

## **JEREMIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that God is speaking to the Southern Kingdom of Judah through Jeremiah and no one wants to hear what Jeremiah is saying. It is as if they were blinded to their sin. We see that in Jeremiah 16:10, **“And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?’”**

And the Lord showed them their sin and He is continuing to show them their sin here in Jeremiah chapter 17. Their sin had permeated their lives from the social sins to their religious sins, they had all come together in the lives of these people and they refused to see them. That is what Jeremiah is going to address here. With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 17 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

### **JEREMIAH 17**

#### **VERSES 1-4**

1. Notice how deeply their sin was in their lives, it was engraved with a diamond pen upon their hard hearts. It was not engraved with a pencil but something that was permanent, it had become such a part of their lives that they were not willing to let go of their sin and return to the Lord!

Not only is their sin engraved in their hearts but outwardly it is manifested in their lives as Jeremiah tells us that it is seen **“on the horns of your altars.”** What does that mean that their sin was performed on the horns of their pagan altars? Interestingly enough excavations in Israel have uncovered horned altars at sites such as Dan, Beersheba, and Arad. On some altars bloodstains can still be detected after more than 2,500 years. In both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah they worshiped these false gods! Their sin remains for us to see, their altars to their pagan gods are stained with blood!

2. And as you read verse 2 you can clearly see that this idolatress lifestyle affected the whole family, they all practiced these pagan activities. What the parents did was passed on to the children and thus, what a reminder of the influence we have on our children and grandchildren!

3. The end result of this wicked lifestyle was that they were going into captivity! All their riches, all their wealth, all their possessions, all that God had given to them would be taken away. Not only that but they will be slaves in a land that they did not know, Babylon. The reason, all because they refused to turn back to God!

#### VERSES 5-6

1. The Lord is saying that anyone who trusts in the strength of man will not prevail. They will be dry and barren. Look at our nation and all the struggles we are having. And in all that, who do we turn to? We turn to the strong arm of man instead of the Lord who can help. You see, you cannot trust in both God and humankind because to turn one's heart toward people is to turn away from God. And in the end there is just destruction, destroyed lives!

2. This section of Jeremiah parallels what Psalm 1 has to say. Listen carefully, **“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.”**

3. In America we may have printed on our money *“In God We Trust”* but the reality is what we should have on our money is *“In Self I trust!”* If you want to go down that path of trusting in yourself you will wither away like a shrub in the desert, you will not see when good comes because good is not going to come for you, and you will find yourself lonely or in a barren land. I do find that interesting, in Christ we have family all over the place and apart from Christ people end up being lonely!

Let me just share with you a few quotes regarding self from Ralph Waldo Emerson in his book, “Self-Reliance and Other Essays” because this is exactly what the Lord is coming against the Southern Kingdom of Judah for, self-reliance! He lived from 1803 to 1882 but as you listen to what he wrote, America is living it! He wrote,

“Be yourself; no base imitator of another, but your best self. There is something which you can do better than another. Listen to the inward voice and bravely obey that. Do the things at which you are great, not what you were never made for.”

“Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.”

“Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.”

“I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching.”

“Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.”

Now as you look at what the Lord is saying through Jeremiah He is telling us not to trust ourselves because as we put our trust in ourselves we are turning away from God as I have said. God is warning us, may we be listening!

4. As we read on you will see what I mean about this being like Psalm 1. We have the cursing for those who do not trust in the Lord and the blessing for those who do trust in the Lord!

#### VERSES 7-8

1. Make no mistake about it; we all have a choice to trust in the Lord or trust in ourselves. We can't blame God for where we go apart from Him but we can praise God if we learn to trust in Him! Our hope is in Him and it is not just wishful thinking. What God has promised He is more than able to bring to pass the Scriptures tell us. Thus, our hope is rock solid!

2. And for those of us who have placed our trust in the Lord we are told that we are like a tree planted by the waters and our roots are firmly established in the Lord. Not only does Psalm 1 speak of this but Jesus said in John 15:5, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”** May we trust in the Lord, may we sink our roots deep down into Him and allow the fresh waters of the Holy Spirit to keep us fresh and fruitful!

3. Now you may be thinking to yourself, “Why is it so wrong to trust in myself?” Well, we don’t have to guess because the Lord is going to tell us. There is a problem from the get-go and when you start to live your life apart from God and you are starting from the wrong place where do you think you will end up? Down a road of destruction! Let’s read on and see what the Lord has to say.

### VERSES 9-10

1. As most of you know I have been a nurse for some 30 years and worked in the Critical Care Units for most of that time. And I am here to tell every one of you that you have a **HEART PROBLEM!** No not because I am a nurse but God says that you have a heart problem! And it is incurably sick, it is deceitful and you can’t even know how bad it is but God can show you!

Some of you may have read the Edgar Allan Poe story called “The Tell-Tale Heart.” It is the story of a murderer and he has just buried the old man’s corpse beneath the floorboards. As soon as he has finished the police arrive on the scene because a neighbor has heard a scream and they have come to investigate if something has happened.

As the murderer invites the police into his house, trying to remain calm, they are not finding anything. As they continue their search the murderer begins to hear “a low, dull, quick sound – such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.” This is what took place as the murderer tells us,

I gasped for breath – and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly – more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations [gestures]; but the noise steadily increased. . . . I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides . . . but the noise steadily increased. . . . I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder – louder – louder! . . . “Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed! – tear up the planks! – here, here! – it is the beating of his hideous heart!”

- Edgar Allan Poe, A Collection of Stories, pp. 156-161

It was not the heart of the dead man that betrayed him but his own tell-tale heart and that is what the Lord is saying here. It is your heart that is evil, it is bad and you can't fix it on your own and you don't even realize how bad it really is!

And when we are saved we are given a new heart by the Lord. He does a heart transplant, not a physical one but a spiritual one! But again, make no mistake about it, that evil heart tries to resurrect itself and we can't even know the depth of depravity that is in it!

Then how can we know what is in our heart? David said in Psalm 139:23-24, “**Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**”

God will show us what is in our hearts as we read His Word, but most often by the trials, the testing's we go through. Difficult times tend to show us what is in our hearts like anger, bitterness, lack of faith, and-so-on.

And as God shows us the ugliness that is in there we need to give it to Him so He can purge us of that garbage and make us more like Him. Yes God has given us a new heart but keep in mind the old nature comes to the surface and those things we thought we conquered come into our lives once again. And as God shows us these wicked ways that are in us, give it to Him as He leads us in the way everlasting. But don't fool yourself; the heart is full of deceit!

### VERSE 11

1. Remember what we just read about the heart, that it is deceitful and desperately wicked and only the Lord can search it out, only the Lord knows what is in there. Let me share with you what The Amplified Bible says of this verse, it is a little clearer and then I will expound on it.

The Amplified Bible says, **“Like the partridge that gathers a brood which she did not hatch and sits on eggs which she has not laid, so is he who gets riches by unjust means and not by right. He will leave them, or they will leave him, in the midst of his days, and at his end he will be a fool.”**

This was a proverb that was based on the common belief that the partridge hatched eggs other than its own. When these young birds are hatched and they realize that the partridge was not their mother they would leave her.

So what the Lord is saying here is that those who gather riches in an unrighteous way will be like a bird who sits on eggs that are not her own. Once they hatch they will fly away never to be seen again just like a person who gathers riches in an unworthy manner. Ill-gotten gain will leave you empty in the end and you will be known as a fool. And this word, **“fool”** is speaking of a person without any moral, ethical or spiritual character. In other words, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”** Jeremiah 17:9.

VERSES 12-13

1. We have just seen how wicked we are and there looks like there is no hope for us and yet, here we see where our hope is found, in the Lord. He is the hope of Israel and He is the hope for all mankind.

In Hebrews 10:19-23 we are told, **“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”**

You see, our sanctuary, our rest, our comfort, our refuge, our hope is only found in the Lord. But if you reject Him, if you turn from the living God, the fountain of living waters you will be written in the dust of the earth, you will not enter into eternity with the Lord but apart from Him in the Lake of Fire! It seems like a simple choice but the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked!

VERSES 14-18

1. I think you can understand the frustration that Jeremiah was going through and he is asking God to vindicate him by punishing those who were coming against him. You see, the people are mocking Jeremiah for what he has said. They refused to see the warnings of God and His coming judgment.

Way may see them as foolish for their actions but we are no different today. People are still saying, “Where is the judgment of God? You have been saying that for years!” Interestingly enough the Lord knew what people would say in the days we are living in.

Peter, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit warned us of this when he said in II Peter 3:3-6, **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.”**

The warning here is not to forget the past judgment because as sure as that happened there is coming another judgment. You can mock the coming judgment, ignore the coming judgment but that is not going to stop the coming judgment just as in the days of Noah when the floods came. For 120 years Noah was mocked by the people until that first rain drop fell and then it was too late!

Notice what Peter goes on to say starting in verse 7 of II Peter chapter 3, **“But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”** II Peter 3:7-10.

Our hope needs to be in the Lord and His promises to us. Once we start taking our eyes off the Lord and His promises we tend to lose hope and that is a dangerous place to be!

2. Jeremiah also speaks of shepherding the people of God but over and over again they refused to follow him, they refused to listen to his words and thus, destruction would come upon them. And at one point Jeremiah asks God not to judge him with these wicked people. And God didn't.

As the Babylonians came and took away the captives, Jeremiah was only with them a brief period of time. For the Babylonians asked Jeremiah if he wanted to stay with them and go to Babylon or remain free in Jerusalem. He choose to stay and eventually he went down to Egypt to minister to the Jews that fled there for safety, and there Jeremiah finished out his life on this earth, his ministry came to an end after years of service. But he stayed the course, he finished the race and so must we!

3. That should bring us great comfort knowing that God does spare the righteous from His judgment. II Peter 2:9 tells us, **“then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”**

And in I Thessalonians 5:9-11 we read **“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”**

Make no mistake about it, difficult times are coming and they are here. Our hope is not in this nation or its leaders, it is in the Lord. And like Jeremiah said about the Lord, we too can say, **“You are my hope with the day of doom.”** Yes we will have tribulation in this world, but the wrath of God will not come upon us if we are His!

VERSES 19-27

1. The Lord tells Jeremiah to go to the gates of the city of Jerusalem and speak to the people. And the message was simple, keep the Sabbath Day! You see, the sign of the Mosaic covenant was to keep the Sabbath Day. This was their reminder of their marriage to the Lord just as a wedding ring is a sign of a marriage relationship.

One day a week the Lord wanted His people to set aside for rest, for refreshment, for spending time with Him and with their families. They worked hard living in an agrarian society. The work never stopped but God did want them to take that day of rest and they were neglecting it!

The warning is simple! Keep the Sabbath and you will be blessed, you will prosper. Violate the Sabbath and you will not prosper. “What is the big deal, so we don’t keep it?” It was a big deal! Irving L. Jensen explains it like this. He wrote,

The real test of the heart’s relation to God is *obedience to His Word*. One of the laws for Israel was the hallowing of the Sabbath by not working on that day (17:21-22). The constant pressure of materialism upon the lives of all, including the people of God, made the keeping of such a commandment difficult, and for this reason this one commandment of the ten was a real test of the priority of the temporal or the eternal in the heart. Was the keeping of the Sabbath law that crucial to Judah? The symbolic action of Jeremiah and the explicit words he was told to speak gave an affirmative answer.

- Irving L. Jensen, Jeremiah, Prophet of Judgment, p. 59

You see, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”** Jeremiah 17:9. That is the problem and too often we do the same. We know what God wants but we refuse to do it and we have our excuses. For example, coming to church, I just don’t get why some people have such a hard time with this. “Pastor Joe, we are not under the Law, don’t be legalistic here!”

Yes I have heard that before. But let me ask you this. If you are married do you come home every night and why do you come home every night? You come home because you love your spouse, there is no law telling you that you have to come home!

Why do I come to church and don’t say because I am the pastor. I come to church because I love the Lord and I love to worship Him, I love to teach His Word, I love to fellowship with the people of God! You see, I come to church not because of the Law but because of ***LOVE!***

Paul put it like this in Hebrews 10:24-25, **“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”**

Paul is telling us that there were some in his day that let other things get in their way of coming together at church; they were forsaking the assembling with other brothers and sisters in the Lord! Paul is admonishing us to gather together as a local body of believers to worship God, to stir each other up for good works and-so-on. So if you are not doing that, then you are negating what the Scriptures are saying here! Obviously you are, you are here!

2. And because they refused to obey what the Lord was saying through Jeremiah judgment came and their city was destroyed! God is warning us that He wants us to be obedient to Him, not out of the Law but out of *LOVE!*

## JEREMIAH 18

### VERSES 1-6

1. Here we see God tell Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house and there God will speak to him. God is going to give to Jeremiah this object lesson about the potter and the clay.

First of all the potter controlled the wheel upon which the clay was placed and with his hands he could mold something in which he desired to make. As Jeremiah watches the potter work with this clay all of a sudden he stopped. The clay was marred by something. So the potter makes the clay into something else.

What is the point? It really is very simple. God is absolutely sovereign over everything. That should put to silence those who are prideful but it doesn't, why? Because, "**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?**" Jeremiah 17:9.

Now what about the clay? The clay is nothing more than the dust of the earth and that is what we are made of, the dust of the earth! We are but clay! That means we are in the hands of the Potter, we can't tell the Potter or the Lord what to do, we must be obedient to what He is calling us to do as He molds and shapes our lives.

We see that even in Isaiah where we are told, "**Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands?'**"

First of all God is the Creator of all things. And think about that. Shouldn't that make us hesitant to oppose Him in any way? Of course it should. It is just plain foolishness to strive against God. And yet we do that when we negate what God has said to us in His Word. We are telling God that we know better than He does in this situation. That again is just foolishness.

Like the Southern Kingdom of Judah, each of us, like all the people of the world, are like a broken piece of pottery because of sin. And as we continue to strive we remain in that broken condition. But as we turn to Him, the master potter takes that broken piece of pottery and fashions it into something to bring Him honor.

We as Christians can also strive with God and wrestle with Him, but that too is foolish. You see, if you could actually win in your fight with God, you would lose! It is when we surrender to Him, lose in a sense, that we then win!

God knows what is best for our lives. And just as a lump of clay, we should be silent as God molds and shapes our lives and not strive against what He is trying to do. It is as Paul said in Romans 9:20, **“But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’”**

You see, there is no room for pride, for boasting except in the Lord for it is the Lord who has enabled us to do these things and not ourselves. He is the master potter and we are the clay, don't fight against that, you won't win!

VERSES 7-10

1. Once again we clearly see that God is sovereign, He does as He wills. But man also has a free will, a choice to move towards God or away from Him. And God will never force us to go against our free will, but He is still sovereign.

Look at our nation and how we have sunk so low and yet there is hope, not in the next President but in our Lord. If we would repent and return to the Lord God will build us back up but the choice is ours!

VERSES 11-12

1. Wow, you read that and you wonder what in the world were they thinking? The answer once again is very simple, “**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?**” Jeremiah 17:9.

Look at what is taking place here. Jeremiah is warning them of the coming judgment of God and to repent of their sins and return to the Lord, the master potter! And the sad thing here is that they were not interested in the Words of God. They saw the Words of God as being empty which caused them to ignore God’s truth and walk after the imagination of their own hearts.

They continued in their evil ways because “**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?**” Jeremiah 17:9. I think you are catching on to what the problem is – ***THE HEART!***

VERSES 13-14

1. As you read what God is saying here He is condemning His people for turning from Him. This is even astonishing to the Gentiles. And notice the picture of what they turned from and what they turned to. God is speaking of the cool, refreshing waters which are His truth and comparing them to the stale, polluted waters of idolatry. Up in the north of Israel, at the base of Mount Hermon is where the Jordan River begins as the run-off of the mountain snows and rain. These waters were cold and refreshing! That is the picture the Lord is painting of His truth, His Word.

Remember what we were told back in Jeremiah 2:13, **“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.”**

W. H. Thomson put it this way in regards to this verse in Jeremiah chapter 2. He wrote, “The best cisterns, even those in solid rock, are strangely liable to crack . . . , and if by constant care they are made to hold, yet the water collected from clay roofs or from marly [which is a crumbly mixture of clays, calcium and magnesium carbonates, and remnants of shells that is sometimes found under desert sands and used as fertilizer for lime-deficient soils.] soil has the colour of weak soapsuds, the taste of earth or the stable, is full of worms, and in the hour of greatest need it utterly fails.” And yet that is what God’s people went after instead of the fresh, life-giving waters that the Lord had for them!

VERSES 15-17

1. The problem was that they turned from the Lord and what was seen in their lives were these abominations. They burned incense to worthless idols, they stumbled in their ways, they moved off the Highway to Holiness and traveled on these strange paths that lead to death and destruction, the land became desolate, the people disliked them, and they are going into captivity.

You see, this is the result of a singular sin: forgetting God like I have said. Now to forget something means it was once known. And that is the tragedy of Israel and Judah. Unlike the Gentiles, God's people did know Him at one time. But, because they turned their back on Him, they gave Him no choice but to do the same to them.

We see this same thought echoed in I Kings 9:8-9 which says, "**And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'**" And that is exactly what happened, the land and God's people were destroyed, and many of the people were taken into captivity.

VERSE 18

1. They had many priests and prophets around that were speaking of health, wealth and prosperity. Thus, they didn't need this kill joy Jeremiah to speak words of gloom and doom. So they plotted to kill or put to silence Jeremiah for what he was saying. And keep in mind that as they fight against Jeremiah they are also fighting against God!

Remember what the Lord said to Jeremiah as He called him into this ministry, “**But the Lord said to me: ‘Do not say, “I am a youth,” For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,’ says the Lord.**” Jeremiah 1:7-8.

The Lord is telling Jeremiah to keep his focus upon the Lord, don’t look at their faces, don’t let them scare you or discourage you from doing what He has called you to do! What a great lesson for us, keep your eyes upon the Lord and you won’t be moved from the course that God has for your life!

#### VERSES 19-23

1. Jeremiah can’t understand this. Here he is interceding for the people, praying that God would not destroy them, and they want Jeremiah dead. And I think we see Jeremiah get a little frustrated over all of this in the following verses.

Jeremiah was made up of flesh and bone and I think he is just fed up at this point and tells God to wipe them out, destroy them. Obviously that was not the heart of Jeremiah all the time. It was a moment in his life, just as we have. But that is not the heart of God and we must keep that in mind. God does not give up on us; He will complete in us that which He has begun. ***PRAISE THE LORD FOR THAT!***

Now let me also say this. Some feel that Jeremiah is not speaking of personal revenge here but God said He was going to judge them and thus, Jeremiah was just praying for God’s will to be done. It sounds nice, but I don’t think that was his intent here.

**JEREMIAH 19****VERSES 1-2**

1. God now wants Jeremiah to go outside the potsherd gate, which was to the south of the city of Jerusalem. And outside this gate was the valley of Hinnom, which was the garbage dump of the city. Besides the normal garbage, broken vessels or vessels that were of no use were also tossed into this valley. And as Jeremiah gathers the elders of the people and priests, as he stands out there the Lord is going to have him tell the people . . .

**VERSES 3-6**

1. The wickedness of the nation had gotten so bad that they were spilling the blood of the innocents. They offered their sons as human sacrifice to the god Molech and Baal. They have found an idol of this god Molech which was made of bronze, its arms outstretched and fingers pointed upward to hold these small children. They would then place this idol in a fire pit, which was located in the valley of Hinnom, and as the hands of this idol became red hot, they would place their sons in as a sacrifice to this god, ensuring prosperity for them.

How did this happen? Because they turned from God and we have seen how wicked our hearts are, and thus, apart from God we will degenerate into all kinds of wicked and immoral behavior as we see here and as we see in our country today!

2. What they were sowing they were going to reap. You see, they went and sacrificed their children in this valley of Hinnom and God was going to turn the tables on them and have the Babylonians come and destroy them causing this valley to be called the Valley of Slaughter because of all the carnage that will take place in it. God is not mocked! What you sow you will also reap as I have said.

#### VERSES 7-9

1. Not a pretty picture but God wants us to see what happens to a nation that turns from Him. When the Babylonians came they surrounded the city, cut off its food supply and starved the people. It got so bad they were boiling their children and eating them. Those that died they were eating their flesh just to survive.

2. Now you read that and you may think that this was unfair for God to do. Make no mistake about it, if you feel that way you are wrong. God is just, He is fair, He is righteous, there is no darkness in Him at all. That means what they received is what they deserved.

And God had warned them not only through the prophet Jeremiah but in Leviticus 26:27-32 we are told, **“And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.”**

And that is exactly what took place because they did not heed the warning that God had given to them.

3. Now we are going to see that as Jeremiah is speaking these words at the potsherd gate he is told to give them an object lesson. Let’s read on and see what this is all about.

#### VERSES 10-13

1. Remember how this chapter opened up, **“Thus says the LORD: ‘Go and get a potter’s earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. And go out to the valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you.’”** Jeremiah 19:1-2.

He has spoken forth the Words of God and now he is to take this potter's earthen flask and break it, smash it to pieces. Now before we see what this is all about, we must understand that this is born out of what was spoken of in chapter 18 as Jeremiah is watching the potter mold and shape the clay. And as he is working with the clay he stops because the clay had become marred, and thus, he smashes it down and starts all over again. God was working with the clay, Judah, molding and shaping them into a vessel of honor.

But now this is broken and God is saying to the Southern Kingdom of Judah that they had become so hard and brittle that He could no longer mold them and shape their lives. And so God was going to break them and bring them into captivity by the hands of the Babylonians. God was judging them for their idolatry. But please remember that God was going to temper His judgment with grace and mercy. After their captivity He was going to bring them home again.

But don't think that this judgment was easy or mild. Burial places for the dead would be scarce, the houses where they practiced idolatry would be destroyed; the famine in the land will be so bad because the Babylonians cut off their food supply that they will resort to cannibalism and in the end they would rather die!

Remember again what the Lord said to them in Jeremiah 18:11, **“Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.””** God was calling for them to repent and return but they said, **“... ‘That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.’”** Jeremiah 18:12. Thus, judgment was coming!

VERSES 14-15

1. The same message he gave outside the potsherd gate, in the valley of Hinnom, he now gives in the Temple area. And as we are going to see next time there is one priest by the name of Pashhur who does not appreciate what Jeremiah has to say. And probably all the priests didn't appreciate it but this one will step forward.

2. Let me close with this because we are living in a day when people don't appreciate what we have to say about the Lord and His Word and I think the Lord wants us to look to Him and stay focused on the work He has called us to do. Don't look at their faces, keep your eyes on the Lord and don't let anything stop you from sharing your faith.

Paul was encouraging a young pastor by the name of Timothy to continue on in the work and he wrote in II Timothy 4:1-5, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

In spite of people not wanting to hear the truths of God found in the Word of God we are still to convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. Don't deviate from the Word of God for it is living and powerful and can and will transform lives! Stay the course!