JEREMIAH 19, 20

From the “potters house” God instructs Jeremiah to assemble the elders of Israel and lead them on a field trip to the “Valley of the Son of Hinnom.” (Read: v.1-6) According to historians "The son of Hinnom" was some ancient hero who had encamped there (Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, 172). The Valley of Hinnom, also called “Tophet,” is a deep, narrow ravine south of Jerusalem. It was where Israel worshipped the Cannite god Baal, and where parents “sacrificed” their children as a burnt offering to the pagan god Molech (2 Kings 23:10). Tophet - "a drum," because the cries of children here sacrificed by the priests of Moloch were drowned out by the noise of beating drums. “Tophet,” comes from the Hebrew word “toph” - meaning "to burn" and hence a place of burning, (Easton's Bible Dictionary).

In this chapter Jeremiah prophesied that this valley, due to the “human sacrifices” offered there, would become known as "the Valley of Slaughter" (Jeremiah 19:6). In the time of Christ this valley was used as a “garbage dump” for the city of Jerusalem. Fires continually smoldered, and smoke from the burning debris rose day and night. The Valley of Hinnom became a “graphic” symbol of judgment and the place of “eternal” punishment called, “HELL.”

In Greek, the Hebrew "Valley of Hinnom" is called “gehenna” - which is used 12 times in the New Testament (11 times by Jesus and once by James), each time translated in the NKJV as "hell" (Matthew 5:22; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers) (v.7-9) Jeremiah declares, their “counsel” will fail and they would fall before their enemies, (Babylonian invaders). And so it is with those who depart from the Lord; our counsel will “fail” and we will be soundly “defeated” by the enemy of our soul. Things would get so bad that “cannibalism” would actually take place; due to the Babylonian siege, (Read: v.9).

(Read: v.10-15) God instructs His servant Jeremiah to “break the flask” of (v.1). “Humpty Dumpty” – “all the kings’ horses and all the kings’ men...” I believe the
“flask” in regards to America has been “broken,” and only God can put it back together again. Only God can heal the “broken hearted,” and restore our “fragmented lives,” that we might have “peace” with Him. In rage Moses broke the tablets containing the Ten Commandments (Ex.32:19) when he came down from the mountain and saw the people engaging in acts of sin; God gave him a “new set” of tablets (Ex.34:1).

Similarly our sins had left us “broken,” beyond repair, but God gave us His Son, not a new set of “Laws,” but a “New” and “better” Covenant, (Hebrews 8:6) But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Therefore, in Christ, despite the “brokenness” of our condition, we can be restored in a right relationship with God, by His “unbreakable covenant” of grace and mercy, through faith in Christ! (Psalm 30:2) O Lord my God, I cried out to You, And You healed me.

CHAPTER 20

From the Valley of Hinnom, Jeremiah goes to the temple, (19:14). There he proclaims God’s message of repentance and judgment, for which Pashhur, one of the chief officers of the temple, put him in prison. The prophet is placed in “stocks” – a wooden frame in which feet, neck, and hands were fastened so as to hold the body in a “distorted” and “painful” position. Here Jeremiah submits his “resignation.” Lord I’ve done the “sash” thing (chpt.13) like you told me, I went to the potters house (chpt.18) like you told me, I broke the flask, (chapt.19) like you told me; but this is too much! How many of us can relate to Jeremiah, especially when our “flesh” is subjected to “distorted” and “painful” conditions. But, as we will see, God would not let the prophet go! And neither will He let you go. (Read: v.1-6).

In Hebrew Pashhur – splitter, cleaver. But apparently the Lord had changed his name to Magor-Missabib: literally, fear on every side. In other words, Pashhur; you are “paranoid”; operating out of the “fear of man,” rather than the “fear of the Lord!” Therefore, “fear” will be your portion; for he would witness the devastating fall of
Jerusalem, (v.4-6). When we do not fear the Lord above men, “fear will indeed be on “every” side; double-minded man.

Next we see Jeremiah’s complaint. (v.7, 8) “You induced me…” You called me; “I was persuaded…” In the beginning of God’s call we are all persuaded; “I am in derision…”

Derision: ridicule; The inept performance elicited derision from the audience. I’m a “clown” before the people. Quite often, as believers, we experience feelings of “derision” which naturally accompanies the gospel we proclaim. (1 Corinthians 4:8) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

The reality is, “everybody” is somebody’s fool! However, in Christ, that which appears “foolishness” to the world is in fact, the “power” of God unto “salvation!” (1 Corinthians 1:21) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. But the “foolishness” of the world leads to “death!” (Proverbs 16:25) There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Like Elijah, Jeremiah is utterly “discouraged,” and wants to “quit!” Elijah: (1 Kings 19:4b) And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!

This is actually, however, where true “victory” begins; when we “realize” we are “no better” than others, and only God’s “grace,” “alone” can sustain us! Jeremiah would learn that it wasn’t his “grip” on God, but God’s “unrelenting grip” upon him that was the source of his rest and peace! Therefore, (Romans 8:37) Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

(v.9) Sister’s email, God drawing her back. This is how we know we are “born again”; we “cannot” be anything but “His,” because His “word” is within us. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24; (Luke 24:32) "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” Peter declared; (John 6:68) “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” The apostle John declared; His “seed” is within us (1 John 3:9); thus, we cannot “live” in sin any longer. A believer may “backslide,” but they cannot
continue in a “life-style” apart from God; for His Spirit dwells within us. (Lamentations 1:13a) “From above He has sent fire into my bones…” Every time you hear His word, no matter how resolute you are to “quit,” or how far you may have wandered, something begins to “burn”; calling you home! His word will not let you go. Jeremiah said: “And I could not!” (v.9b) I could not deny what I know to be life, and truth!

(Read: v.10) Jeremiah’s enemies hoped for his “downfall,” “Perhaps he can be induced…” Those who are under the “conviction” of the gospel, “rejoice” to see one of God’s servants “fall!” For by it they “justify” their sin and rebellion. But what they fail to realize is that the gospel is not based upon the faithfulness of God’s servants but that of “Christ!” And they will still stand before Him, to whom they must give an account! (1 Peter 4:5) They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

(Read: v.11) Because God is “for us” we can give Him praise in the midst of our circumstances, (Read: v.13). Like many of us Jeremiah moves from “complementing” God to “complaining” to God in the same breath! (Read: v.14-18). Here the prophet shows us once again, that he is just as “human” as we are. The emotional roller-coaster he is on does not change God’s original plan for his life, (see: 1:5).

CONCLUSION: The way can be difficult but it’s always worth it. (Matthew 7:14) Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Did you hear about the “salute seen around the world; the heroic salute of a severely injured U.S. Army Ranger, with the 3rd Ranger Battalion in Afghanistan? A suicide bomber detonated a bomb which killed four of Josh’s fellow soldiers and severely wounded him. While in ICU, he was presented the “purple-heart,” many thought he was “unconscious,” but after the presentation ceremony, he manages to raise his arm in “salute” – reporters tell us that witnesses said; grown men began to cry, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room. Josh’s salute stands as a symbol of courage a determination in the name of the country he loves! How much more should we stand for Christ who first loved us? The “way” can be difficult; but the Lord is with us, the mighty and awesome One! (2 Corinthians 4:8-10) We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.