***Jeremiah 19 1-15 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. 2And 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, 3and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. 4“Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents 5(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), 6therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. 8I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair.” 10“Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury. 12Thus I will do to this place,” says the Lord, “and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet. 13And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods.” 14Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord’s house and said to all the people, 15“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.’***

Two weeks ago, we left Jeremiah as God continued to call on the people to repent, but we learned of the people’s response – It is useless. The idea behind their response is that God is inviting them to repent and they have no interest in doing so. So we remember that Jeremiah prayed that God’s will and judgement would be done. He’d interceded and interceded on behalf of the people and now he sees that God’s plan is perfect. He prays – Your will be done.

 In verses 1-2 we read *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. 2And 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.* God returns to the potter and the earthen flask or vessel. We studied the potter and the clay in chapter 18. God is pointing Jeremiah back to the same semblance. And take some of the elders or the men of reputation from among the people, the ancients or those with wisdom and years. This may have pointed to the Sanhedrin, as well as the elder priests. These would have been the chief men, as in 1 Chronicles 24:4. These would have been considered the proper men to stand as witnesses to what Jeremiah was saying. And go into the valley of the son of Hinnom (a well known valley east of Jerusalem) by the east entry gate, which is the gate that these men would have been entering the Temple by. The valley of Hinnom can be seen from this eastern gate known as the gate of Harsith. Interestingly, this gate is known by another name – the potter’s gate – because the potter’s field lies nearby.

 Verses 3-5 *and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. 4“Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents 5(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind).* God says- hear the word of the Lord. Similar to Jeremiah 17:20, God is calling on the leading men of Jerusalem to hear and lead by example. Behold the Lord will bring upon Judah and Jerusalem dreadful and catastrophic occurrences. The very telling on these things will cause the hearer to be astonished and the ears to tingle. By worshipping other gods and committing idolatrous sin, the people have alienated themselves and this very city from God. Once known as the Holy City, the home of God’s Temple, they have dishonored Him and He no longer looks with favor upon them. They have sacrificed children to Moloch, built altars to Baal, and burned their sons on the fire. God did not command this and indeed it never crossed His mind. It was so evil. Leviticus 18:21 says - *And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.* God named child sacrifice an abomination a thousand years before the time of Jeremiah, but the people did it anyway.

 Verses 6-9 *therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. 8I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair.”* Behold the days are coming, and this holds the idea of the days are not far off. This place will no longer be called Tophet, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, from the verses before. The valley became known as Tophet because the people would beat on drums while sacrificing the children. God is foretelling that the name of the valley should be the valley of Slaughter. He first said this in Jeremiah 7:32-33 when the prophecy said that there would be no place to bury the dead in Tophet due to the great slaughter. Because of the innocent blood of children being shed in this valley, God will cause the Chaldeans and Babylonians to shed the blood of the people of Judah. The city will be the object of hissing. The city will be desolate and all that pass by will be astonished. I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and daughters. This is the judgement Moses prophesied 1000 years earlier from Deuteronomy 28:53 if the people deserted God. *You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.* This is fulfilled in Lamentations 4:10, as the siege of Jerusalem takes full hold under the Babylonians. *The hands of the compassionate women Have cooked their own children; They became food for them In the destruction of the daughter of my people.* The people cannot say they were not warned.

 Verses 10-12 *“Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury. 12Thus I will do to this place,” says the Lord, “and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet. 13And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods.”* God instructs Jeremiah to break the potter’s flask to symbolize the ruin to come. Seeing the broken flask is an object lesson to reinforce the words of the prophecy. As Jeremiah breaks the flask, so God will break the people. The ruin will be so great that Jerusalem will not be able to made whole again without God making it so. No human hand will be able to rebuild it unless they return to God. We know from history that the Chaldean destruction was so complete that little was left standing of Jerusalem. The remnant that returned with Ezra and Nehemiah during the time of Cyrus had to build a new city from the foundation up. There will be so many dead that there will be no room left in Tophet. This is a great slaughter and hence the name valley of Slaughter. Any remaining houses of Jerusalem will be polluted with dead bodies and blood. We know that Jews considered dead bodies unclean and those that came in contact with them were considered unclean. Not only were dead bodies a source of pollution, but the people burned incense and made sacrifice to false gods on their rooftops. All this defiled these house and made them unclean. God will soon render judgement on the city and the people.

Verses 14-15*Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord’s house and said to all the people, 15“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.’* Jeremiah now comes from Tophet and stands in the outer court of the Temple. He says to the people much of the same things he said to the elders in the valley of Tophet. Thus says the Lord – I will bring upon Jerusalem and all the surrounding cities all the doom, evil, and judgement pronounced against it. God’s will is about to be done. He will not relent. The people would not repent. They stiffened their necks. They insisted on being disobedient and now God will follow through on His prophecy.

And so we leave Jeremiah tonight, as he again brings warning to the people, but the people refuse to hear. The days are drawing near for the judgement. Yet, we know that the elders and the people will not hear. They like their sin too much. Likewise, God is warning us. We don’t know how many days remain, but we must pray and seek God’s face. His word will not return void. We must seek Him while He may yet be found… we must tell others of Jesus before it is everlasting too late.