

## A Broken Potter's Jar

### Jeremiah 19

#### Outline

- 1-9 | God tells Jeremiah the message of calamity to convey using the potter's jar
- 10-13 | Breaking the jar
- 14-15 | Jeremiah's declaration in the temple court

#### Reflections

Jeremiah is told by God to continue the use of the potter illustration to convey the message of destruction. In the last chapter, the potter was working with clay and forming and reforming a pot or jar from it as he wished. Now Jeremiah is told buy an already finished stoneware pot to use in his object lesson concerning Jerusalem's impending calamity being allowed by God.

Most of the events described in this chapter take place just outside the city of Jerusalem in the valley of Ben-hinnom or Topheth. The IVP Bible Background Commentary<sup>1</sup> offers this description and history of this place.

The Valley of Ben Hinnom was on the south side of Jerusalem and joined the Kidron Valley at the southeast corner of the city. It became infamous for Baal worship because of the acts of Ahaz and Manasseh. Josiah defiled the region in order to prevent future idolatrous acts.

According to Smith and Fausset<sup>2</sup>, it is believed that this was originally a king's music grove or garden but then became defiled by the child sacrifices to Molech and sacrifices to Baal. This valley is also known as Gehenna (Strong's G1067), translated as hell in the New Testament. Although the use in the New Testament is more figurative rather than literal.

- **hell** - Matthew 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6

*A possible location.* [alt-arch.org](http://alt-arch.org) has a good picture highlighting the Kidron valley to the east and the Hinnom valley to the south of the city of Jerusalem. It also highlights the location of [King's Garden](#), which is a modern and controversial proposed park that could have been where Jeremiah's Topheth might have been located. That is merely my opinion but it is based on various Bible dictionary and encyclopedia entries.

It is interesting that in chapter 18, Jeremiah uses the illustration of a potter working with something that is still soft and malleable. Whereas in this chapter, he is instructed to make illustration with an already hardened pot or jar. Could this be an illustration of God's willingness to work with a people who are still willing to repent and be reformed into God's image and promises calamity will come to those who have hardened their hearts toward God and His commandments?

The people of Israel are repeatedly called a stiff-necked, hard-hearted, and people in both the Old and New Testaments.

- **stiff-necked** - Deuteronomy 10:16; II Kings 17:14; II Chronicles 30:8; 36:13; Nehemiah 9:29; Jeremiah 7:26; 17:23; 19:15; Mark 9:18; Acts 7:51
- **hard-hearted** - I Samuel 6:6; II Chronicles 36:13; Psalms 95:8; Proverbs 28:14; Isaiah 63:17; Lamentations 3:65; Matthew 19:8; Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; 10:5; 16:14; John 12:40; Ephesians 4:18; Hebrews 3:8,15; 4:7
- **stubborn** - Deuteronomy 9:6,13; Judges 2:19; Nehemiah 9:16,17,29; Psalms 78:8; Isaiah 46:12; Jeremiah 5:23; Ezekiel 2:4; 3:7; Hosea 4:16; Zechariah 7:11

Consider the following out of Romans.

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**Romans 1:16-32 NASB** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. **21** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

**24** Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. **25** For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

**26** For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, **27** and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

**28** And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, **29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; **32** and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Don't become hard-hearted, stiff-necked and stubborn toward God and His commandments! Seek the Lord today while you are still able to. You won't be disappointed!

Lord God, we pray that You will still see us a malleable and able to reform in those areas of our live where we still need to come into agreement with You Word. Soften out hearts and open our minds to You and we pray that Your Spirit will help us to understand how You would have us to live to honor You. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1 - Walton, John H. et al. *IVP Bible Background Commentary*. InterVarsity Press; e-Sword, 2000.

2 - Fausset, A. R. *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*. Public Domain; e-Sword, 1800s.

Smith, William. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Public Domain; e-Sword, 1884.

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