Jeremiah Chapter 19

May 19, 2024 · PM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2024/jeremiah-chapter-19/

Chapter 19

Theme: Using a clay bottle for the lesson, Jeremiah promised the ruin of Tophet and Jerusalem like it.

Outline:

1-6 Tophet Renamed Valley of Slaughter

7-9 Siege Bad Enough to Eat Own Children

10-13 God to Break City Like Potter's Vessel

14-15 All Prophesied Evil Will Come to Pass

Preparatory Reading: Jeremiah 7; II Kings 6:24-33.

Related Links:

1. Short Overview of Jeremiah *(slides; 2024).*
2. *Short Overview of O.T. Prophets (slides; 2023) … The Prophets of the Old Testament, here.*
3. Long Overview of O.T. Prophets *(slides; 2019), here.*
4. Introduction to Jeremiah *(sermons only; 2024), here.*
5. Glory of Fulfilled Prophecy *(sermon and outline; 2010).*

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Introduction:

1. God gave Jeremiah His word at his ordination; here He confirmed all he preached would come to pass.
2. Judgment bad enough to eat your children and your friends in a siege should scream the evil of sin.
3. Such punishment is hard to even imagine, but it is far less than what is coming on the world soon.
4. The song, *Day of Judgment! Day of Wonders!*, asks, *Careless sinner, what will then become of you?*
5. Every word of God in both testaments, especially the Bible's last book, will most surely come to pass.

Tophet Renamed Valley of Slaughter – Verses 1-6

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;

A. We have had much of this section previously in chapter 7 of presumption by the temple.

B. The previous chapter had Jeremiah visit a potter's house to see the sovereignty of God.

C. Now he was to get a potter's clay bottle for an object lesson in the verses 10-11 ahead.

D. He was to take some very old common people and very old priests of Judah as witnesses.
E. Jews that brought the woman taken in adultery were convicted from oldest to youngest.
F. When he broke the bottle at the appointed place, the witnesses were to see it (Jer 19:10).
G. Maybe, just maybe, their years of wisdom would get Judah to listen and repent? But no.
H. Lesson: Age should add gravity, humility, knowledge, and wisdom. Are you growing?

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,

A. We met this place before in chapter 7, which is good reading to prepare for this chapter.
B. Tophet, or this valley, was a chief place for child sacrifice and burning refuse and burial.
    1. It was near Jerusalem in a ravine bordering Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15:8; 18:6).
    2. Various kings of Judah sacrificed children there (I Kgs 11:7; II Chr 28:3; 33:1-10).
    3. Some evidence says the name is for drums beaten to drown out children's screams.
    4. Josiah defiled the place severely to try to end all child sacrifice there (II Kgs 23:10).
    5. It became a refuse pit with constant fire, a picture of hell, or *Gehenna* (Isaiah 30:33).
    6. This indictment is likely after Josiah, due to Manasseh and Zedekiah (Jer 15:4; 21:1).
    7. Consider how abominable it is to burn to death any child, but even daughters also.
    8. Satan's religions take your children like this, but our God killed His own Son for us.
    9. Never forget the angel of the bottomless pit is Abaddon and Apollyon, a destroyer.
C. With his group of ancient witnesses from Jerusalem, Jeremiah went out to this valley.
D. This senior citizen field trip was unlike anything they had ever participated in before.
E. Lesson: If there is any valley or sinful thing in your life like Tophet, destroy it today.

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.

A. Jehovah through Jeremiah spoke to the king and citizens of Jerusalem by the witnesses.
    1. The age of the citizen witnesses and office of priest witnesses was a creative change.
    2. Maybe, just maybe, the years of wisdom might get Judah to listen to repent? But no.
    3. Plural kings, we are not told, might include other kings, a co-rex, queen, or princes.
B. We may consider the king reigning at this time was possibly Zedekiah (Jeremiah 21:1).
C. This name and title of Jehovah used here is used again below – a glorious description.
D. The infinite I AM THAT I AM is King of the angelic armies but also God of His people.
E. The tingling is for shockingly terrible judgment news (I Sam 3:11-14; II Kgs 21:10-16).

F. Lesson: GOD Jehovah, though terrible by Jeremiah's prophecies, can be your own God.

G. Lesson: God's creativity is infinite in creation, salvation, and judgment, so repent today.

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;

A. Here is the reason for the ear-tingling news of God bringing great evil upon Jerusalem.

B. They forsook Jehovah – fountain of living waters for a broken cistern (Jer 2:13; 17:13).

C. Here is the reason for God directing Jeremiah and his witnesses to this specific location.

D. They had particularly corrupted this named valley outside Jerusalem with vile idolatry.

E. **Estrange** = to change from one's accustomed or normal condition; to render strange or unfamiliar in appearance. They changed Jehovah's gifted property for His idol enemies.

F. The idolatry here, Jeremiah 7 also described, was incense to idols and burning children.

G. Lesson: When we use a gift of God contrary to His intention, we estrange it (Job 33:27).

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:

A. We met this vile Baal worship in chapter 7, which is helpful to prepare for this chapter.

B. Baal = lord, supreme male deity of Phoenicians and Canaanites (Ashtoreth the female).
   1. We read of Baal 1000 years earlier with Moses and the Moabites (Numbers 22:41).
   2. Israel was known for Baal worship, with Ahab marrying Jezebel of Ethbaal of Sidon.
   3. The Babylonian god Bel or Belus was a related deity worshipped by the Chaldeans.
   4. Jeremiah has Baalim (plural), likely idols or emphasis e.g. Baalzebub, Baalpeor, etc.
   5. His name's nearness to lord or Lord had been rejected by Jehovah (Hosea 2:16).

C. God had never commanded such abomination as child sacrifice nor even thought it.
   1. This text, like some earlier, is perverted by fear of absoluters (Jer 7:10; 19:5; 32:35).
   2. Of course His omniscience fully foresaw the sin previous to it and during its practice.
   3. God had commanded against this abominable religious rite (Lev 18:21; Deut 12:31).
   4. God surely did not command them to do this thing in His revealed will (Deut 29:29).
   5. But He surely had planned and intended them to do so in His secret will (Deut 29:29).
   6. How do we know God intended it? By extension (Exodus 4:21; 14:4; Deuteronomy 2:30; II Samuel 24:1; II Chronicles 32:31; Psalm 76:10; 81:11-12; Isaiah 63:17; John 12:40; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 7:42; Rom 1:18-32; II Thess 2:9-12; I Peter 2:8; Jude 1:4).
   7. How do we know God did this? By Ezekiel's perfect description (Ezekiel 20:25-26).

8. How did God's church do such a thing? By rejecting preaching and being given over.

D. The child sacrifice to Baal here mentions sons only – chapter 7 mentions both (Jer 7:31).

E. Connecting two other places, children are the innocents (Jer 19:4; II Kings 21:16; 24:4).

F. Lesson: Train your children in the fear and love of God Jehovah lest you sacrifice them.

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.

A. We met judgment of this valley in chapter 7, which is helpful to prepare for this chapter.

B. God had specific plans for this place of child sacrifice – a burial place for the rebels.

C. The Chaldeans and Jews later to cleanse the land of corpses would fill it with the bodies.

D. As the next verse declares, there would too many carcasses to bury, so some were left.

E. Tophet, or this valley, was a chief place for child sacrifice and burning refuse and burial. It was near Jerusalem in a ravine bordering Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15:8; 18:6).
   1. Various kings of Judah sacrificed children there (I Kgs 11:7; II Chr 28:3; 33:1-10).
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F. Notice here the use of a capital 'T' in the definite article The for the names of the valley.
   1. We saw this use in a previous chapter for the name of Jehovah or LORD (Jer 16:21).
   2. Since the original 1611 KJV did not use this format, we compare to find a purpose.
   3. For these valley proper names, the definite article The is used without other capitals.
   4. So previous use for Jehovah's name LORD is to emphasize it as a name (Jer 16:21).

G. Lesson: God's jealousy for His worship and His gifts require us to treat both perfectly.

Section Lessons

A. Lesson: Age should add gravity, humility, knowledge, and wisdom. Are you growing?

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Siege Bad Enough to Eat Own Children – Verses 7-9

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 carcases will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

A. Kings and citizens of Judah and Jerusalem had dedicated this location to Baal worship.
   1. They vainly thought burning their children to Baal would save them from Chaldeans.
   2. The place where they pursued Baal worship to save them would be their cemetery.

B. It has always been a great dishonor to have your body exposed to elements and animals.

C. Moses had warned of too many carcasses to drive birds and beasts away (Deut 28:26).

D. There were not enough caring Jews left to protect these bodies from their consumption.

E. For much more about rebellious counsel not escaping judgment, see a Proverb … the Proverbs 16:5 commentary.

F. For much more about folly trying anything contrary to the Bible, see a Proverb … the Proverbs 21:30 commentary.

G. Lesson: There is no wisdom, understanding, nor counsel against the LORD (Pr 21:30).

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.

A. Jehovah would make the thriving metropolis of Jerusalem desolate to a terrible degree.

B. **Hiss** = To make the sharp spirant sound of geese or snakes or the pronunciation of ‘s’.

C. While we make different sounds to show mockery or disgust or surprise, get the point.

D. We have seen this judgment before with wagging (Jer 18:16), and we shall see it again.

E. Nebuzaradan did his job well, and one of the world’s most beautiful cities was rubble.

F. Think of the astonishment of Bible examples that compromised i.e. Lot, Samson, Judas.

G. Lesson: Our lives can be a testimony of God’s goodness or His destructive judgment.

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.

A. This degree of famine and straitness (to contract or narrow) is exceptional but recorded.

B. Moses had threatened this from God 1000 years earlier (Lev 26:27-29; Deut 28:49-57).

C. God had brought it to pass on Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes (II Kings 6:24-33).

D. It happened to Jerusalem; Jeremiah wrote that mothers boiled their children (Lam 4:10).

E. It happened again in the world's worst tribulation in 70 A.D., documented by Josephus.
F. It is nothing compared to what comes next – end of the universe and Day of Judgment.
G. Lesson: Studying Jeremiah shows God's fury against sin, but we face worse ourselves.
H. Lesson: Let us, knowing the terror of the Lord, be moved to repent unlike these Jews.

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God to Break City Like Potter's Vessel – Verses 10-13

10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,

A. See Jeremiah again – he is outside the city at Tophet with ancients of people and priests.
B. He had gotten a potter's earthen or clay bottle before leaving the city for his prophecy.
C. Now is the climax God wanted for his object lesson – the time to break the clay bottle.
D. Lesson: Lord, let us never be so rebellious that we are a bottle in your hand to be broken.

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.

A. Why a clay bottle? So the ancient witnesses had a visual image of irreparable breakage.
    1. A kiln-dried piece of pottery that is broken has many shivers; it cannot be restored.
    2. There would be no successful defense of the city but total destruction by Babylon.
    3. They would not rebuild the city back again … not until God's 70 years were fulfilled.
B. The Chaldean destruction coming would overwhelm Tophet with burials (Jer 7:32-33).
    1. The sacred place of Baal religion would be a stinking place of pestilence by bodies.
    2. Think shame. Judah thought Tophet might save them, but it would be their cemetery.
C. There would be no remedy this time around, for Manasseh and Judah had gone too far.
D. They killed in Tophet; God made it their cemetery; He turns ways on men (Ps 9:15-16).
E. Lesson: We can be a clay bottle in God's hands, if we do not heed His reproof (Pr 29:1).
F. Lesson: The sin you may enjoy now – from drunkenness to rebellion – can destroy you.

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

A. Jeremiah now applied the irreparable destruction to the city nearby, capital Jerusalem.

B. Refer back to Tophet being overwhelmed by dead bodies for pestilence, now Jerusalem.

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.

A. The inspired prophet gets even more detailed – their houses would end up like Tophet.

B. Though the children were burned at Tophet, the Jews used city roofs for pagan worship.

C. Baal child sacrifice at Tophet was not all – they adored sun, moon, stars, and other gods.

D. Lesson: If you think yourself far removed from sun worship, what about the horoscope?

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All Prophesied Evil Will Come to Pass – Verses 14-15

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,

A. Jeremiah returned to Jerusalem, where he usually was, to preach in the temple's court.

B. His horrible prophecy at Tophet, addressing Judah, was spoken to the ancient witnesses.

C. Having committed a private sober warning to the ancients, he resumed with the nation.

D. Lesson: David desired the house of the Lord, for it is where we hear the word (Ps 27:4).

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.

A. Back in Jerusalem, Jehovah assured Judah that all His prophecies would come to pass.

B. Here again, for the second time in this chapter, is the glorious name and title of Jehovah.

C. Now in chapter 19, consider all the evil you have read He pronounced to bring on them.
D. The trip to Tophet for its use of witnesses had not changed the desolation of all of Judah.
E. Why? They hardened their necks, a metaphor of a bullock resisting to submit to a yoke.
F. Why? They hardened their necks – a bullock refuses to plow; the Jews refused to obey.
G. Lesson: The worst blindness is proud stubbornness refusing to humbly bow to His word.
H. Lesson: He will not reprove forever, for He sends destruction without remedy (Pr 29:1).
I. Lesson: Jesus said take His yoke upon you – submit easily – His ways are rest for souls.
J. Lesson: Resisting His rule makes life hard and heavy; His yoke is easy and burden light.
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