

“RUIN, REBELLION, AND RESTORATION”
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH
Jeremiah 18:1-17
“LESSONS LEARNED IN THE POTTER’S HOUSE”

INTRODUCTION: It is normal for us to appreciate the work of a skilled craftsman or visionary designer; one who can see the potential in something that others cannot see. Our God is the Master Creator, able to make something out of nothing, even using materials that did not exist until He spoke them into existence. He formed and fashioned us, and we should say as the Psalmist, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139:14) God wants us to appreciate His work in making human beings in His image.

BACKGROUND: Clay was a central commodity in the Ancient Near East, and served many purposes. Clay vessels were used for cooking, storing liquids, and as containers for other household items. It was also used as mortar for brick makers. In Jeremiah’s time, the potter’s wheel was literally two stones, an upper and a lower, so the craftsman could turn one by foot and the other by hand as vessels were being formed. Because clay could be pliable or brittle, it served as a fitting illustration for God’s work on mankind. He formed man from the “clay” of the earth .

I. NEVER QUESTION THE METHODS GOD USES TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND HIS MESSAGE. OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO COMPREHENSION. (Jeremiah 18:1-2)

- A. Jeremiah did not protest God’s commands to go to the potter’s house (workshop) to hear God’s words. The Lord could have spoken to Jeremiah right where he was! God teaches certain things based upon where He wants you be, such as your local church!
- B. The wilderness may seem like a barren place and waste of time to many. However, God did a lot of speaking and teaching in the wilderness. If you are in a spiritual wilderness, listen!

II. OBSERVATION IS CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL TRUTH. JEREMIAH WATCHED THE POTTER AT WORK AND LEARNED ABOUT GOD AT WORK. (Jeremiah 18:3-4)

- A. Potters work patiently with various forms of clay, exerting pressure at various places in order to achieve the desired form. After the clay was shaped into the potter’s predetermined shape, it was then placed into a fiery kiln (oven) to make it hard. The beautiful ceramics and colors are only applied after the shaping is done.
- B. Jeremiah noticed the clay was repeatedly being marred in the hand of the potter, which required the potter to continually keep working on it. Do you realize how often the LORD had to (and continues to!) keep reshaping you until Christ is formed in you?
- C. Jeremiah had to learn three important things while watching the clay under pressure;
 - 1. The P_____ God is S_____ (Romans 9:14-24)
 - 2. The P_____ There is a r_____ the work is being done (Ephesians 3:8-11)
 - 3. The P_____ If I see Him, I can see m_____ and r_____ properly. (Job 42:1-6)
- D. The clay is ordinary material, found in various places and forms. The beauty does not come out until the potter does his work. (2nd Corinthians 4:7) (Psalm 103:14)
- E. The potters workshops were often near a strategic location where the hopelessly disfigured vessels could be thrown down to the ground, where the broken pieces would lay in plain sight.

III. SPIRITUAL LESSONS ARE LEARNED FOR OUR OWN GROWTH, AND TO HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND GOD'S WAYS. DO YOU COMPREHEND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY? (Jeremiah 18:5-17)

- A. Individuals and nations are in the hands of a sovereign God, and need to learn what Jeremiah discovered. God's sovereignty allows Him to hold back deserved judgment or blessing based upon human behaviors. He does not "change His mind" but will relent of the consequences He had planned. (Jeremiah 18:5-10) (Malachi 3:6) (Numbers 3:19)
- B. Rebellious sinners can convince themselves that God will never punish them for their sinful ways and foolishly choose to live out their evil desires. Please do not mistake amazing grace for license to sin without consequences. (Jeremiah 18:11-12)
- C. The Lord is "amazed" at how His people can reject Him, the fountain of living and refreshing waters and choose to worship idols who cannot help them in any way. The result of such continued behavior will result in broken vessels that will be permanently useless. (Jeremiah 18:13-17)

THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW THE POTTER WILL SEE HIS BACK TURNED TO THEM IN THEIR TIMES OF NEED. THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD WILL GET TO SEE HIM FACE TO FACE AS HE SMILES UPON HIS FINISHED WORK. (Numbers 6:24-26)

WILL YOU LET THE POTTER SEE HIS REFLECTION IN YOU?

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