

4/14/02

**Jer. 18-20**

The next three chapters are tied together by the theme of the potter and the clay. The message was delivered at Tophet and preached in the court of the Lord's house by Jeremiah but the outcome was physical persecution of the prophet, giving to us the last of the lamentable confessions of Jeremiah.

1. In chapter eighteen we have the vessel or flask being formed and shaped by the potter.
2. In chapter nineteen we have the vessel being broken.
3. In chapter twenty we have the prophet the vessel of Yahweh being marred and broken.
4. In chapter eighteen the focus is the sovereignty of Yahweh and the free-will of the nation or man.
5. In chapter nineteen the focus is the sure judgment of the nation, symbolic of the broken flask.
6. In chapter twenty the focus is the ongoing rebellion of man's evil heart, persecuting the servants of Yahweh.

The cry of Yahweh through the prophet is national conversion but to no avail!

**18:1-23**     **The prophet Jeremiah is sent to the potters house.**

**18:1-12**     *The Parable of the potter and the clay.*

**18:1-4**     The instructions to Jeremiah at the potters house.

\* This is the ninth sermon.

- 1) The word of the Lord came again to Jeremiah. Vs. 1
- 2) The prophet was to go down to the potters field where Yahweh would speak to him. Vs. 2
- 3) The prophet observed the potter making something on the wheel. Vs. 3
  - \* The upper and lower discs connected with a rod.
- 4) The vessel was marred so the potter made it in to another vessel, as it seemed good to him. Vs. 4
  - a) The sovereign authority of God is principle.
  - b) The other principle is the need of willful submission.
    - (1) Both Divine authority and human responsibility are present in the metaphor but are ignored by Calvinist who only emphasize Divine election alone!
    - (2) G. Campbell Morgan sees in three things in this passage. Jer. 18:1-6

- \* The principles: the sovereignty of God and man as free to surrender to Him.
  - \* The purpose” God has a plan for men, the universe is bathed in purpose.
  - \* The person: At the heart of the universe is a Person, and we see Him in Jesus.
- 3) All illustrations will break down, in this instance human will is not passive but active, for or against God!
- c) Yahweh’s mercy and patience is marked by making the clay in to another vessel.
- 1) The figure of the potter is used by many. Is. 29:16, Zec. 11:13, Rom. 9:21
  - 2) We are to be vessels unto honor. 2Tim. 2:19-21

**18:5-10** The interpretation given to Jeremiah about the potter’s clay.

- 1) The prophet is told by Yahweh that the house of Israel is like the clay in the hands of the potter, He is sovereignly in control of the nation. Vs. 5-6
  - a) This will be another sign message to Jeremiah that will be played out in chapter nineteen.

- b) But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our **potter**; And all we are the work of Your hand. Is. 64:8
- 2) Yahweh tells Jeremiah that if a nation or kingdom was condemned to destruction but repents, God would spare it. Vs. 7-8
- a) The change is brought about by the turning of the people, not a change of mind on Yahweh’s part.
    - \* Yahweh is the God of second, third and so on chances, evident of David, Jonah, Peter, etc.
  - b) Yahweh does not repent as man repents but He is merely acting in accord to His attributes of holiness and Omniscience being just and righteous! Num. 23:19
- 3) Yahweh also told Jeremiah that if a nation or kingdom to be blessed of God but does evil and disobeys Yahweh, then God would withdraw the good intended to be imparted. Vs. 9-10
- a) God does not change His posture towards sinful man by challenging him.
  - b) God changes His posture towards sinful man by repenting of his evil.

**18:11-12** The reaction of the people to the message of Jeremiah.

- 1) Yahweh makes the application to the nation of Judah and commands Jeremiah to address the nation. Vs. 11
  - a) The prophet Jeremiah was to speak to Judah and the inhabitation of Jerusalem. Vs. 11a-d
  - b) The message of Jeremiah was two-fold.
    - 1) To pronounce the coming disaster.
      - \* “I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you.” Vs. 11e
    - 2) To call them to repentance.
      - \* “Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.” Vs. 11f-g
- 2) The people responded by saying, “That is hopeless!” Vs. 12a-b
  - a) They acknowledged their lack of power to change rather than acknowledging the power of Yahweh to turn and change them.
  - b) They were also denying that Yahweh was the only solution to the coming destruction.
- 3) The people said, “So we will walk according to our own plans. Vs. 12c
  - a) They were committed to their own plans to avert judgment.

- b) They confirmed their trusting in the arm of flesh, cursing themselves. Jer. 17:5-6
- 4) The people said, “And we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.” Vs. 12d
  - a) They were set on their rebellion against Yahweh.
  - b) They were completely bent on their evil nature of sin. Jer. 17:9

**18:13-17** *The indictment and verdict of the people.*

**18:13-14** The unnatural behavior of Judah.

- 1) The people of God acted ungodly, they had become unfaithful and treacherous as a virgin to her husband Yahweh, horrible in nature, unlike the Gentiles. Vs. 13
  - \* She had gone from purity and innocence to perverted treachery!
- 2) The people had left Yahweh who was dependable for strange gods, pictured in the cold flowing snow waters of Lebanon. Vs. 14, Jer. 2:9-13
- 3) The three rhetorical questions demand a three-fold NO!

**18:15-16** The sins of the people.

- 3) Judah as a result forgot Yahweh and now practiced the worship of worthless,

empty idols in the burning of incense.  
Vs. 15a-b

- 4) Judah had brought about her own stumbling by not continuing in the paths of Yahweh but in walking in pagan paths, so she was no longer on the highway of Yahweh to be blessed. Vs. 15c-e
- \* Oswald Chamber in his commentary says, “Backsliding the prevailing of human stubbornness after he experimental knowledge of salvation. Backsliding is never spoken of in the Bible as a degenerate tendency, but as a conscious forsaking. (The Complete Works:1422)
- 5) Judah had in fact been responsible for bring judgment on herself, desolation and hissing by men. Vs. 16

**18:17** The severe consequences to the people are pronounced.

- 1) She would in effect be scattered as the east wind before her enemies.  
\* This sirocco wind was a hot desert wind that killed all vegetation!
- 2) Yahweh would have nothing to do with her, symbolized by showing them His back and not His face in the day of their calamity. Vs. 17

\* The reference to Yahweh’ back is a pay on words corresponding to the people’s stiff-necks of the people turning their backs not to hear or obey Yahweh. Jer. 18:17; 19:15

**18:18-23** *The persecution of Jeremiah by the people.*

**18:18** The plot against Jeremiah.

- \* Another of Jeremiah’s confessions, the fourth?
- 1) Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah." Vs. 18a-b
- 2) They were did not believe the message of Jeremiah, that the Law would perish from the priest, the counsel of their wise or the word of their false prophets. Vs. 18c-e
- \* The three group of individuals, the priest, the wise and the prophet.
- 3) They planed to attack Jeremiah’s character to discredit him with their tongue, so that people would ignore the message. Vs. 18f-g
- \* Jer. 11:21-23

**18:19-23** The prayer of Jeremiah.

**18:19-20** The innocence of Jeremiah stated.

- 1) Jeremiah pleaded that Yahweh listen to him and the words of those who contend with him. Vs. 19
- 2) Jeremiah pleads with Yahweh about the injustice of the people, repaying him evil for good as they plot against him. Vs. 20a-b
  - \* The rhetorical question has the obvious answer of no, once again!
- 3) Jeremiah reminds Yahweh of his commitment to do them good and turn them from His wrath. Vs. 20c-d

**18:21-23** The intercession of Jeremiah against the people.

- \* Some commentator have a difficult time with Jeremiah praying this way but it is in line with the judgment of God and the Old Testament pattern.
- 1) Jeremiah prays Yahweh would do six things. Vs. 21
    - a) Their children be deliver up to the famine. Vs. 21a
    - b) Their blood be poured out by the sword. Vs. 21b
    - c) Their wives become widows. Vs. 21c
    - d) The people be bereaved of their children. Vs. 21d
    - e) Their men be put to death. Vs. 21e
    - d) Their young men be slain by the sword in battle. Vs. 21f

- \* Yahweh had told Jeremiah over and over again not to pray for the people any longer and in his love struggle for the people he finally concedes with God!
- 2) Jeremiah prays that they experience the fear of being hunted. Vs. 22
    - a) That a cry be heard from their houses, when Yahweh brought a troop suddenly upon them. Vs. 22a-b
    - b) The reason being that they had dug a pit to take him, and hidden snares for his feet. Vs. 22c-d
  - 3) Jeremiah prays for their complete destruction. Vs. 23
    - a) He basis his petition on God's Omniscience, "Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel Which is against me, to slay me." Vs. 23a-d
    - b) He boldly asks that they die in their sin. "Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight." Vs. 23e-f
    - c) He pleads they be overthrown and that Yahweh deal with them in His anger. Vs. 23g-h

**19:1-20:6** **The sign of the earthen flask.**

- \* This is the tenth sermon, some may see one more in the court of the Lord's house but it

is the same one declared in two different places. Jer. 19:14; 20:1-6

**19:1-3** *The instructions to Jeremiah.*

**19:1** The details of the instruction.

- 1) The word of Yahweh told Jeremiah to go get an earthen flask made by the potter.
  - \* A clay water decanter with a narrow neck.
- 2) Then Jeremiah was to take some of the elders of the people and of the priest as witnesses.

**19:2** The indicated location.

- 1) Jeremiah was to go to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, on the northwest of the city, going southeast it merges with the Kidron Valley, leading out to the Dead Sea. Vs. 2a; Jer. 7:31
  - a) The location was the place of child sacrifice during the reign of Manassah, which Josiah desecrated. 2Kings 23:10
  - b) The place had become the city dump where the trash was burned, Jesus made reference to it as a type of hell, where the fire is never quenched. ?
- 2) The location was near the Potsherd Gate.
  - a) The gate is unknown and appears only here. Vs. 2b

b) The gate is identified by the Tagums with the Dung Gate. Neh. 2:13

c) The East gate is not correct as some say.

3) Jeremiah was to proclaim the words Yahweh would tell him. Vs. 2c

**19:3** The devastating proclamation.

- 1) The message was directed to the kings and population of Jerusalem. Vs. 3a-c
  - a) It was the word of the Lord, not the words of Jeremiah they were to hear being the apostate leaders and people.
  - b) It was the Captain of the armies of heaven who was addressing them, the God of Israel.
  - c) It was a pronouncement of such sever destruction that anyone hearing of it would not believe it.
    - \* “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe, literally evil, on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.”

**19:4-9** *The explanation to Jeremiah.*

**19:4-5** The reasons stated.

- 1) They had forsaken Yahweh and made Jerusalem an alien place, Vs. 4a
- 2) They had burned incense to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah had known. Vs. 4b-d

- 3) They had filled Jerusalem with the blood of the innocents. Vs. 4e
- 4) They had built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which Yahweh did not command or speak, nor did it come into His mind. Vs. 5,  
\* They syncretized pagan practices into the worship of Yahweh. Jer. 7:11

**19:6-9** The outcome.

- 1) The days were coming that the place would no more be called Tophet, a place of burning or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom “shame or lamentation”, but the Valley of Slaughter. Vs. 6  
\* No longer the bodies of children but of the people who murdered them!
- 2) Yahweh would make void “play on words with the empty flask”, the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and their corpses He would give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. Vs. 7, Deut. 28:25-26
- 3) Yahweh would make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passed would be astonished due to all its plagues. Vs. 8
- 4) Yahweh would cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, daughter and friends at the

siege of Jerusalem in their desperation  
Vs. 9

\* Cannibalism was pronounced in the covenant and recorded. Deut. 28:53-57; Lev. 26:29; 2Kings 6:26-29; Lam. 2:20; 4:10

**19:10-13** *The application by Jeremiah.*

- 1) Then Jeremiah was to break the flask in the sight of the men who went with him. Vs. 10
  - a) The flask symbolic of the nation, empty and unfixable to work with, fit only for destruction.
  - b) The vessel having been fired could not be remade.
- 2) Then at the same time Jeremiah was to declare the pronouncement the word of the Captain of the armies of heaven, that even so Yahweh would break the people and the city and Tophet would not be sufficient to bury them. Vs. 11
  - a) Another very vivid sign to illustrate the point of the sermon, like the sash and the potter and clay. Jer. 13:18-19
  - b) Judah had become hard and inflexible, having no remedy!
- 3) The city would be like Tophet defiled, a place of fire. Vs. 12
- 4) The reason being that the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of

Judah on their roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods.

Vs. 13

- a) In the middle East the roof tops are like patios or places to do hang clothes.
  - b) The excavations of the past ten to fifteen years in the old city of Ophal have confirmed the idolatrous worship in the burned houses and rubble at the time of Nebuchadnezzar.
- \* The seal of Shaffan the Scribe for Baruch was found.

**19:14-15** *The re-proclamation of the message by prophet at the temple.*

- \* Many include the first six verses of chapter twenty with chapter nineteen and rightly so, for it is the same message and the result of Jeremiah's persecution. So a better division would be to begin chapter twenty at verse seven.

**19:14** Jeremiah went from Tophet and he stood in the court of the Lord's house and preached to all the people the message. Vs. 14

- 1) There is no direct instructions to go to the temple by Yahweh but implies it by the fact of his going.
- 2) Jeremiah was sent two other times to the temple to preach. Jer. 7:1-12; 26:1-2
- 3) Jeremiah prophesied without any doubt the message heard by the few select elders of the people and priest regarding the potters vessel at Tophet but now all the people would hear it.

**19:15** Jeremiah pronounce judgment.

- 2) The message was prefaced as from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel again. Vs. 15a-b
- 3) Jeremiah proclaimed doom an all the city and towns for their necks in order not to hear His words. Vs. 15c-e

**20:1-6** *The persecution of Jeremiah.*

- \* The entire section is in the third person. Jer. 19:14-20:1-6
- 1) Pashur the priest and chief governor, the one to maintain order or handle disturbances in the house of the Lord heard Jeremiah prophecy the judgments. Vs.1
- \* There are two different men named Pashur.
- (1) The son of Immer. Jer. 20:1a



- (2) The son of Melchiah. Jer. 21:1a, 38:1
  - (3) It is believed that this individual is another, Pashur having gone into captivity. Jer. 29:25-26
  - (4) The name is believed to be of Egyptian origin meaning “a portion of Horus” the hawk-headed god of the day, some interpret it “freedom, fruitful round about, ease or tranquility” a word play when God changes his name to “fear on every side” Jer. 21:3
- 2) Pashur struck Jeremiah and put him in he stocks. Vs. 2
- a) Whether he struck Jeremiah or had him beat with 39 lashes we do not know. Deut. 24:3
    - \* This is the first recorded violence done to Jeremiah. Amos 7:10-17
  - a) The stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was apparently by the house of the LORD, so all could see the individual and hurl taunts, etc.
  - b) How ironic that the one that was to oversee the house of the Lord put in the stocks the one Yahweh had called to be the overseer of the nation.

- c) The stocks were a form of both torture and humiliation, the word stocks “mahpeket” means causing distortion.
    - \* Appearing only three times. Jer. 29:26; 2Chron. 16:10
- 3) Pashur released Jeremiah from the stocks. Vs. 3
- a) The next day Jeremiah was released. Vs. 3a
  - b) The prophet Jeremiah prophesied to Pashur that Yahweh had changed his name to Magor-Missabib, “fear on every side”. Vs. 3b-c
- 4) Jeremiah expands the prophecy. Vs. 4-6
- a) On him, the people and the city. Vs. 4
    - (1) For thus says the LORD: `Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see *it*. I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword.
    - (2) Probably in 597 B. C. under the captivity of Jehoiachin?
  - b) On the wealth and riches. Vs. 5
    - \* Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the

treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon.

- c) On the family of Pashur. Vs. 6  
 \* And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'

**20:7-18     The difficult ministry of the prophet Jeremiah.**

**20:7-10** *The frustration of Jeremiah regarding his call.*

- \* This is the last confession of Jeremiah, though some divide this last one into two and sometimes called his "Gathsemane".  
Jer. 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-1 (20:7-13, 14-18)
- 1) The invocation of the prophet is declared.  
Vs. 7  
 \* O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me.

- a) Some have pointed out that the word induced and persuaded is used for seducing a virgin and a lying spirit to deceive Ahab. Vs. 7, 10; Ex. 22:16; 1Kings 22:2-22
- b) But the context of Jeremiah does not lend itself to that idea but to Jeremiah's reluctance to respond to the call of a prophet and the fact that God being stronger persuaded him and to be open minded and prevailed, but not in a deceptive way but in a way that Jeremiah trusted Yahweh for his protection. Jer. 1:6-8; 17-19  
 \* Jeremiah though God would keep him from all harm instead of keeping him through the persecutions!
- 2) The complaint of the prophet is in a form of despair. Vs. 8  
 a) He cried out, "Violence and plunder! As the judgment of God.  
 b) The results was that he was reproached and in derision daily.
- 3) The decision of the prophet is confessed. Vs. 9  
 a) He made up his mind that he would not proclaim Yahweh's word, mention nor commemorate His name. Vs. 9a-c

- b) He discovered that the word of God burned in his heart like a burning fire shut up in his bones, tiresome and unable to hold it back, so he proclaimed it. Vs. 9d-e  
 \* 1Kings 19:3-4; Jonah 1:2-3; Ps. 29:3; Jer. 4:19; 23:9; Ezk. 3:14; Amos 3:8; 7:14-16; Acts 4:20
- 4) The constant stress and tension of his ministry is described. Vs. 10
- a) He heard many mocking: **“Fear on every side!”** to intimidate him through whispers and rumors . Vs 10a-b  
 \* The phrase is the same as the name given to Pashu by Yahweh.
- b) He heard ongoing harassment, “Report,” they say, “and we will report it!”, they would turn him in to the authorities. Vs. 10c-f
- c) All his acquaintance, his family and friends watched for his stumbling, saying, “Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him.”, Vs. 10g-l  
 \* Jer. 11:21, 12:6

**20:11-13** *The fear and confidence of Jeremiah.*

- 2) The confidence of Jeremiah for his ministry and safety. Vs. 11
- a) He remembered the promise of Yahweh at his call, “But the LORD is with me as a mighty, awesome One, literally **“a worrier”**. Vs. 11a-b
- 1) The prophet goes from lament and complaint to complete confidence in God!
- 2) He remembers the promise of God that He would be with him. Jer. 1:8, 19
- b) He remembered his enemies were fighting against Yahweh not him, “Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.” Vs. 11c-g
- 3) The battle is handed over to God. Vs. 12
- a) He remembers that Yahweh is the Captain of the armies of heaven, “But, O LORD of hosts. Vs. 12a-b
- b) He entrusted righteous judgment to Yahweh, “You who test the righteous, And see the mind and heart. Vs. 12c-d
- c) He alienates himself with Yahweh’s purposes, “Let me see Your vengeance on them; For I have

pleaded my cause before You.” Vs. 12e-f

- 4) The prophet Jeremiah breaks out in worship and rejoicing as he has focused his eyes on God rather than the situation, “Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! For He has delivered the life of the poor From the hand of evildoers.” Vs. 13
  - a) The poor were the least able to fend for themselves.
  - b) If Yahweh would deliver them, how much more Jeremiah.

**20:14-18** *The lamentation of Jeremiah over the day of his birth .*

- 1) He regretted his birth like Job, “Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me!” Vs. 14; Job. 3:3-6
- 2) He cursed the man who broke the news of his birth, “Let the man be cursed Who brought news to my father, saying, "A male child has been born to you!" Making him very glad.” Vs. 15
  - \* Not his parent which was prohibited in the Law. Ex. 21:15 17; Lev. 20:9
- 3) He wished the worst on that man for not having killed him as he was being born or in fact would of remained in the womb forever, “And let that man be like the cities Which the LORD overthrew

(Sodom & Gomorrah), and did not relent; Let him hear the cry in the morning And the shouting at noon, Because he did not kill me from the womb, That my mother might have been my grave, And her womb always enlarged with me.” Vs. 16-17

- 4) He is down the lowest point in his life despairing and broken, “Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, That my days should be consumed with shame?” Vs. 18