

“Thou art the Potter; I am the Clay”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction

A. Jer. 18:1-10

1. A place of pottery manufacture, south of Jerusalem on the slopes of the Valley of Hinnom, where water and clay were found. It would be where clay could be weathered, stored and prepared for fashioning. There would be a kiln for firing the pottery and a dump for broken and discarded pottery. The house would provide cover for the potter's wheel and control the drying process before firing it in the kiln.

B. At the potter's house, Jeremiah watched a familiar process

1. He saw a vessel formed and the potter discover it was flawed
2. Many things can go wrong in fashioning pottery
 - a. The clay may be the wrong kind or texture for the vessel
 - b. It may have too many impurities; or the treading may not have been properly done - Isa. 41:25
 - c. It may be too dense or have air pockets that would cause it to shatter in the kiln.
 - d. It may have had too little time in the fire or removed too quickly
3. The potter did not see the proper result in the vessel he had fashioned, so he took the lump and fashioned a different vessel
 - a. The point is that the potter had power over the clay. The clay does not dictate its purpose to the potter.
 - b. The flaws were in the clay, not the hand of the potter.

C. God's omnipotent power over nations is represented by the power of the potter over the clay. It was within the power and prerogative of God to mold Israel until they conformed to His plan.

I. GOD IS THE POTTER

- A. God is often compared to a Potter, who fashions us according to His will.
- B. In the beginning, God formed Adam from the dust of the ground - Gen. 2:7
- C. Job understood how he was formed - Job 10:9-10
- D. Elihu repeated this to Job - Job 33:6
- E. The potter has complete power over the clay - Isa. 29:16
- F. We must not criticize our Potter - Isa. 45:9, 64:8
- G. Jeremiah spoke of the princes of Zion as clay - Lam. 4:2
- H. Paul used this illustration to show the will of God - Rom. 9:20-23
- I. God will destroy the wicked like a piece of pottery - Jer. 19:10-11; Psalm 2:9

II. WE ARE THE CLAY

- A. The parallel between humanity and the clay must not be carried too far. Humans are not passive.
- B. When we repent of sin, God reworks us into vessels for honor - 2Tim. 2:19-21
- C. However, as judgment of the vessels is the right of the potter, so judgment of Christians is in God's power - Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-48

III. MARRED POTTERY CAN BE REMADE

- A. While it is true that God has a purpose for our lives, we still have free will; we choose to cooperate and obey him, or to rebel and disobey Him.
 - 1. When we cooperate and obey, we have a fulfilling life
 - 2. When we rebel and disobey, we bring misery on ourselves and others we deviate from God's plan we bring misery into our lives.
- B. God has a form for the home, and all those who choose to disregard His structure suffer for it - Prov. 6:20-28
- C. God has a structure for child rearing, and those who think they know more about it than the Almighty bring sorrow into their lives and the lives of their children - Prov. 19:18, 10:1
- D. We often wish we could go back and start over
 - 1. Perhaps it is some unpleasant situation of our own making.
 - 2. Perhaps it is words or choices we wish we could take back
 - 3. Sadly in most cases, it is impossible to go back and start over.
 - 4. Sometimes it is like getting bad haircut; we just wait for it to grow out.
 - 5. Story of the new discount barbershop that opened up across the street from an established barbershop. The new shop opened up and put up a sign with big letters: "We Give \$5.00 Haircuts." Not to be outdone, the established barber put up his own sign: "We Fix \$5.00 Haircuts."
- E. The good news is that no matter how much we have messed up our own lives, we can be remade and refreshed spiritually
 - 1. 1Tim. 1:15; Rom. 6:17-18; 2Cor. 5:17; 1Cor. 6:9-11