**Jeremiah 19 (Lesson 11a)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 19 – The Broken Bottle (2 min. to read)**

A. Message In A Bottle (19:1-9; cf. Lev. 18:21; Ex. 20:1-6)

1. In an expansion on the previous chapter’s potter and clay imagery, Jeremiah is instructed to purchase a clay bottle and take leaders, namely priests and elders, with him into the Valley of Hinnom.

2. *“Whereas a spoiled vessel on the potter’s wheel could be reshaped, once it had hardened it was beyond reconstruction, and only fit for breaking. The earthenware container symbolized the final form of Judah’s spiritual obduracy (cf. Rev. 22:11), and the act of shattering it in the presence of senior citizens and priests indicated the coming doom.”* (Harrison, 110f)

3. Jeremiah shares a prophecy of doom for the people so severe that the people’s ears would tingle. The reasons for this doom are fourfold: 1) Forsaking the Lord; 2) Estrangement from true religion; 3) Murder of true prophets (e.g. 2Kgs. 21:16); 4) Baal worship, sp. human sacrifice.

4. It will not be called “Topheth” (*hallowed place for sacrifice*) but rather the Valley of Slaughter (cf. 7:31f; 2Kgs. 23:10). *“In that valley the people had killed and burned their sons when, following the rites of Molech worship, they required a sacrifice of particular efficacy in an emergency (cf. 7:31f).”* (Harrison, 111) Their choice of human sacrifice will lead to cannibalizing their loved ones (cf. Dt. 28:53; Lam. 4:10).

5. God would make void, a pun on the Heb. for bottle. It may have been that Jeremiah symbolically poured out the bottle and then smashed it.

B. Christening The Sinking Ship (19:10-15)

1. While on the pottery wheel, the clay could be remade. This bottle is smashed and as such cannot be repaired. The Jews will return, but they will never again be the same. God won’t make a full end, but He is ending a huge section of Israel’s purpose.

2. *“Cuneiform texts recovered from Ras Shamra included a ritual to be used when offerings were made on rooftops to astral deities and celestial luminaries (cf. Zp. 1:5).”* (Harrison, 112) cf. *The Legend of King Keret*.

3. After this object lesson in the Valley, Jeremiah ascends into the Temple and repeats the message in the true place of worship. The use of the 3rd person may indicate Baruch is the writer/observer here.

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 19**

A. What had Josiah done to Topheth? (2Kgs. 23:10)

B. How can one be a vessel fit for noble use? (cf. 2Tim. 2:20f)

C. What information is gathered by a comparison of 19:11 & Josh. 21:43; 23:14-16?

**III. Applications For Chapter 19**

A. Estrangement from God leads to perversion, which leads to abomination.

B. No human hand can deliver from God (Lev. 26:17; Heb. 10:31; Ps. 118:8f; 146:3f).

C. *“The hope of modern Israel is not a return to Palestine as premillenialists have predicted. God’s promises to Israel were conditional (cf. 18:6-10), and because of their rejection of God they were never to be made whole again. The ‘hope’ of the Jews is only in Christ, that by faith in Him they may be saved (cf. Acts 26:6-7; 28:20; Rom. 11:20-23; Gal. 3:26-29).”* (Harkrider, 56)

**Jeremiah 20 (Lesson 11b)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 20 – Problems With Passhur (2-2.5 min. to read)**

A. Passhur Arrests Jeremiah (20:1-6; cf. v. 5 w/ 39:6f)

1. Passhur and Immer are personal names here but will become family names later on (cf. Ezra 2:37f; 10:20). It was also a common name at the time (cf. 21:1; 38:1).

2. Passhur, the chief overseer of the temple, disturbed by the message arrests Jeremiah, puts him in stocks (Heb. “twist”) by N gate for all to scold. In addition to the stocks, Jeremiah is also beaten (cf. 2Cor. 11:24; Dt. 25:3). Compare to the treatment of Apostles (Acts 4:17-21; 5:27-29).

3. *“This narrative focuses on what Jeremiah told Pashur the next morning after being released. The name Pashur would be changed to ‘Terror on every side.’ The coming events would cause even his friends to point an accusing finger at him: ‘Pashur, Horror! For your horrible rebellion we must go through these horrors.’”* (Harkrider, 55)

4. *Terror on every side* is also used in 6:25; 20:10; 46:5; 49:29; Lam. 2:22

B. Jeremiah’s Valley Of Shadows (20:7-18; cf. 15:18-21; Heb. 4:12f; 1Kgs. 19:4-18)

1. Jeremiah openly & very heavily laments the circumstances. Why keep up if this is the reaction? Far from honor, he himself has found horror.

2. Even though he tries to hold back, God’s wrath burns in his bones.

3. Even his friends have him in their sights but he knows that God is on his side. Even so, he is incredibly despondent & curses day of his birth.

4. *“This is a powerful poetic section which contains unusual psychological insights, not merely in relation to Jeremiah himself but for canonical prophecy as a whole because of the self-disclosure of profound emotional conflict. Jeremiah’s sensitive nature appears in his reaction to the sarcasm and ridicule with which his message was received. His situation was all the more acute because his burning prophetic vocation compelled him to testify concerning covenant spirituality despite all opposition from his beloved countrymen. Thus if is hardly surprising that the emotional tension and conflict which resulted found occasional expression in an outburst of intense feeling such as that indicated here...This section depicts a man loudly complaining about his lot in life, yet showing that he is still submissive, loyal, and obedient to God’s will.”* (Harrison, 113f) compare Humphries, 214.

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 20**

A. How would Passhur be recompensed for his rebellion? (20:3-6)

B. What lessons can we learn from this complaint? (Mott, 113; Humphries 220)

C. Who else cursed the day of his birth in time of trial? (20:14-18)

**III. Applications For Chapter 20**

A. One can praise God with singing even with a broken heart (20:14).

B. *“Those who preach God’s word must be committed to a life, not just a ‘vocational position.’ Sometimes the responsibilities will bring heaviness of heart so great that one would prefer not to be in that position. However, the love of God and of His people should cause the servant of the Lord to persevere (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2-4; 2 Cor. 4:8-10; 1 Cor. 9:19-23).”* (Harkrider, 56) Old saying, 3 kinds of preachers

C. God has given us a wide range of emotions that we can use reverently before Him.