

Jeremiah 19:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

Analysis

God commands another symbolic act: "And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee." The Valley of Hinnom (Hebrew Gei Ben-Hinnom, גֵּי בֶן-הִנּוֹם) had become synonymous with abomination—the site where Judah sacrificed children to Molech. This location's choice is strategic, confronting sin at its most horrific manifestation point.

The geographical specificity—"by the entry of the east gate"—ensures witnesses and precision. This wasn't a private meditation but a public prophetic declaration in the very place of covenant violation. God's word must confront sin directly, not abstractly. The phrase "proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee" emphasizes prophetic dependence—Jeremiah speaks God's words, not his own opinion.

This location would later be associated with Gehenna (Greek form of Hinnom), which Jesus used as imagery for hell (Matt 5:22, 29-30, 18:9, Mark 9:43-47). The valley's associations with child sacrifice, abomination, and judgment made it a fitting symbol for eternal punishment. Reformed theology sees Gehenna as representing the final, permanent judgment awaiting impenitent sinners—a terrifying reality making gospel proclamation urgent.

Historical Context

The Valley of Hinnom runs south of Jerusalem, joining the Kidron Valley. Kings Ahaz and Manasseh made their sons pass through fire there (2 Kgs 16:3, 21:6), establishing high places for child sacrifice to Molech (Lev 18:21, 20:2-5). Josiah's reforms defiled these sites (2 Kgs 23:10), but they remained symbolically associated with abomination. By Jesus' time, the valley served as Jerusalem's garbage dump where fires burned continuously, reinforcing the Gehenna imagery.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why is it significant that God calls Jeremiah to prophesy at the very site of Judah's worst sin?
2. How does the Valley of Hinnom as a picture of hell emphasize the seriousness of sin and judgment?
3. In what ways should modern gospel proclamation confront sin directly rather than abstractly?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא אֶת־	אֶל־	גִּי יַאֲ	בֶן־	הַנֹּמִם	אֲשֶׁר־
And go forth	H413	unto the valley	of the son	of Hinnom	H834
H3318		H1516	H1121	H2011	
פֶּתַח־	שַׁעַר	הַחֲרֹסֹת	וְקָרָא אֶת־	אֲשֶׁר־	
which is by the entry	gate	of the east	and proclaim	H8033	H853
H6607	H8179	H2777	H7121		
הַדְּבָרִים	אֲשֶׁר־	אֲדַבֵּר	אֵלֶיךָ:		
there the words	H834	that I shall tell	H413		
H1697		H1696			

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:8 (Parallel theme): And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:

2 Kings 23:10 (Parallel theme): And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

Jeremiah 32:35 (Parallel theme): And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

2 Chronicles 28:3 (Parallel theme): Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

2 Chronicles 33:6 (Parallel theme): And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

