

Jeremiah Chapter 18

Verses 18:1 – 20:18

A close link exists between (chapter 17 and chapters 18-20).

Destruction is in view (chapter 17), but repentance can yet prevent that (18:7-8).

However, repentance was not present (18:12), so Jeremiah's shattered jar illustrated God's dashing Israel in judgment (chapter 19).

Then the rejection spirit (compare 19:15), led to persecution against God's mouthpiece (chapter 20).

Verses 1-4: The word "potter" means "shaper", and the LORD as Creator shapes and forms lives (Gen. 2:7-8; Psalm 94:9).

The LORD has sovereignty over lives like the potter over clay (Rom. 9:20-22).

Jeremiah 18:1 "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,"

The word of prophecy, as the Targum: this is a distinct prophecy from the later part of the preceding chapter, where destruction is prophesied.

Verses 2-6

"Potter's house":

God sent Jeremiah to a potter, who gave him an illustration by shaping a vessel.

The prophet secured a vessel and used it for his own illustration (19:1).

Jeremiah watched the potter at his wheel.

The soft clay became misshapen, and the potter shaped it back into a good vessel.

God will so do with Judah if she repents.

Jeremiah 18:2 "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words."

Which, no doubt, was well known to the prophet; but where it was is not certain.

Some think Jeremiah was in the temple, and this house was beneath it, and therefore he is bid to go down to it.

But of this there is no certainty, nor even probability.

It is most likely that this house was without the city, perhaps near the potter's field (Matt. 27:10); and which lying low, he is ordered to go down to it.

"And there I will cause thee to hear my words":

There the LORD would tell him what he had further to say to him, and what he should say to the people.

And where by lively representations, by sensible objects before him, he would cause him to understand more clearly what he said and designed to do.

As God sometimes represented things to the minds of the prophets in dreams and visions, setting before them mental objects, and raising in their minds ideas of things, He sometimes, (as is the case here), represented things to them by real, visible objects, and by similes taken from them.

Conveying unto them a clear and distinct knowledge of His mind and will, which they, in turn, shared with the people.

The reason the LORD sent Jeremiah to the potter's house to give him the words for the people, was because the LORD would show Jeremiah that God has power over His creation.

This lesson was to be heard in Jeremiah's ears and seen in Jeremiah's eyes.

Jeremiah 18:3 "Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels."

The likening (as in Jer. 18:6), of man to the clay and God to the potter was familiar (see on Jer. 18:4).

While Jeremiah looks upon the potter's work, God darts into his mind two great truths.

God has authority and power, to form and fashion kingdoms and nations as he pleases.

He may dispose of us as he thinks fit.

And it would be as absurd for us to dispute this, as for the clay to quarrel with the potter.

But he always goes by fixed rules of justice and goodness.

When God is coming against us in judgments, we may be sure it is for our sins.

But sincere conversion from the evil of sin will prevent the evil of punishment, as to persons, families and nations.

Have you ever seen a potter put a clump of clay on the wheel and start making a vessel?

As the wheel turns round and round, the hands of the potter form the clay.

Jeremiah was to see that God is the Potter and we are His clay.

He molds us and makes us into whatever He wants.

Jeremiah 18:4 "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]."

Which is the matter the vessel is made of.

"Was marred in the hand of the potter":

While he was working it.

Either it fell, as the Septuagint version renders it, out of his hands, or from the beam on which it was laid.

Or was spoiled by some means or other, so that it was not fit for the purpose he first intended it.

Or the words should be read, according to some copies, "and the vessel was marred which he made, as clay in the hand of the potter".

While it was moist and pliable as Jarchi interprets it; and while it was in his hands, forming and fashioning it.

"So he made it again another vessel":

Put it into another form and shape it would better serve.

"As seemed good to the potter to make it":

Just as he pleased, and as his judgment in his art directed him.

He having power over the clay to mold it as he would, and as it best answered so to do.

God has control over His creation, as the potter has control over the clay.

It appears that the vessel the potter had made for beauty became marred, and the potter started all over again and made a new vessel.

This is showing Jeremiah the disappointment God had in His people He had created, and how He may destroy them and start all over again.

It is the potter's (God's), choice to do with the clay as He will.

Verses 5-6

The visit to the potter was a sign, reflecting that Judah still had the opportunity to turn from their sin and be spared from judgment.

The LORD's design was to refashion His people into something serviceable, not to destroy them (Isa. 64:8).

Jeremiah 18:5 "Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,"

While he was in the potter's house, and after he had observed his manner of working, and the change he had made in his work, the LORD spoke to him, and applied it in the following manner.

This is just saying that while Jeremiah watched the potter making the vessel of clay, God began to speak to him.

Jeremiah 18:6 "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."

Make, and mar, and remake at pleasure?

Certainly he could.

God is a sovereign Being, and has a sovereign and uncontrollable power over his creatures.

He has an indisputable right unto them, and can dispose of them as he pleases.

He has as good a right to them, and as great power over them, as the potter has to and over his clay, and a better and greater; since they are made by him, and have their all from him, their being, life, and motion.

Whereas the clay is not made by the potter; it is only the vessel that is made of the clay by him, which has its form from him.

If therefore the potter has such power over the clay, which he did not make, as to cast it into another form as it pleases him, and especially when marred; the LORD has an undoubted power over men, and a just right to change their state and circumstances as he pleases.

Nor have they any reason to complain of him, especially when they have marred themselves by their own sins and transgressions.

Which was the present case of the house of Israel or the Jews (see Isa. 29:16).

"Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand":

And he can form and fashion it as he pleases, and it is not in the power of the clay to resist and hinder him.

"So are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel":

And I can dispose of you as I please, and put you in what circumstances it seems good unto me.

Drive you from your land, and scatter you among the nations.

Nor can you hinder me from doing this, or whatever else is my pleasure.

And this his sovereign power and pleasure, and as exercised in a way of mercy and equity, are exemplified in the following cases.

The LORD had created them to be a vessel of honor, but they had chosen to become ugly in the sight of their Creator.

The LORD is telling Jeremiah, "Do they not know that I can destroy them, and start all over again"?

Verses 7-10

Judgment could be averted if there were true repentance.

Examples are Israel during Hezekiah's reign (26:17-19; Micah: 3:9-12), and Nineveh following Jonah's preaching (Jonah chapter 3).

Jeremiah 18:7 "[At what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy [it];"

The words carry the thoughts of the prophet back to those which had been stamped indelibly on his memory when he was first called to his work (Jer. 1:10).

He is now taught that that work was throughout conditional.

In bold speech Jehovah represents himself as changing His purpose, even suddenly, "in an instant," if the nation that is affected by it passes from evil to good or from good to evil.

The seeming change is but the expression of an unchanged eternal Law of Righteousness, dealing with men according to their works.

This, and not the assertion of an arbitrary, irresistibly predestinating will, was the lesson the prophet had been taught by the parable of the potter's wheel.

The nation is in God's hands as this vessel is in the potter's hands.

At any moment, God can pick them up and destroy them.

God can do with His creation whatever He chooses.

Verses 8-10

Though He had announced impending judgment, the "spoiled" nation can be restored as a good vessel by God, who will hold off the judgment (verses 8, 11).

By contrast, if the nation followed sin, He would not bring the blessing desired (verses 9-10).

Jeremiah 18:8 "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."

Such a sentence as this, should immediately, upon the above declaration, do as Nineveh did.

"Turn from their evil."

Their evil of sin, their evil ways and works, as an evidence of the truth of their repentance for former sins.

"I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them":

As they change their course of life, God will change the dispensations of his providence towards them, and not bring upon them the evil of punishment he threatened them with.

In which sense repentance can only be understood of God, he doing that which is similar to what men do when they repent of anything.

They stop their proceedings, and change their outward conduct.

So God proceeds not to do what he threatened to do, and changes his outward behavior to men.

He wills a change, and makes one in his methods of acting, but never changes his will.

In this particular instance, the creation of God had become ugly to Him, because of the use of the vessel He had made.

He had made them to worship and glorify Him, and they have chosen to follow other gods.

They have stained their vessels He made.

If they would repent right now and do the thing He created them for, He would not destroy them.

Jeremiah 18:9 "And [at what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant [it];"

By way of promise on the other hand.

Or, "and the moment I shall speak", etc. as in (Jer. 18:7).

In favor to a people; signifying, that if they do that which is right and good, and continue therein, it may be expected that I will appear for and among such a nation and kingdom.

"To build and to plant it":

To build up its fences that have been broken down, and to plant it with pleasant plants, and make it prosperous and flourishing.

And protect and defend it, and keep it safe, and in a secure condition.

So that it shall be in very thriving circumstances, and be out of the power of its enemies to hurt it.

It is God that makes a nation great, or destroys it.

The time when God decides to do this is in His hands as well.

Once God has spoken there is no turning back.

Jeremiah 18:10 "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."

What is sinful, contrary to the law and will of God, openly and publicly, in a bold and daring manner.

"That it obey not my voice":

In my word, and by my prophets, but turn a deaf ear to them, and slight and despise all instructions, admonitions, and reproofs.

"Then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them":

Or, "do them good".

That is, withhold it from them, and not bestow it on them.

But, on the contrary, correct or punish them according to their deeds.

Thus, though God is a sovereign God, ye, in the dispensations of his providence towards kingdoms and nations, he deals with them in such a merciful and equitable manner, that there is no just reason to complain of him.

And yet he maintains and keeps up his power and authority, such as the potter exercises over the clay.

For the creation to rebel against its Creator is a dangerous thing.

God wants His creation to obey His wishes.

When they obey God, great blessings follow.

When they disobey God, a curse comes on them.

It is in God's hands to destroy them and start all over again.

Jeremiah 18:11 "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."

This is the application of the above general rules of procedure to the people of the Jews, and particularly that which relates to the destruction of a nation or kingdom, and the declaration of it in order to reclaim them.

"Speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying":

Thus saith the LORD; or, "to the man of Judah".

The body of the Jewish nation, and especially the inhabitants of the metropolis of it.

Which was the source of sin to the whole kingdom, and on which the calamity threatened would chiefly come, if not prevented by a reforming.

"Behold, I frame evil against you":

As the potter frames his clay upon the wheel, to which the allusion is.

Which is to be understood of the evil of punishment, but not of any secret purpose, and settled determination, in the mind of God to bring it upon them.

For that is never disannulled by himself or others, or ever changed.

But some operation in Providence, which began to work towards their destruction.

Some providential step which God had taken, and which threatened their ruin.

"And devise a device against you":

The same as before; by which it looked as if he had thought of the matter, and had contrived a scheme, which if he went on with, would issue in the subversion of their whole state.

"Return you now every one from his evil way":

That so the reforming may be as general as the corruption was.

It supposes a sense of the evil of their former conduct, and repentance for their sins, of which their forsaking and abstaining from them would be an evidence.

"And make your ways and your doings good":

For it is not sufficient barely to abstain from sin, which is only a negative holiness.

But there must be a performance of good works, a walking in them, a constant series and course of obedience to God, according to the rule of his word.

God does not want to destroy them, but they may drive Him to it.

This is one more plea from God for them to repent of their spiritual adultery and return to worship Him alone.

The demonstration of the potter and His wheel is showing that God can do with them whatever He chooses.

Jeremiah 18:12 "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."

"There is no hope":

Jeremiah brought them to the point where they actually stated their condition honestly.

The prophet's threats were useless because they were so far gone, abandoned to their sins and the penalty.

All hypocrisy was abandoned in favor of honesty, without repentance.

Repentance was not in Israel (as verse 18; 19:15).

This explains a seeming paradox that Israel can repent and avert judgment, yet Jeremiah is not to pray for Israel (7:16; 11:14).

It would do no good to pray for their change since they steeled themselves against any change.

We can easily see these people did not want to be instructed of God.

They wanted to do their own thing.

They do not receive the message God sent to them through Jeremiah.

They act almost arrogantly toward Jeremiah.

They just tell him they will do as their own heart desires and not as he instructed.

Jeremiah 18:13 "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."

“Virgin of Israel”:

It enhanced their guilt that Israel was the virgin whom God had chosen (2 Kings 19:21).

Virgin, (daughter of), is a set phrase that often refers to certain nations or peoples.

These are God's chosen people.

They have the law of God to live by that the rest of the world does not have.

God had chosen them to be vessels of honor.

God had put His trust in them.

They have broken that trust.

They have turned against the very God that made them so great.

Jeremiah 18:14 "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?"

Various translation problems attend this verse.

Some suggest that “field” should be changed to read a word of closely related Hebrew consonants, “mountain”.

Likewise, the verb “forsaken” is taken by some as “cease to flow”.

In any case, the application is clear.

Although the supply of “snow” and “waters” is dependable, Judah has been fickle and unfaithful.

“Snow of Lebanon ... cold flowing waters”:

No reasonable man would forsake such for “the rock of the open country,” perhaps a poetic term for Mt. Lebanon, from which the high mountain streams flowed.

Yet Israel forsook God, the fountain of living waters, for broken foreign cisterns (compare 2:13).

This is possibly showing that the water of God has never stopped flowing for them.

God has cared for them as His beloved.

They have had all of their needs met.

God had supernaturally cared for their welfare.

Why would they leave His protective care to go to another?

Why would they leave the flowing stream to go to the dry land?

In other words, why would they leave the good they had for the uncertainty of false gods?

Jeremiah 18:15 "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;"

Or, "that they have forgotten me"; this is the horrible thing they have done, which was unheard of among the Gentiles, who were always tenacious of their gods, and the worship of them.

And that foolish and unwise thing, which was like leaving pure flowing streams of water for dirty puddles.

This is to be understood of their forsaking the worship of God, as the Targum interprets it, and following after idols.

"They have burnt incense to vanity":

To idols, which are vain empty things, and which cannot give their worshippers what they expect from them.

Or, "in vain they burn incense"; even to the true God, while they also sacrificed unto idols.

Which to do was an abomination to the LORD (Isa. 1:13); and especially burning incense to idols must be a vain thing.

And so the Targum, "to no profit as they burn incense or spices:"

"And they have caused them to stumble in their ways":

That is, either the idols they worshipped, or the false prophets caused the professing people of the Jews to stumble and fall in the ways into which they led them.

"From the ancient paths":

Or, "the paths of eternity"; which lead to eternal life.

Or which were of old marked out by the revealed will of God for the saints to walk in.

And in which the patriarchs and people of God, in all former ages, did walk.

And which were appointed from everlasting, and will remain forever.

And these are the good old paths in (Jer. 6:16).

"To walk in paths, in a way not cast up":

A new way, unknown in former times.

An unbeaten track, which the saints had never walked in.

A rough path, unsafe and dangerous.

And hence they stumbled, and fell, and came to ruin.

The burning of incense was a very important part of service to God.

The smoke from the incense that went up into the heavens symbolized the prayers of the saints.

To burn incense to a false god, would be putting their trust in a false god.

God had always made a path for His children to walk in, as He did in the middle of the Red sea.

The way to heaven and to God, is to walk on the straight and narrow path that He has provided.

To walk on any other path, brings sin and sorrow, which leads to destruction.

Jeremiah 18:16 "To make their land desolate, [and] a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head."

Not that this was the intention either of those that led them out of the right way into those wrong paths, or of them that went into them.

But so it was eventually.

This was the issue of things; their idolatry and other sins were the cause of their land being desolate.

Through the ravage of the enemy, let in upon them by way of judgment.

And through the destruction of men by them; so that there were few or none to cultivate and manure it.

"And a perpetual hissing":

To be hissed at perpetually by the enemy, whenever they passed by it, and observed its desolation.

Thereby expressing their hatred at its inhabitants.

Their joy at its desolation; and their satisfaction in it, which would be for ever.

Or, as Kimchi interprets, a long time.

This is the present case of the Jews; and has been ever since their destruction by the Romans.

And will be until the fullness of the Gentiles is gathered in.

"Every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished":

To see the desolations made, and the strange alterations in a place once so famous for fruitfulness and number of inhabitants.

"And wag his head":

Either out of pity, or rather in a way of derision and exultation (see Lam. 2:15).

This beautiful land of milk and honey will be turned into a wasteland.

The land would now be disgraced.

It would be a horrible sight to see.

The destruction will astonish those who pass by.

Jeremiah 18:17 "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."

As the east wind, which is generally strong and boisterous, drives the chaff and stubble, and anything that is light, before it, and scatters it here and there.

So the LORD threatens to scatter the people of the Jews over the face of the earth.

Before their enemies, whom they should not be able to withstand.

It denotes the power of the enemy God would make use of.

The ease with which this should be done; and the utter dispersion of them.

And is their present case.

"I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity":

That is, will not look upon them in a favorable way.

Nor with any pity and compassion for them, nor hear their cries.

But turn his back upon them, and a deaf ear unto them, and give them no help and relief, or deliver them out of their calamities.

But suffer them to continue upon them, and them to sink under them (see Prov. 1:26); which refers to the same time of calamity as here.

They have turned their backs on God and now He will turn His back to them.

The east wind brings stormy weather.

This will be a day when no help will come to them from God.

Jeremiah 18:18 "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."

"Devices against Jeremiah":

Plans to charge the prophet with their “tongues” and then to slay him (verse 23), were based on the premise that his message of doom was not true.

The business of the priests, the wise, and the prophets continue as usual since God made them lasting institutions (compare Lev. 6:18, 10-11).

Jeremiah again lets his readers understand some of the constant persecution he faces (compare 11:18-19), and renews his plea for safety and deliverance from the designs of evil men (compare Psalm 43:1; 59:1-2).

Instead of accepting the message God has sent them, they decide to do away with the messenger, Jeremiah.

They do not believe Jeremiah.

They believe God will help them, regardless of what they do to Him.

They would rather take their direction from the priest who is living as badly as they are, than to listen to Jeremiah.

To "smite him with the tongue" would be to falsely witness against him.

The prophets they were listening to were the false prophets.

Verses 19-23

“Give heed to me”: This is one of many examples of prayer aligning with God’s will as Jeremiah prays for God’s work of judgment to be done (verses 11, 15-17).

Jeremiah 18:19 "Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me."

To his prayer, since his enemies would not give heed to his prophecies.

And God does give heed to the cries and complaints of his ministers, when men will not give heed to their words and doctrines.

They have a God to go to, who will hear them, when men despise them.

"And hearken to the voice of them that contend with me":

Hear their reproaches and rantings, their blasphemies and evil speaking, their lies and falsehoods, and judge between me and them.

Let it appear who is in the right.

Vindicate my cause, and plead with them that plead against me.

Now Jeremiah is crying out to God for Him to help.

Jeremiah says "They will not listen".

Jeremiah 18:20 "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."

For all the good that I have done them, shall this be all the recompense I shall have, to be evilly treated by them.

To have my good name, and even life, taken away by them?

Shall this be suffered to be done?

And, if it is, shall it go unpunished?

The prophet taxes the people with ingratitude, which he afterwards instances in, and proves.

"For they have digged a pit for my soul":

Or "life".

They lay in wait to take it away.

Or they had formed a design against it, and brought a charge and accusation against him, in order to take it away, under cover of law and justice.

Kimchi interprets it as poison, which they would have had him drink.

"Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them":

He was an intercessor for them with God.

Pleaded with him on their behalf, that good things might be bestowed upon them, and that wrath might be averted from them.

So Christ did for the Jews that crucified him (Luke 23:34).

This is an instance of their ingratitude.

That though he had been an advocate for them, stood in the gap between God and them, and was persistent for their good.

Yet this was all the recompense he had from them.

They sought his life to take it away. This kindness of his for them was forgotten by them.

But he trusts the LORD will remember it, and not suffer them to act the base part they intended.

And now he determines no more to plead their cause, but to utter evils upon them, as follows.

This is the very same message that David gave (in the book of Psalms, chapter 35).

They are trying to say that Jeremiah is not of God.

They have dug a hole for his soul.

Jeremiah had tried to intercede for them, but God told him not to do it.

Jeremiah had done the job God sent him to do, but they hated him for it.

They believed Jeremiah was speaking for himself, instead of God.

They had been so blinded by their sins, they did not realize what he was saying was true.

Jeremiah is asking God to deal with them for this rejection.

Jeremiah 18:21 "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."

To be starved, and perish by it, as they were in the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans, and the Romans.

"And pour out their blood by the force of the sword":

Or, "upon the hands of the sword"; by means of it.

That is, the blood of the parents of the children.

Let the one perish by famine, and the other by the sword.

Which, when thrust into a man, blood gushes out, and runs upon the sword to the handle of it.

"And let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows":

Let them have neither husbands nor children.

Which latter might be a comfort to them, when they had lost their husbands.

But being stripped of these also, the affliction and distress must be the greater.

"And let their men be put to death":

Or "slain with death".

With the pestilence, as Kimchi rightly interprets it (see Rev. 6:8).

Jarchi understands it of the angel of death (see Heb. 2:14).

"Let their young men be slain by the sword in battle":

Such being commonly employed in military service, as being the most proper persons for it.

Jeremiah has been so angered by what they have done and said to him, that he no longer asks God to save them.

He wants the wrath of God to descend on them and take vengeance for their actions toward him.

God does not need Jeremiah to figure out what to do to them, no more than He needs our help to dole out punishment.

God is just in His judgements, and sometimes we are not.

Perhaps, Jeremiah is saying, "All of the things you said would happen to them, let it be so".

Jeremiah had already prophesied these things would happen.

Jeremiah 18:22 "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."

A shrieking of women and children, not only for the loss of husbands and parents, but because of the entrance of the enemy into the city, and into their houses, to take away their lives and their substance; as follows.

"When thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them":

Or an army, as the Targum; either the Chaldean army, or rather the Roman army.

"For they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet":

And therefore, it was a just retaliation, that a troop or army should suddenly come upon them, and seize their persons and substance.

“Digged a pit” (compare 38:6).

Jeremiah 18:23 "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."

However deep they had laid them; and however unknown they were to him; or however private and secret they might be thought to be by them.

God is an omniscient God, and knows and sees all things.

The thoughts of men's hearts, and all their secret designs in the dark against his ministers, people, and interest.

"Forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight":

They had sinned the unpardonable sin; or, however, a sin unto death.

For which prayer for the forgiveness of it was not to be made (1 John 5:16).

This the prophet knew: what he here utters, and both before and after, must be considered, not as flowing from a private spirit, or from a spirit of malice and revenge.

But what he delivered out under a spirit of prophecy, as foretelling what would be the sad estate and condition of these persons.

For, otherwise, the temper and disposition of the prophet were the reverse.

And he was inclined to sue for mercy for these people, as he often did.

Wherefore this is not to be drawn into a precedent and example for any to follow.

"But let them be overthrown before thee":

By the sword, famine, and pestilence.

Or, "let them be made to stumble before thee"; and fall into perdition.

They having made others to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths of truth and goodness.

So that it was but a righteous thing that they should be punished after this manner (see Jeremiah 18:15).

"Deal thus with them in the time of thine anger":

The set time for his wrath to come upon them to the uttermost.

Then do unto them according to all the imprecations now made; which the prophet foresaw, and believed he would do; and therefore thus spake.

Jeremiah wants to be compensated for what they had done to him.

He has stopped weeping for them, and begun to feel the anger God had felt earlier.

They had planned to kill Jeremiah, and he wants God to kill them.

This is such a change from the pleading of Jeremiah to God to save them.

He suddenly agrees with the judgement God has made against them.

Now, he wants God to destroy them.

Jeremiah Chapter 18 Questions

1. Where did God send Jeremiah?
2. Why did He send Jeremiah there?
3. The _____ of the potter form the clay.
4. Who is the great Potter?
5. Who has control over the creation?
6. What happens, when the vessel the potter makes is marred?
7. What is verse 6 saying?
8. What is Jeremiah to say to the house of Israel?
9. What will God do, if they repent and return to Him?
10. Who decides when God will destroy or build up a nation?
11. What happens, when the creation obeys God?
12. Verse 11 says speak to whom?
13. What is the demonstration of the potter and the clay showing?

14. What did they decide to do?
15. What does God call Israel in verse 13?
16. God had chosen for them to be a vessel of _____.
17. What is verse 14 showing us?
18. They had burned incense to _____.
19. What did the smoke of the incense that was burned to God symbolize?
20. Where is a good example of a path God had made for them?
21. This beautiful land of milk and honey will be turned into a _____.
22. They had turned their backs on God, now He will _____.
23. How did they receive the message Jeremiah brought them?
24. What was Jeremiah, really?
25. "Smite him with the tongue" means what?
26. What is Jeremiah saying to God in verse 19?
27. They digged a pit for Jeremiah's _____.
28. What did Jeremiah tell God to remember?
29. What were some of the terrible things Jeremiah suggested should happen to them?
30. Jeremiah finally agrees with the _____ God has made on them.