

Jeremiah 18:1-23 **Sin Brings Disaster – Repentance Brings Deliverance**

The Potter and the Clay – Warning of pending disaster

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 you to hear My words."

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

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.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

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!

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

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.

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

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.

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 every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.'"

God's Warning Rejected

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."

Punishment Decreed

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.

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?

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,

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

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."

Persecution planned against Jeremiah

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."

Jeremiah's Prayer for Revenge against his adversaries

19 Give heed to me, O Lord, And listen to the voice of those who contend with me!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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Facts Revealed:

The Potter and the Clay – Warning of pending disaster

✧ The word which came to Jeremiah from Yahweh (the Lord), saying:

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

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

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. [\[Jeremiah 18:1-4\]](#)

✧ Then the word of Yahweh (the Lord) came to me, saying:

"O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says Yahweh (the Lord). "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!

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

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. [\[Jeremiah 18:5-8\]](#)

✧ The potter and the clay is a picture showing God's relationship with His people.

✧ The illustration is a call to the people to consider repentance to escape the pending wrath determined against it.

✧ Repentance results in blessing where God had decreed destruction because of their sin.

✧ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

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. [\[Jeremiah 18:9-10\]](#)

✧ The message is a warning of the danger of continuing in sin.

✧ Sin results in destruction where God had promised blessing for obedience.

✧ "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says Yahweh (the Lord): "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.'"
[\[Jeremiah 18:11\]](#)

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✧ Yahweh calls for the people to make a choice between two clear alternatives and repent of their sins for the good.

God's Warning Rejected

- ✧ 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 18:12]
- ✧ The people are so addicted to their sins they blatantly refuse to consider repentance and determine to follow their own evil inclinations.

Punishment Decreed

- ✧ Therefore thus says Yahweh (the Lord):
"Ask now among the Gentiles, Who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.
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? [Jeremiah 18:13-14]
- ✧ It seems astounding that people can willingly and knowingly turn their back on the blessings of God and choose their own destruction.
- ✧ "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,
To make their land desolate and a perpetual hissing; Everyone who passes by it will be astonished And shake his head.
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." [Jeremiah 18:15-17]
- ✧ Their hardhearted refusal of God and His ways will result in their violent removal from their land and their dispersal through foreign lands of their enemies.
- ✧ Yahweh will punish the people because they rejected Him in favor of idolatry and all the perversions that accompany it.
- ✧ The land is defiled by their sinful behavior. [Leviticus 18:24-30, 19:31, Numbers 36:33-34, Psalm 106:39, Isaiah 24:5, 59:3, Jeremiah 2:7, 3:6-10, 16:18]

Persecution planned against Jeremiah

- ✧ 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." [Jeremiah 18:18]
- ✧ Out of Jealousy and in defense of their own false prophecies, the Priests of Anathoth make plans to silence Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's Prayer for Revenge against his adversaries

- ✧ Give heed to me, O Yahweh (Lord), And listen to the voice of those who contend with me! 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.
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.
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.
Yet, Yahweh (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. [Jeremiah 18:19-23]
- ✧ Jeremiah's prayer for revenge is simply a prayer for Yahweh to do all He said He will do in punishing the people for their rebellion against the warnings Jeremiah had given at the Word of Yahweh.