slaughter." The obvious reference would be to the great number of the people of Jerusalem/Judah that will be killed by the enemy as a result of God's judgment.

Jer. 19:7 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.

I think the NLT translation is much simpler to understand: *"For I will upset the battle plans of Judah and Jerusalem and let invading armies slaughter them. The enemy will leave the dead bodies as food for the vultures and wild animals."*

The NLT seems to take a little emphasis off of one very important point—the fact

that it is the LORD who will give the enemy of Judah/Jerusalem success, and it is the LORD who will feed the carnivorous birds and the wild beasts with the dead carcasses of the people.

This treatment of the dead corpses just adds to the shame of the people. In my mind it is another aspect of reaping what they have sown. They had used this valley for idol worship showing great disregard for the lives of their children, and now the LORD will treat them with the same contempt.

Jer. 19:8 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.

The LORD goes on to declare through His prophet that Jerusalem will be ruined and become a place that will cause the heathen nations to look upon the people with scorn. The extent of the destruction will astonish all who see it.

Jer. 19:9 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.

The LORD is going to make their circumstances so desperate through the siege of the enemy that they will turn to cannibalism. This is a prophecy that is more than this mom can imagine, but there is no reason not to take this prophecy literally. Scripture records that circumstances were just as horrendous when Benhadad, King of Assyria, besieged Samaria.

2 Kings 6:25–29 “And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.”

Jeremiah’s Lamentation seems to be referencing the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Lamentations 2:20 “Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long?”

Jer. 19:10 ¶ Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,

Jer. 19:11 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.

At this point Jeremiah is instructed to break the bottle in front of his witnesses and tell them that the LORD is going to break the city and its people just as surely as Jeremiah had broken the bottle. Jeremiah was to be sure to break the bottle in such a way that it was beyond repair—just as the city and its people were beyond restoration. The LORD would start over with a new generation.

The decreed destruction would result in Tophet, the Valley of Hinnom, becoming their burial ground; in fact, they will run out of space needed for burials.

Jer. 19:12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even* make this city as Tophet:

Jer. 19:13 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 LORD goes on to emphasize that this destruction will happen because of His decree. The enemy would not succeed except through His empowerment. The LORD had set Jerusalem apart as the location of the temple, the place that was associated with His name as the God of Israel.

1 Kings 8:26–29 “And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.”

Instead of protecting the honor of God’s name, the people had chosen to reject Him and show honor to the false gods of the heathen nations. They had been led into such actions by their kings. God had been clear with His people from the very beginning that He is a jealous God.

Exodus 34:14 “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:”

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

Deuteronomy 6:14–15 “Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.”

Jer. 19:14 Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to

prophecy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people,

Jer. 19:15 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.

After delivering his object lesson to the chosen witnesses in the valley of Hinnom, Jeremiah went to the temple course to declare to all the people that God is going to judge Jerusalem/Judah because they have refused to listen to His prophet. They have hardened their necks, a picture from the Hebrew of turning their back on the God of Israel. They have purposely chosen to break covenant with their God and turn to the worship of false gods. They refuse to repent when confronted with their sins and the opportunity to seek God's mercy.