

The Potter and the Clay

(A lesson for Israel and a lesson for the Nations)

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will announce My words to you." (Jeremiah 18:1-2)

For forty years the Prophet Jeremiah proclaimed the Lord's plea for the nation of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to repent of their sins, sins of apostasy, idolatry, perverted worship, and moral decay, and return to Him or face His coming judgement as a result of their sin.

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." (Jeremiah 18:3-6)

Here we find an illustration of God's sovereign rule over the house and the affairs of His people Israel; God is the potter and Israel is the clay and it's God who is doing the forming and not the clay. To further illustrate His point, God reminds the nation of Israel of His sovereign rule over the nations and how a nation responds to God impacts God's calamity or blessing on that nation.

"At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it." (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

While this illustration was to show to the nation of Israel God's coming calamity on them should they not turn from their evil ways, we can see application to our country today. Certainly, we can say the Lord has blessed our country and apart from the nation of Israel it would appear America has been one of the most

blessed countries throughout history. But sadly, we see our nation is no longer seeking His voice and God may soon *“think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.”*

So, would Israel understand the illustration and repent and seek God? Unfortunately, God knew what their answer would be and in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took control of the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

“So now then, speak to the men of Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Behold, I am fashioning calamity against you and devising a plan against you. Oh turn back, each of you from his evil way, and reform your ways and your deeds.”’ But they will say, ‘It’s hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’” (Jeremiah 18:11-12)

Let’s hope that we won’t be like Israel and say to God, *‘It’s hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’*