

## Jeremiah 18:1 – 19:15

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~ Our Spiritual Safari will take a familiar trip with Jeremiah down to the potter's house in this report. Ezekiel will develop and perfect Jeremiah's prophecy in captivity; but Ezekiel will act out a performance of this parable as he retells it, too. Frankly, this is a stunt these prophets pulled to get the attention of the people; and it worked. It was difficult to get these sin-hardened, sophisticated, God-rejecting Israelites to listen to anything true and correct. Today, I think it's even more difficult to get anyone to listen to sound doctrine taught from the Word of God. The religious mob demands theatrics. Inordinate affections abound. Put on a so-called Gospel concert with a group of piously proud individuals singing songs with lyrics that are as unbiblical as unbiblical can get – but are sickening sweet, overly emotional, and highly sensational – and you'll pack the house with people who will sit and stare mindlessly for several hours, as crocodile tears roll down their face. The next day, it doesn't mean a thing to them. Preach a proper, correct and complete sermon, or, even more audacious – write it out – and, not so much.

A long time ago, two men took a trip to town in a wagon drawn by a donkey. Before they started along their way, one man got out, grabbed a two-by-four, and smacked the ass across the face as hard as he could with the board. The man went back, got in the wagon, and the second man was shocked; so, he said, “... *why did you do that?*” The first man answered, “... *That's how I make sure I have his attention.*” Well, sometimes the Lord uses extreme methods to get our attention, friends. Even Jesus spoke extraordinary parables to reach the hearts of everyone who might listen. Believe me, when Jesus told of the prodigal son eating the slop in the pig pen, those people winced and moaned. Remember, Israelites were forbidden from having anything to do with swine; so, a story about an Israelite boy in a pig pen was offensive, crude, horrifying – and it made them question Jesus – all at the same time....

**XVIII**

**1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,**

**2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.**

**3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.**

**4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.**

**5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**

**6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.**

~ Once again, Jeremiah apparently doesn't want us to miss the fact that this is the Word of the Lord we're reading – and that he was speaking on behalf of the True and Living God to Israel. Interestingly, the application is made to the corporate nation; not an individual. Well, if you have ever seen potters create a vessel, you'll know they start with a lump of some not-so attractive mud. However, when a highly-skilled workman completes a work on their wheel, the product can be exquisite, expensive vases. They are works of art. The difference is the skill and experience of the potter. Of course, God is the Potter in this parable, and Israel is the clay; but an application can be made to each of us as individuals because we were formed from the dust of the earth. You and I are just an old dirty lump of clay.

**Romans 9: 21** *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ~*

Now, I understand most Christians are familiar with the “*potter and the clay*” – because I see and hear people write books and talk about it all the time. However, most of what I have seen does not grasp the true spiritual meaning. So, Jeremiah gets his spiritual two-by-four out and, trust me, he is going to slap us upside our heads to make sure he has our attention. Most of us have a difficult time dealing with what we read here. Well, if the lump of clay is of the wrong texture, or incorrect water content – and it won’t yield – the potter just tosses it aside. Then, later, he will take that unworkable material and make it some other kind of vessel. I don’t know about you, but the implications that carries scares the living daylights out of me.

**2 Timothy 2: 19** ....*the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour ~*

What we are going to see is the power of the potter and the personality of the clay; but we’ll also see the very opposite in the personality of the potter and the power of the clay. If that sounds like a paradox to you, that’s exactly what it is. God took clay and formed the physical part of mankind; then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. That’s when man became a living soul. No one can stop the Potter from His work, friends. No one can question His right to do as He pleases. No one can resist His will in any capacity. No one can tell God no; and no one will alter His plan and purpose for His creations. There is no picture more graphic depicting the sovereignty of God in the entirety of Holy Writ.

Mankind loves to protest and speak boisterously and breathlessly about his rights and freedoms – but they ignore the rights of God. The worst racketeering and murdering gangster can claim the Fifth Amendment right not to speak or incriminate themselves in a United States court of law. However, when you come before the judgment seat at the throne of the True and Living God, you won’t have that right – because God knows your thoughts. Whatever God decides will be right; and if you don’t think so, then you’ll be wrong about that, too. When you relinquish your final breath in this flesh, you’re going to discover God has incontestable authority;

jurisdiction to which there is no appellate process. His will cannot be resisted; it is inexorable and utterly inflexible. God forms and fashions nations, individuals and, indeed, the world and the entire universe, into whatever He deems appropriate to advance and continue His will and good pleasure; and He is accountable to no one regarding anything under any circumstances. He is an iron-fisted dictator ruling His own personal monarchy.

This universe was created and is operated for one reason and one reason only: to please and glorify Himself. I'm sure many people don't like this talk. Some will disagree entirely on my interpretation of Scripture. Well, you have a right to be wrong – because this is what the Bible teaches, my beloved. The rebellion of mankind against God is not even as powerful as a tempest in a teapot. You cannot surprise God. You cannot deceive God. You cannot disturb Him emotionally, physically or otherwise. You can't tell God He is wrong. God rides triumphantly in His chariot, and those who get in the way are trodden underfoot. That's the true meaning of the sovereignty in the power of the potter.

We have a mixed-metaphor, though — as clay has no personality. It is formless, shapeless, and lifeless mud; inept, inert and incapable. Clay is gooey – not good. It has very little structural integrity. The Psalmist says, *"... God remembers we are dust."* Well, I think most of us forget God remembers, and we become stuck on ourselves. When dust gets stuck on itself, it's just mud. We have no inherent ability, friends; we're just hopeless and helpless as humans. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he began his epistle by saying we were dead in trespasses and sins. While we were yet without strength, Christ died for us. If the so-called Christian would start with that premise – as opposed to bragging about how worthy they think they are – their walk with, and their work for the Lord would actually mean something. It's neither of him that willeth nor of him that runneth; but it is of He Who showeth us mercy from whence our salvation cometh.

No man has any claim on God. God said to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion."* God heard Moses – but not because Moses was Moses; no, God heard Moses because God extends mercy and grace. God is not

obligated to save any man or woman under any circumstances. This is a lost world that could remain lost and God would still be righteous and holy. If God were an arbitrary, brutal, and cruel dictator who reacted on a whim, then verse four would be the most terrifying and repulsive truth mankind could comprehend. We should all thank God He is not petty, prejudice, petulant and perfidious; but that He *“made another vessel”* with patience.

You and I have no right to question God about anything at any time for any reason. To second guess the Lord and doubt His ways is blaspheme. The moment we begin to question God, we assume an irreverent equalizing of ourselves with Him. There are many people who honestly believe they are going to be saved by their own methods and manufactured self-righteousness. Everyone likes to think they are a good person who can work this thing called life out on our own. Then comes that day when calamity strikes, or they lay on their deathbeds realizing they have been horribly wrong. I’m not saying there is no such thing as a deathbed conversion; I’m saying it is highly unlikely. It is an extraordinarily rare occurrence.

If we truly love the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God then we’ll read the remainder of this chapter and the next after praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment. It’s quite a remarkable picture we’re looking at here. I’m afraid very few – as few as who are chosen – understand this. Most people whom God has placed in the path of the safari don’t bother reading any of this. Most so-called Christians have actually turned their backs on God. Jeremiah’s people resisted his message and rejected him altogether, too. He became so disturbing to them that all they could think to do was kill him....

***7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;***

***8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.***

***9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;***

***10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.***

***11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.***

***12 And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.***

***13 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.***

***14 Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?***

***15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;***

***16 To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.***

***17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.***

***18 Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.***

***19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.***

***20 Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.***

***21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle.***

***22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet.***

***23 Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger.***

## **XIX**

**1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;**

**2 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,**

**3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.**

**4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;**

**5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:**

**6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.**

**7 And 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 them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.**

**8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.**

**9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.**

**10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,**

**11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.**

**12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet:**

**13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.**

**14 Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither 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 saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words ~**

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