

The Potter and His Creation

Jeremiah 18

Outline

- 1-4 | Jeremiah is told to use the image of the potter to deliver a message
- 5-12 | God is the Potter and He is forming calamity against His people because they refuse to turn from their evil ways, from following their own plans
- 13-17 | God's message concerning Israel
- 18 | A plot to slander Jeremiah
- 19-23 | Jeremiah's prayer for justice

Reflections

This is one of the classic passages that describes God's sovereignty, providence and judgment all in the same place. It begins with Jeremiah being told to use the illustration of the potter who was forming a pot on his wheel to deliver a message from God. While observing the potter, the pot on his wheel was not turning out as the potter intended, so, while it was still malleable, the potter destroyed it and remade it into something else.

This prompted Jeremiah to declare the word of the Lord to the people. Let's consider the God's attributes of sovereignty, providence and judgment in the message.

Sovereignty

God declares His sovereignty in verse 6 using the illustrates it using the potter as a metaphor.

Jeremiah 18:5-6 NASB Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 6 "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."

Through Jeremiah, God is reveal a part of His nature to us but He doesn't just make a declaration and then leave us wondering how He exhibits this part of His being, in this case His sovereignty. God, through Jeremiah, then describes His dealings with two nations whom God has declared two different paths for whose ultimate outcome is determined by its own actions.

Nation/Kingdom that Repents	Nation/Kingdom that Sins
Nation/Kingdom that God has determined to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy	Nation/Kingdom that God has determined to build up or to plant it
God will relent from the calamity	God will reconsider the good

This is the message that God is giving to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: God has determined calamity against them but they are urged to turn back, or repent, and reform their ways and deeds.

Providence and Judgment

God's providence and judgment go hand in hand, His wanting to bless and at the same time His decision to bring judgment. We also see that God is willing to change His plans concerning a nation or kingdom and that His decision is based on the response of the nation or kingdom, either continuing in their sinful ways or repenting and reforming their ways.

What About Us

While God has predetermined the possible outcomes, He has left the choice up to the nations or kingdoms or individuals. Predestination and Free-Will are not mutually exclusive but they are eternally

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connected. God has predetermined the possible outcomes: Heaven or Hell, but He has left us with the choice of how we will live. This is how it has been from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. God has set a standard for us to live by and we can choose to follow or not. But He has also predetermined the potential outcomes. At the same time God is a forgiving God who is willing to relent if we are willing to repent and reform our ways.

Consider the words of Christ concerning salvation and judgment.

John 3:16-21 NASB "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

What choice have you made with regard to Jesus? Choose wisely because your life, both now and in the future, depend on it!

Lord God, You are sovereign over all of Your creation, choosing to plant or to uproot, to bless or to bring judgment. You've sent Your Son and have given us a choice concerning Him, to believe or not. I pray that all would choose wisely for their very lives and eternal souls depend on it. Help us to be sensitive to Your Spirit as it helps us to understand Your Word and guides us in how we should live. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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