

Jeremiah 18

This chapter begins with the not uncommon illustrative use of the potter and his vessel of clay. It is an illustration of how easy it is for God to destroy the nation because of her sins. With the command to repent in order to be spared, the people not only say there is no hope, but they will continue on their path. The close of this chapter, Jeremiah asks God to judge his enemies. Many believe that chapters 18-20 date from the early years of Jehoiakim's reign, thus predating the statements that the nation's destiny is written in concrete and can't be changed.

- 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 thee to hear my words.**
- 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.**
- 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.**
- 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**
- 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.**

In every instance where this illustration is used it speaks of a group, usually the nation of Israel.

"Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?," Isaiah 29:16.

- 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
- 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.
- 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand," Isaiah 64:8.

Jeremiah 19:1-11, Jeremiah is told to get a potter's vessel and in verse 11 it is told to break it. The entire context is the potter's vessel represents the NATION of Israel.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Romans 9:21

This is important in understanding Romans 9:21 as some teach the illustration is of God's sovereign control over individuals, whereas, the context is God's dealing with the nation of Israel.

- 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;**
- 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.**
- 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;**
- 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.**

God's promise is that if a nation which God has pronounced judgment, repents, and turns from their ways God will forgive them and not destroy them.

Can this apply to the United States?

Although some would say yes, the context and the specific wording say no. Notice, that a nation "**against whom I have pronounced**" turn from their evil ways. God had directly pronounced judgement upon Israel (Judah) so it would apply to them. God also directly pronounced judgment upon other nations in the Bible (cf. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria) so if they would have repented they would have been spared. But, God has never directly pronounced judgment upon the U.S.A., so it can not be applied to the U.S.A. or any evil nation that God has not directly pronounced judgement upon.

11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

God tells Jeremiah to speak to the about the coming judgment and their need to repent.

12 And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

The response of the people was **"there is no hope."** What they were saying was that God can't help us, we can only hope in ourselves.

"There were a lot of powerful arguments against the Equality Act, but Rep. Greg Steube (R-Fla.) resorted to the ultimate authority: the Bible. During an intense debate on the House floor, the Florida representative said it was time for his colleagues to hear the truth about the transgender issue. But Democrats aren't interested in the truth -- or God. And far-Left radical Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) didn't mind saying so.

"A woman must not wear men's clothing nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this," Steube read from Deuteronomy 22:5. But let's be clear, he said. "It's not clothing or personal style that offends God, but rather the use of one's appearance to act out or take on a sexual identity different from the one biologically assigned by God at birth." What's happening when men, women, and children do that, Steube said, is that "they're making a statement that God didn't know what He was doing when he created them." And if Congress supports that -- by passing extreme transgender bills like the Equality Act -- then this country is "go[ing] directly against what is laid out in scripture."

Democrats, irate that the Florida congressman dared to quote the word of God on the House floor, unleashed on Steube. Everyone from Rep. Al Green (D-Texas) to Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), shamed him for being transphobic and intolerant. But it was Congressman Nadler's response that was the most shocking and revealing. "Mr. Steube," he said pointedly, "what any religious tradition describes as God's will is no concern of this Congress."

March 1, 2021, Tony Perkins, *Nadler on God: He's 'No Concern of This Congress'*

"we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart."

How do we know when our leaders, and the people, are following their own thinking and evil hearts? The answer is simple - the leaders legislate and [the people] deny truth to approve of that which scripture has clearly condemned and revealed.

GENDERS "The concept of gender spans across a spectrum. And as we know by now, it goes way beyond identifying as strictly male or female. Gender has become very nuanced in that, for many individuals, they now have the opportunity to identify with new terms more suitable to their body and preferences."

Cosmopolitan, 12 Gender-Related Terms You Should Know and Understand

"House Democrats have revealed their new, "future-focused" rules, which include the following: "In clause 8(c)(3) of rule XXIII, gendered terms, such as 'father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, grandson, or granddaughter' will be removed.

"In their place, terms such as 'parent, child, sibling, parent's sibling, first cousin, sibling's child, spouse, parent-in-law, child-in-law, sibling-in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepsibling, half-sibling, or grandchild' will be used, instead."

Michael Brown, Townhall, *Congress Has Officially Gone Gender Crazy*

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," Genesis 1:27.

ABORTION An estimated 62,502,904 abortions have been done since the Supreme Court decided Roe v. Wade in 1973. (LifeNews.Com, January 22, 2021)

"As nouns the difference between baby and fetus is that baby is a very young human, particularly from birth to a couple of years old or until walking is fully mastered while fetus is (canada|us) an unborn or unhatched vertebrate showing signs of the mature animal." **WikiDiff, Baby vs Fetus - What's the difference?**

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:13-16

RACE

"Systemic racism is both a theoretical concept and a reality. As a theory, it is premised on the research-supported claim that the United States was founded as a racist society, that racism is thus embedded in all social institutions, structures, and social relations within our society. Rooted in a racist foundation, systemic racism today is composed of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors that give an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to White people while denying them to people of color."

Nicki Lisa Cole, Ph.D., *Definition of Systemic Racism in Sociology Beyond Prejudice and Micro-Aggressions*, July 20, 2021

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious [religious]..

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Acts 17:22-26 [bold added]

MARRIAGE

"Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), is a landmark civil rights case in which the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 5-4 ruling requires all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the Insular Areas to perform and recognize the marriages of same-sex couples on the same terms and conditions as the marriages of opposite-sex couples, with all the accompanying rights and responsibilities.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh," Genesis 2:24.

13 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.

14 Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?

As in Jeremiah 2 God asks how can such a foolish thing be done. In chapter 2 the appeal was to the heavens. Here the appeal is to ask the heathen. Would someone leave the life giving water?

15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;

16 To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.

Because the people have forgotten God for other gods, judgment is coming.

18 Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices 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 smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

The people didn't like the message of Jeremiah. Their answer was to get rid of the messenger when they should have listened to the message.

1. They plotted against Jeremiah because they despised his warnings..
2. The leaders of the nation - priest, king, prophet - will continue to tell us the truth, implying that Jeremiah won't.
3. The plot was to speak against Jeremiah as God's messenger in order that none would listen to him.

**19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.
20 Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.**

Jeremiah asks God to listen to him and pay attention to what those who contend with him are saying. Should evil people be rewarded asks Jeremiah when I have obeyed you and asked you to spare them from your wrath.

**21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet.
23 Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger.**

Vs. 21-22 Jeremiah asks that God judge those who oppose him through famine and sword upon their families. He asks that they cry from their homes in fear when the enemy come because of what they have done to me.

Vs. 23 Jeremiah acknowledges that God knows what is happening and appeals to God to deal with them in His wrath.

SHOULD BELIEVERS PRAY FOR GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THEIR ENEMIES?

"An imprecation is a curse that invokes misfortune upon someone. Imprecatory psalms are those in which the author imprecates; that is, he calls down calamity, destruction, and God's anger and judgment on his enemies. This type of psalm is found throughout the book. The major imprecatory psalms are Psalms 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, and 140." <https://www.gotquestions.org/imprecatory-psalms.html>

Should Christians Pray for God's Wrath on Their Enemies? BY Jeff Olson

Depending on our motives, praying for God's wrath can be a legitimate cry for justice. That is the cry of the heart you see reflected in such psalms as Psalm 94:1-2: O LORD, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve.

While the desire for God to set things right is valid, Jesus introduced a new attitude to have toward our enemies.

Jesus didn't teach us to pray against our enemies. He didn't encourage us to request bloodthirsty revenge or the judgment they deserve. Instead, He called His followers to actually pray for their enemies (Matthew 5:43-45). This was nothing short of revolutionary for his Jewish listeners. In a time when the Jewish religious leaders touted radical vengeance as a virtue, Jesus introduced a whole new way of doing business. He taught that true sons of God are not only concerned for their neighbors, but for their enemies as well.

It's a mistake to assume that praying for our enemies means we are to be passive and to let them take advantage or walk all over us. There are times to take a stand and strongly oppose our enemies like the day Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers and drove them out of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 21:12-13). And the writers of the New Testament call us to appeal to civil authorities to enforce laws that are meant to hold evildoers accountable and keep them in check (Romans 13). Holding others accountable for their actions and seeking justice, however, are not the same as praying for and pursuing revenge.

Though we should never stop longing and working for justice, Jesus took praying for vengeance off the table. By word and example, Jesus urged his followers to replace a heart for revenge with a heart to see our enemies reconciled to God and us. His life, death, and resurrection empowers us to envision the glory of God restored in others, to seek peace and reconciliation when possible, and to leave the matter of vengeance up to a holy and wise God who will mete out revenge in His perfect time and in His perfect way (Romans 12:17-21).