

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!
NOTES FOR THIS WEEK: 2/1-2/2021
THIS WEEK'S STUDY: *Jeremiah Chapters 17-18*

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS112, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484

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+13462487799,,87858644763# US (Houston)

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).
THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

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+16699006833,,85309150746# US (San Jose)

+12532158782,,85309150746# US (Tacoma)

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+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose); +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma); +1 346 248 7799 US

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Phil Twente ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221 For Audio & notes from previous studies - www.ptwente.com

OPENING PRAYER – Introduction Jeremiah Chapters 17 & 18

Jeremiah 17-18 – Judah’s Sin and Punishment (vs. 1-13); Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance (vs. 14-18); Hallow the Sabbath Day (vs. 19-27); Chapter 18 The Potter and the Clay (vs. 1-11); God’s Warning Rejected (vs. 12-17); Jeremiah Persecuted (vs. 18-23)

Chapter 18 - The Potter and the Clay:

- In the Bible on four different occasions this analogy of the potter and the clay is used to express our relationship to God. He, the Master Potter, my life the clay. It speaks to us the sovereignty of God over our lives, the ability of God to make of us whatever He desires. *Isaiah 29:16; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:1-9; Romans 9:14-24*

HAVE THINE OWN WAY, LORD! *Adelaide Pollard – Maranatha Singers (2:05)*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will, While I am waiting, yielded and still.
Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now, As in Thy presence humbly I bow.
Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!
Power, all power, surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.
Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o’er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see Christ only, always, living in me.*

THIS WEEK’S STUDY:

Jeremiah 17-18 – Judah’s Sin and Punishment (vs. 1-13); Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance (vs. 14-18); Hallow the Sabbath Day (vs. 19-27); Chapter 18 The Potter and the Clay (vs. 1-11); God’s Warning Rejected (vs. 12-17); Jeremiah Persecuted (vs. 18-23)

The Sin of Judah

Jer 17:1 "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; With the point of a diamond it is engraved On the tablet of their heart, And on the horns of your altars,

- *Sin engraved in their hearts!* Their sin is deep rooted, now dominating their hearts! It is at the core of their being. It is *engraved* in their heart. They are totally given over to sin. Engraved on the horns of their altar. The *horns of the altar* was a symbolic place where the people would come on and hold on to the *horns of the altar*, a place where they sought mercy from God. But in that place of mercy, sin has been engraved. We must be careful not to think that I can handle this. Sin will never dominate my heart! The ruthlessness of sin requires ruthlessness with sin!
- *Written with a pen of iron:* Describing the character and extent of Judah’s *sin*, the hardness and strength of Judah’s rebellion against God, we see the description of their sins deeply engraved upon them, as if written with an *iron* pen, and with *the point of a diamond*. There was nothing superficial about their sinful state.

Jer 17:2 While their children remember their altars and their wooden images By the green trees on the high hills.

- *While their children remember!* The children, rather than really knowing what it was to worship the LORD in the temple, were taken by their parents to these places of worship of every high hill the altars unto Ashteroth, the Canaanite female goddess of fertility. No one sins to themselves! *While their children remember*, the etching, the engraving of sin upon the heart and the altars, set a sinful course for coming generations. Their sin was written so deep and in such places that it would be read for generations. Think of the lasting effects of sin, of its consequences!

Jer 17:3 *O My mountain in the field, I will give as plunder your wealth, all your treasures, And your high places of sin within all your borders.*

Jer 17:4 *And you, even yourself, Shall let go of your heritage which I gave you; And I will cause you to serve your enemies In the land which you do not know; For you have kindled a fire in My anger which shall burn forever."*

- *I will cause you to serve your enemies.... kindled a fire in My anger which shall burn forever.* For all this deeply ingrained sin – especially idolatry with *wooden images* upon the *high hills*. God promised to bring His judgment upon Judah. The land of God, the Holy Land, was polluted by God's people. They have gone too far. They are going to be taken away captive. God gave them this land as it was part of God's heritage for them, but they have polluted the land that God had given to them.

Jer 17:5 *Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. (Isa 30:1) "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin;*

Jer 17:6 *For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.*

- *Cursed be the man that trusts in man, trusting in the arm of flesh.* When the Babylonians were coming, the king of Judah sent down to Egypt to hire the Egyptians to come and to help fight against the Babylonians. Rather than turning to the LORD and repenting from their sin and having a wholesale repentance and turning to God and just throwing themselves upon the grace and the mercy of God, instead they sought deliverance from the enemy through the power of Egypt. The LORD said, "*Cursed be the man that trusts in man.*" They were trusting in the Egyptians, looking to them to be their strength, but when the Egyptians started to come, Nebuchadnezzar went down and wiped out the Egyptians and then came back and wiped Judah out. It turned out that it was a curse. The Egyptians were no help to them.
- *Whose heart departs from the LORD.* Where do you seek your help? Where are you looking for help? Cursed be the man who is trusting in man, who is looking to the arm of flesh. We need to look to God! Our nation is in serious trouble. We are looking to the arm of flesh. Our nation ought to be on its knees, seeking God and asking God's forgiveness and repenting before the LORD. We are in must the same condition as Israel. They were down and out, and the count had begun. And still rather than seeking the LORD they were seeking the arm of flesh, the help of man. And in our nation today, there are no signs of true national repentance.
- *He shall be like a shrub in the desert:* He is going to be left barren Jeremiah pictured a weak, dry *shrub in the desert* about to die from drought. This is the picture of the one (believer or not) who trusts in man instead of the LORD; they are dry and unsustainable.

Jer 17:7 *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.*

Jer 17:8 *For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.*

- *Cursed is the man who trusts in man* but oh, how *blessed is the man who turns to the LORD, who puts his trust in the LORD, who's hope is in the LORD!* That is true from a national standpoint! It also is true from an individual standpoint. Where do you turn in your hour of need? Who do you look to for help? So many are looking to man, the arm of flesh. They will be *like a tree planted by the waters*, whose *leaf will be green*. Jeremiah drew on the images of *Psalms 1*, where the **blessed** man is the one who delights in God's word. In some sense, Jeremiah thought trusting in the LORD to be the same as delighting in His word.
- *Like a tree planted by the waters.* The blessing of the man who will put his trust in the LORD, he will be fruitful, he will survive. But the man who puts his trust in man will wither and die.

Jer 17:9 *"The heart is deceitful (it is a liar!) above all things, And desperately (incurably sick) wicked; Who can know it?*

- *Deceitful above all things! The most deceitful thing in the world is your heart!* How many people are deceived by their own hearts! How Satan loves to deceive and when Satan is on the throne of a

person's life, he has them totally deceived. Deceived into thinking that they are all right. I am okay, you are okay. Deceived into thinking that it does not really matter with God how I live. Deceived in believing that as long as I am sincere, all paths lead to God. The heart is deceitful above everything else, above all things and it is also desperately wicked. The question is, *who can know it?* David said, "Lord, You have searched me, You have known me, You know when I am up, You know when I am down. You understand my thoughts as they begin to originate in my mind." God knows my thoughts in their origins, before I think them He already knows what I am going to be thinking.

Believers are protected against deception by their conscience, by the Holy Spirit and by God's word!

- **And desperately wicked:** The heart is not only deceitful, but also *wicked* – and *desperately* so. Many have been led to rebellion, disobedience, and great sorrow by following their heart, without challenging their heart and judging it by the measure of God's truth. "Follow your heart" is poor advice when the heart is *desperately wicked*.
- **Who can know it:** The heart's deceit and wickedness are advanced enough that even the individual may not know or understand their own heart, and outsiders have even more difficulty in discerning the heart of others. We are protected against deception by our conscience; the Holy Spirit; and God's word! Never tell anyone to follow their heart!

Jer 17:10 *I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind (most secret parts), Even to give (reward) every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

- **Knowing** the heart of one's self or others is difficult and sometimes impossible, *God* searches, tests, and knows the heart and mind. He knows what is exactly what is in your heart. It is wise to trust what God says about us more than what we think or feel about ourselves.
- **It is amazing how trials have a way of revealing what is in our heart.** It terrifies me when I find out what is in my heart when I go through my heart. Driving freeways can be a trial to me. Some of these wild drivers in Southern California, do these crazy things that jeopardize your life. What I have found is in my heart is not very pleasant. The LORD is revealing what is in my heart. But how would we know what is in our heart unless we went through these experiences. It would be so easy to be completely deceived as people are.
- **The LORD spoke to the children of Israel, saying, "I took you for forty years of wandering in the wilderness, to prove you and to know what was in your heart."** It was not for God to know what was in their heart, He knew what was in their heart, but it was for them to know what was in their heart but the trials that they went through brought out what was in their heart.
- **Even to give to every man according to his ways:** Because God perfectly knows the heart and mind of man His judgment is true. God knows to what extent the heart either justifies or condemns the *doings* of a man or woman.

Jer 17:11 *"As a partridge that broods but does not hatch, So is he who gets riches, but not by right; It will leave him in the midst of his days, (Psa 55:23b) Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; And at his end he will be a fool." (Luk 12:20) But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'*

- **Jeremiah just spoke to the folly of trusting one's heart.** Now he states a proverb meant to show the foolishness of trusting in riches. Not all riches are condemned; only those gained *not by right*. Riches that are not got *by right*, *will leave in the midst of his days, in the end he will be a fool*. That which you have will be taken from you, someone will scam you.

Jer 17:12 *A glorious high throne from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary.*

- **The sanctuary is a place of protection.** A place of rest and security. It was a throne of holiness, which made it truly glorious; it was God's throne, which made it truly high. Every place where God is worshipped, and grants His presence, is no other but "the house of God, and the gate of heaven"
- **Where is your place of security? A glorious high throne from the beginning.** God's throne is our place of security, our sanctuary. Our "city of refuge"!

Jer 17:13 *O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, (Luk 10:20) Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the*

spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters."

- **In Jeremiah 2 the LORD's complaint against the people is that they had forsaken Him the Fountain of Living Waters and they have carved out cisterns and the cisterns cannot even hold water. Judah is forsaking God, the spring of water. They were forsaking these springs of living water. God, the fountain of life for cisterns that really do not hold water. Every man has to believe in something and does believe in something.** Every man has a philosophy, or an ideal or a religion where by his life is governed. Now we are governed by the law of God, by our submission to Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

Jer 17:14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my praise.

- **The prophet was responding to God. LORD, heal me, save me.** Because he was continually exposed to the malice of unreasonable men. Heal my backslidings, my tendency to backslide, and save me from being carried away by the strength of the stream to forsake You! He was continually exposed to the malice of unreasonable men. "**LORD, save me** from them, and let me not fall into their wicked hands. You are He whom I glory in, and boast of, for on You do I depend!

Jer 17:15 Indeed they say to me, "Where is the word of the LORD? Let it come now!" (2Pe 3:3-4) knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, [4] and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

- The judgment had not yet come. But they began to really get on to Jeremiah. "**Where is the word of the LORD?** You tell us all this stuff, we don't see this happening." They were really beginning to give Jeremiah a bad time. Such a miserable experience to be continually mocked by people, which can really tempt one to be silent!

Jer 17:16 As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows You, Nor have I desired the woeful day; You know what came out of my lips; It was right there before You.

- **Nor have I desired the woeful day;** God does not, and therefore ministers must not, desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn and live!! Though we warn *of the woeful day*, we must not wish for it, but rather weep because of it, as Jeremiah did!! LORD, you know that I don't desire these things that I have been telling the people. I don't desire these days when the Babylonians come and wipe us out. I don't desire the days of slaughter, You know that! **You know what came out of my lips;** Now they are giving me a bad time for what You told me to tell them.

Jer 17:17 Do not be a terror to me; You are my hope in the day of doom.

Jer 17:18 Let them be ashamed who persecute me, But do not let me be put to shame; Let them be dismayed, But do not let me be dismayed. Bring on them the day of doom, And destroy them with double destruction!

- **Be not a terror unto me** - Do not command me to predict miseries, and abandon me to them and to my enemies. **Let them be ashamed who persecute me:** Jeremiah was part of a long tradition of prophets and men of God in Israel who cried out to God for defense. This was a prayer of vengeance, but a prayer that left vengeance in the hands of God.
- **But do not let me be put to shame:** Because he could defend and justify his work before God, Jeremiah confidently prayed that God would defend and justify him and bring his enemies and persecutors to shame, dismay, doom, and destruction. **And destroy them with double destruction!** The LORD said, "I will punish them double." Jeremiah is saying to go ahead and give them the double destruction, but LORD I have only been speaking your word, don't let me be **dismayed** and confounded. Think of it, forty years, even though continually mocked, he perseveres! LORD I leave it in your hands!

Keep the Sabbath Holy

Jer 17:19 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

- A message that Jeremiah is to speak at the king's gate and then at all of the gates at Jerusalem.

Jer 17:20 and say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates.

Jer 17:21 Thus says the LORD: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; (Neh 13:19) So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.

- ***Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem:*** At God's direction Jeremiah brought a strong and public word to all of Judah and Jerusalem, kings and commoners. Their response to this word would measure their surrender or rebellion to God.
- ***The LORD is calling again to honor the Sabbath day.*** There were two components to the sabbath for Israel. First, it stood for "***Sabbath rest***" (***Exo 16:23a***) *Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD.*
- ***Secondly, the Sabbath was a sign given to Israel regarding the covenant that God had made with them.*** This relationship that we have with You means something, but now Judah is saying that this relationship means nothing to us! Other signs included the rainbow with Noah; Circumcision with Abraham. Communion with Jesus Christ! The Sabbath rest was pointing to the Spiritual rest that will and can only come through Jesus Christ!
- ***In telling them to keep the Sabbath and not to bear burdens on the Sabbath, the LORD is actually saying to come back to this covenant relationship.*** In that covenant relationship God promised that He would be their God they would be His people. He would defend them from their enemies, and they would be blessed and all of the blessing that went with the keeping of the covenant of God. Even at their present state, God is calling them back to the covenant, but they are not responding. This is the message at the gate, all of you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Come back to the covenant.

Jer 17:22 nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

- ***Bear no burden on the Sabbath day:*** Jeremiah simply repeated the Sabbath commands Israel originally agreed to as part of the Sinai Covenant (***Exodus 20:8-11***).

Jer 17:23 But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

- ***They had deliberately set their heart against God and the things of God*** and they were obdurate. (***Pro 29:1***) *He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* That is just to the place that they are coming. They will suddenly be destroyed with no remedy. They have hardened their neck and they will not listen. Though God is still holding out His hand, offering them even now reprieve.

Jer 17:24 "And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the LORD, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, Jer 17:25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever.

- ***God is still holding out the hand of opportunity to them.*** Just return to the covenant, return to God. You can have your kings and your princes, and you will remain in this city.

Jer 17:26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the mountains and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the LORD.

- ***This can still be a place of blessing,*** a place of praise where the people can gather and worship God. And God making still this appeal to the people. How reluctant God is to bring His judgment. How

longsuffering and slow to wrath. And even at this state of their moral degradation God is still stretching out His hand unto them.

Jer 17:27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

- **So, it was! The gates of the city burned! The palaces burned!** What graciousness and patience from God, but they would not turn so Jerusalem burned and today you can go over and in the archeological digs you can see a layer of ash of when Jerusalem was burned by the Babylonians shortly after Jeremiah gave them this prophecy. It's sad that people won't wake up to the reality that going down your own sinful path is only going to lead to destruction. God's way leads to life, abundant life, eternal life.

The Potter and the Clay

Jer 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:

Jer 18:2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words."

- **Here he was told to go and to hear the word of the LORD.** He was not to go and preach a sermon he was to go and receive a sermon as he watched the potter working there in the potter's house. Go to the potter's house and I will cause you to hear My words. As God sometimes did with His prophets, He instructed Jeremiah to learn a lesson through a living lesson, something from daily life.

Jer 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

Jer 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

- **Jeremiah in obedience to the LORD** went down to the potter's house **to watch** him as he was working. The wheel was spinning, and the clay was there, and **he watched him** as he was making this vessel. He watched him as he worked there with this clay on the wheel. As the potter was working, the vessel was marred. Somehow, some way in the potter's hand so the potter started all over again, he remade it into a vessel that pleased him or seemed good to the potter.
- **Three basic things: there is the potter, there is the wheel, there is the clay.** On four different occasions, In the Bible, we see this analogy of the *potter* and the *clay*, being used to **express our relationship to God.** He, **the Master potter**, my life, the clay. It speaks to us **the sovereignty of God over our lives, the ability of God to make of us whatever He desires!**
- **The clay in its natural form is almost worthless** because of its abundance. It is common. Yet the potter, through skill, can take that worthless clay **and make out of it a vessel of art, a vessel of beauty and a vessel of utility. He can make something worthwhile, something that can be used.** And our lives in their natural state are almost worthless. **There is only one life, it will be soon be passed and only what you do for Christ will last!**
- **The wheel is the instrument in which the potter fashions the clay.** It is under his control and he uses it to help bring symmetry to that clay. He uses it to form the clay into the shape that he wants it to be. **T**
- **Thus, the wheel is the circumstances of our lives that God is in control of by which God molds us and shapes us.** God uses **circumstances to mold and to shape the character of our lives.** And
- **Sometimes we don't understand what is in the mind of the potter** as Paul uses the analogy in (**Rom 9:20**) *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"* But it is all a part of God's molding and shaping me. And **He uses adversities so many times in His purposes of molding and shaping my life into the vessel that He would have me to be.**

Jer 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

Jer 18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"

- **O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?"** It is true that as God had created this nation for His praise and glory that the nation of Israel had been marred in the hands of the potter.

They had rebelled against God. They had resisted the work of God. And God is going to really bring them back to just a blob again, just a glob of clay. They have resisted the work of God.

- **Notice that God is so patient!** Though there is the failure, the vessel becomes marred in the hands of the potter, he does not give up. He will start over. He will remold and reshape until it becomes a vessel that pleases him. That should comfort us because it means that God does not give up on my life.
- **The patience of God.** Here in this picture, we see the beautiful patience of God by which He works with us and works in us as He is forming and shaping us into the image of Jesus Christ. God is working in you to conform you into the image of Christ, patiently, lovingly. When the vessel gets marred, then He starts over again. But He continues His work in us. How we appreciate it and thank God for His mercy and for His patience with which He has worked in my life!

Jer 18:7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

- **The clay was marred and so the potter just stopped the wheel and took the clay and began to work** with it again to start over again. The idea is *plucking up, pulling down and destroying* that which was done.

Jer 18:8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

- **Again, we see God's patience and God's goodness and love.** If a nation has failed in the purposes of God and is deserving the wrath and the judgment of God, if that nation will turn to God, will repent, though God has pronounced the judgment upon it. Now, these words are interesting to pluck up, to pull down and to destroy. Back in the Jeremiah 1, God said that He had called him to pluck up, to pull down and to destroy. The nation had become so marred that there was no reforming. They had to start all over. . It had to be pulled down. It had to be destroyed in order that God might start anew. That is what the whole picture of the potter is, and the vessel marred.
- **Here, Jesus came with a message of love and God's love and these people did not repent.** So, God uses imperfect instruments. But the time had come to pluck up, to pull down and to destroy as the vessel marred in the hands of the potter. But God said that even now if they will turn from their evil then I will turn from the judgment that I thought to bring upon them.

Jer 18:9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

- **Jeremiah's commission was also to build and to plant.** He was first of all to pluck up, to destroy, to pull down and then he was to build and to plant as we said in chapter one they had gotten so bad that there reformation would not work. They had to start over again. But before you can start you have to break down and pull down that which is there. The system is so corrupt that you have to get rid of it and start over fresh.

Jer 18:10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

- **It is all conditional.** The promises of blessing and the benefits of God are conditioned upon the people walking after God. And even these blessings of benefit and good if the people do evil in their heart then God will turn from the good that He was going to do for them. The promised blessings will not come or be fulfilled if the people's hearts are not right before God.

Jer 18:11 "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now everyone from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."'

- **It was a call for the people to repent.** God has promised that His judgment is going to come but He has already said that if they would turn from their evil then He would turn from the judgment. Jeremiah is sent to the people to preach this message to them. Judgment has been determined by God against you therefore return from your evil ways and make your ways and your doings good.

Jer 18:12 And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart."

- **Jeremiah was saying that God is determined to bring judgment upon this nation and upon you people.** Repent! Turn from your evil way that you might forestall that judgment of God and they said, “Forget it! We are going to do what we want! What tremendous arrogance! We hope that now one if us will do that!

Jer 18:13 Therefore thus says the LORD: "Ask now among the Gentiles, Who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.

Jer 18:14 Will a man leave the snow water of Lebanon, Which comes from the rock of the field? Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?

- ***Ask now among the Gentiles, who has heard such things:*** God responded to their answer with astonishment. Not even among the **Gentiles** was there such foolishness and hardness of heart. It was like leaving pure waters, the *(snow water of Lebanon for strange waters*, a muddy pool of filth. It was like leaving a safe and paved highway for unsafe pathways where men trip and fall.
- ***Will a man leave the snow water of Lebanon, Which comes from the rock of the field?*** What a glorious thing it is to have a spring of cold water coming right out of the ground, a good place to build your house. You always have a supply of water which we need to survive. And God said, “Would you forsake that in order to try to survive off of a cistern, a reservoir that you have dug out of a rock to catch the water, but which do not hold water.
- **The water is representative of the living water.** The living water represents God and the cisterns, and the stale water represents the other religious systems and the other gods. And they have forsaken Me the fountain of living water, but they have substituted these other gods. Again, He brings the same charge against Israel. The virgin daughter of Israel has forsaken the LORD.

Jer 18:15 "Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in pathways and not on a highway,

- **In the beginning of the nation where they followed after God in the wilderness, to walk in good old paths.** But amazingly they had left *the ancient paths*, which were appointed by the divine law, which had been walked in by all the saints, which were therefore the right way to their journey's end, a safe way, being well established, were both easy to find and easy to walk in. But, they would not!

Jer 18:16 To make their land desolate and a perpetual hissing; Everyone who passes by it will be astonished And shake his head.

- ***A perpetual hissing; everyone who passes by.*** When people pass by and see the ruins of Jerusalem they all hiss and wag their heads and hold it in derision. The hissing will be more in amazement than in ridicule. Men will shake their heads at the nation's uncommon, remarkable stupidity.

Jer 18:17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back and not the face In the day of their calamity. "

- ***God said, "I will turn My back on them.*** They won't see My face. I will just turn My back upon their calamity."

Jer 18:18 Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans 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 attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. "

- **The people scoffed, they mocked, they scorned,** they said, “Oh, that won't happen here. The words of the (false) prophet, they will not fail. The priests and so forth.” And they determined to speak against him and to smite him with the tongues and not listen to any of his words.

Jer 18:19 Give heed to me, O LORD, And listen to the voice of those who contend with me!

- **Now Jeremiah was seeking the good of the people.** What he was saying was for their good and here they are devising evil against him because he dared to speak to them the word of the LORD.
- **When you speak the word of the LORD it does not make you popular.** People don't want to hear it. You go to that worldly crowd where you work and start talking about the only true safe sex is just get a wife and get married and stay married for life and they do not want to hear it. So, Jeremiah is now praying to the LORD and said,

Jer 18:20 Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I stood before You To speak good for them, To turn away Your wrath from them.

- **Jeremiah was trying to help them.** He was trying to keep them from the wrath of God and the judgment of God that had been determined because of their evil. But because they have now turned against Jeremiah and are plotting against him.

Jer 18:21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, And pour out their blood By the force of the sword; Let their wives become widows And bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, Their young men be slain By the sword in battle.

- **Jeremiah said, “Okay LORD, if they are not going to listen then just go at it.** Let them have it. I have tried to protect them. I have tried to turn them and all they are doing is turning against me.” Jeremiah is just saying for the LORD to take over.

Jer 18:22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, When You bring a troop suddenly upon them; For they have dug a pit to take me, And hidden snares for my feet.

- **They are trying to ensnare me.** They are trying to trap me.

Jer 18:23 Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel Which is against me, to slay me. Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight; But let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them In the time of Your anger.

- **Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me:** You know LORD that they are plotting to kill me.
- **Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight;**
- **Deal thus with them In the time of Your anger.** LORD, just go ahead, they do not want to listen, just let them have it.

How are we to pray? From the Old Covenant –

- **God knows!** We are told “*Vengeance is Mine!*” (*Deu 32:35*)
- **We are to take our prayers and grievances only to God,** not to others. We are to pray for our enemies, remembering how the weeping prophet, Jeremiah prayed, with compassion and love.

From the New Covenant –

- **Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight;** This is much different from what we hear in the New Testament when Jesus said, (*Luk 23:34*) *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* (*Mat 5:43-44*) *"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'* [44] *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*
- **Also, Stephen when they were stoning him** lifted up his face towards the Lord and said, (*Act 7:60*) *Then he (Stephen) knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."* But here is the Old Testament prophet and he is saying, “All right LORD, wipe them out.
- **We are reminded not to take vengeance ourselves against our enemies!** (*Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30*) *For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,"*
- **In addition to prayer, we have been given two weapons to make an impact in the Spiritual realm! They are the Love of God and the word of God!** There is no defense that people have against those two weapons. That’s why the LORD says deal with it in this way, even though it looks like we ought to fight fire with fire, but if you respond in love, the LORD says, I will take that and use that in a person’s life in a way that would never happen in yelling at them or getting back at them. So, in the New Testament this is a little different that where Jeremiah is here.
- **Go to God alone!** One thing we give Jeremiah great credit for is that he didn’t go to the temple and shout this prayer out in public. We are to do the same! We want to take our prayers to the one “safe place”, even when we begin our prayers in the flesh, and that is to God alone.
- **God does not, and therefore we must not, desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn and live!!** ***Closing Prayer***