



“A Struggle With Man & God” (Jeremiah 19-20)

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Intro: Review chapter 18...The pot marred in the potter’s hands represented God’s intention for these people that He was unable to fulfill due to their refusal to repent and submit to His will for their lives...

Matthew 23: ³⁷ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate.

I. THE TEXT

Chapter 19

vv.1-2a The Valley of Ben Hinnom = “The Valley of the son of Hinnom.” It was also called the Valley of Topheth because it was here that the Canannites worshipped gods like Molech & Baal by sacrificing their children in fire. Topheth means roasting place or burning place. When Josiah was king, he had the altars to these false gods torn down and made this place the city dump. Fires still burned here pretty much continually, but now only to consume all the garbage. Jeremiah is told by God to go near the entrance to the Potsherd gate. This was the gate the potters would bring their discarded pottery and throw it in the dump.

vv.2b-9 Things would get so bad during the seige by the Babylonians that formerly loving mothers would actually eat their own children (Lam.4:10)

* v.3 The “tingling” refers to what one feels when they hear of a sudden death or tragic accident.

v.10a Right in the middle of his message, Jeremiah was to break the jar, then finish his message...BREAK THE JAR ON STAGE...anyone not paying attention before this would be alert now!

* Note: This is a contrast between chapter 18 where the clay in the potter’s hand is still wet and pliable. Here the clay has hardened and the final end is unchangeable. This broken pot represents the wrath that is going to come upon these people as a result of their refusal to heed the Word of God and repent.

* In the NT, the Valley of Ben Hinnom (Hebrew) is called Gehenna (Greek), and Gehenna is usually translated as “hell” (Matt.23:33; Mark 9:45; Luke 12:5). Jesus used Gehenna to illustrate hell. So

Jeremiah's message goes beyond the people of his day and warns all who refuse to repent that destruction (Gehenna) will be their final end.

vv.10b-15 So from the city dump to the place of worship, everyone in Jerusalem heard Jeremiah's message.

Chapter 20

vv.1-2 This is the first time that anyone has actually physically persecuted Jeremiah. How would Jeremiah respond?

vv.3-6 Jeremiah prophesies against Pashhur

* Note: This is the first time that Babylon is actually mentioned.

vv.7-8 Jeremiah complains to the Lord. We have seen Jeremiah's humanness before (ch.12), and here we find him struggling once again.

v.9 Jeremiah had thoughts of simply resigning his call to proclaim truth

v.10 How tragic, even all Jeremiah's friends had turned against him, were mocking him, and looked for any opportunity to secure his demise.

vv.11-13 Aren't you glad Jeremiah's struggle ends here in faith and praise?

vv.14-18 WOW! What an abrupt change! How do you explain this?

* "What these curses convey...is a state of mind, not a prosaic plea. The heightened language is not there to be analyzed: it is there to bowl us over. Together with other tortured cries from him and his fellow sufferers, these raw wounds in Scripture remain lest we forget the sharpness of the age-long struggle, or the frailty of the finest overcomers." (J.A. Motyer, p.81).

* See Psalm 103:14

* Peter one minute emphatically declaring that he will die with Jesus, and just a few hours later denying three times that he even knew him. Elijah standing against 850 false prophets on Mt Carmel, then for fear of Jezebel running off to hide in a cave. Abraham, credited righteousness as a result of God's promise of a son, then struggled waiting for God to fulfill that promise, attempting to fulfill God's will through Sarah's handmaid Hagar. Noah, building an ark that could have saved the entire population of the earth, and after surviving the judgment, planted a vineyard, made some wine, got drunk and lay naked in his tent. Asaph (Psalm 73:21-22; Psalm 74:1). See Psalm 42; 43).

* See Matthew 27:46

II. LESSONS

A. Struggling With Following The Call Of God Upon Your Life

* Jeremiah followed God's call reluctantly (Jer.1:4-8). God did put a little pressure on him (Jer.1:17).

* Moses (Ex.3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13)

* Gideon (Judges 6:11-27, 36-40; 7:2-7, 8b-11, 16-21)

* Jonah

* See Luke 14:25-35; Luke 9:25; I John 2:15-17

B. Struggling Because You Have Followed The Call Of God Upon Your Life.

* Moses (Num.11:15)

* Job (Job 1:1-5, 6-12; 2:11-3:4)

* John the Baptist

CONCLUSION

* Compelled to live much alone, this much-suffering man acquired the habit of counting on the companionship of God as one of the undoubted facts of his life. He poured into the ear of God every thought as it passed through his soul. He spread forth his roots by the river of God, which is full of water...The Lord was his strength, his stronghold, and his refuge in the day of affliction...F.B Myer, pp.89-90.