

**Grace Bible Church  
The Tree of Life  
A Weekly Review  
Week ending 03/13/11**

**Learning the mystery behind the Potter, the Clay, the Lump and the Vessel. Part 3.  
How the clay is shaped and molded into a vessel.**

In our study of the Potter, the clay and the vessel, we need to note the potter's wheel as it relates to the plan of God for the human race. Let's begin with a reminder of the Potter's wheel. The potter controls the potter's wheel. This is simply a reminder of **Col 1:16-17, For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created by Him and for Him.**

Under the concept of the wheel, God's plan keeps rolling on no matter what. The wheel must turn on an axle and the axle is based upon the justice and the righteousness of God. Because of the angelic conflict, God has designed His plan so that the wheel of the Christian life must turn or spin on the axle of the individual's choice.

It's important to note what the wheel represents and how it used in the Bible. We have noted in Jer 18:3, that Jeremiah uses the analogy of the wheel as a type that represents the workings of God as He molds and shapes either a person or a nation into the kind of vessel He desires.

**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.  
(Jer 18:3-4)**

Here, the wheel represents the training He gives, and sometimes the discipline necessary in order that He may obtain the results He desires to have. In Eze 1:15 Wheels always represent progress, motion, purpose, accomplishment.

**Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the earth beside the living beings, for {each of} the four of them. The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship {was} like sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship {being} as if one wheel were within another. Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions, without turning as they moved.  
(Eze 1:15-17)**

In this Scripture the wheels represent the power of God in action. The wheel within a wheel in Eze 1:16-18, **their appearance and workmanship {being} as if one wheel were within another. This represents the inner motions, purposes and desires of our Lord within Himself. As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about.**

The rims of these wheels reach unto Heaven to inform us that the purposes and works of GOD are higher than ours, too high for our comprehension. The eyes on the wheels represent the omniscience of the Spirit of God, who knows full well what He is doing, and understands all the purposes of GOD. When it comes to His wheels, you must decide which axle you will use – the one that God has provided or will you invent your own which is some form of self-righteousness. Therefore, in perfect righteousness the justice of God provided man with a free will, so that man is a free agent in determining his own destiny. And he must take the responsibility for his own decisions. Therefore man cannot blame the mistakes and errors of his own decisions on perfect and incorruptible God.

In Psa 9:17, the psalmist says, **The wicked will return to Sheol** [grave, abode of death], **{Even} all the nations who forget God.**

I say that because the reason why Jer 18:4 says, **But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; is because Israel as a nation had forgotten God.**

Jer 2:32, "**Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me Days without number.**

Like the church at Ephesus, in Rev 2:4, **“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”**

A voice is heard on the bare heights, The weeping {and} the supplications of the sons of Israel; Because they have perverted their way, They have forgotten the Lord their God. “Return, O faithless sons, I will heal your faithlessness. Behold, we come to Thee; For Thou art the Lord our God.” (Jer 3:21-22)

Notice how they became unworthy vessels, **“This is your lot, the portion measured to you From Me,” declares the Lord, “Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood or lies and false doctrine. So I Myself have also stripped your skirts off over your face, That your shame may be seen.”** (Jer 13:25-26)

**“For My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods And they have stumbled from their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in bypaths, Not on a highway,”** (Jer 18:15)

Notice how many times the indictment was because they had forgotten God. Judah, in the days of Jeremiah, was a nation which had forgotten God. All through the scope of this prophecy, across the forty years or more that Jeremiah ministered to this nation, we are watching a nation being turned into the grave. There was chaos spreading throughout the land. There was corruption widespread in government, morality was constantly declining and evil was infecting the people. The life of the nation, like ours, was gradually becoming more and more hellish -- exactly in accordance with the prediction of the psalmist. Today, as you know, America is a nation which is rapidly forgetting God. We are described in 2Ti 3:1-5.

**But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. (2Ti 3:1-5)**

Today, we too are watching the phenomenon of a nation which has forgotten God being turned into hell or a grave--with corruption spreading in the land, the moral fiber of our people losing its consistency, the government increasingly unable to govern properly. The institutions of American life being shaken by frequent panics and torn with dissension--all this exactly in line with the prediction of the Scriptures.

The message of Jeremiah is that of a growing revelation of the heart of the God who turns a nation into hell. We hear the judgments of God in this book, but what the prophet is being taught as he goes along is to know the heart of the God of judgment. What a different picture that is! The great message of this book to us is to see what lies behind that which appears to be the ruthlessness of God in dealing with a people, and learning, from chapter to chapter, what kind of God is behind the judgment.

In Chapter 17, Jeremiah was taught two great truths: **Jer 17:9, The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?**

**Jer 18:12, "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 was also shown a glorious throne set on high from the beginning.

**A glorious throne on high from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord. Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For Thou art my praise. (Jer 17:12-14)**

This is the story behind Jer 18.

**The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you." 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." (Jer 18:1-6)**

When the person or the people, turn to God, healing begins to come back into that life. Jeremiah was sent down to the potter's house, and there he saw three simple things but they conveyed to him a fantastic lesson. The art of making a pot has not changed through the centuries. The wheel is now turned by an electric motor, but that is about the only difference. The clay is the same as it has always been. The potter is the same, with his capable hands, guided by his intelligence, working to mold and shape the clay into the vessel he has in mind. Today, there are the same ingredients--the potter, the clay, and the wheel.

What did Jeremiah see in this lesson? First, there was the clay. Jeremiah knew, as he watched the potter shaping and molding the clay; that he was looking at a picture of himself, and of every man, and of every nation. We are the clay. So Jeremiah saw the clay being shaped and molded into a vessel. Then some imperfection in the clay spoiled it in the potter's hand, and the potter crumbled it up, and began a new process of shaping it into a vessel that pleased him.

**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.**

**(Jer 18:3-4)**

Jeremiah saw the wheel turning constantly, bringing the clay against the potter's hand. That wheel stands for the turning circumstances of our life, under the control of the Potter, for it is the potter's foot that guides the wheel. The lesson is clear. As our life is being shaped and molded by the Great Potter, it is the circumstances of our life, the wheels of circumstance, which bring us again and again under the potter's hand. The wheels of divine authority and the circumstances of our life under the pressure of the molding fingers of the Potter, shapes the vessel according to his will.

Then, Jeremiah saw the potter, he knew God was the Great Potter, with absolute right over the clay to make it what he wanted it to be. So Jeremiah, watching, learned that an individual or a nation is clay in the Great Potter's hands. He has a sovereign right to make it what He wants it to be. He has the skill and design to work with the clay and to bring it to pass.

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10)**

**For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phi 1:6)**

**For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [He gives you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure. (Phi 2:13)**

**Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1Th 5:24)**

**“For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him.” (Job 23:14)**

Job even realized that the Potter was at work even when it seemed like he wasn't, we call that the silence of God. In Job 23, we have Job's last reply to his friend Eliphaz who has come right out in lambasted Job.

**Then Job replied, “Even today my complaint is rebellion and His hand is upon me heavy despite my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him And fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, And perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him and I would be delivered forever from my Judge. Behold, I go forward but He is not there and backward, but I cannot perceive Him;” (Job 23:1-8)**

Why? Because God is silent, this is the silence of God!

**“When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. (Job 23:9-11)**

Again Job is saying to his friends, I am innocent and your accusations are totally wrong!

**“I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth [doctrine] more than my necessary food.” (Job 23:12)**

That's Job's testimony! This means that Job has the doctrine to deal with what he's going through. We know that because he already passed part 1 of evidence testing and suffering for blessing. He said Job 1:21, **“Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”** Then he told his nagging wife in Job 2:10, **“You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”**

Job has the doctrine, but right now the doctrine is locked up because of interference from his three friends who are being used by Satan to do so! How? They counseled him! Nothing is more confusing to a person who has doctrine than a lot of counseling from their so-called friends. Since Job is under evidence testing, Satan as the defense attorney has the right of cross examination, and if he desires to use some self-righteous believers to try and get to a mature believer, he has the right to do so. It's the potter's right to do so and to allow this. Job regards this as divine neglect and it's merely the period of cross-examination. Neither Job nor his three friends understand how close Job is to that great principle of maximum glorification of God. And he will pass part three of evidence testing and suffering for blessing in spite of the confusion and the maligning of the three critics, his so-called friends. Job needs to realize that

the silence of God demands that he utilizes the inventory of his own doctrine resident in his own soul...that's when believers become great. Do you realize that we live in the dispensation of the silence of God. We live in the dispensation called the Church-age. God does not speak to anyone in this dispensation. Since the Canon of scripture was closed not one person has ever truly heard the voice of God. God now only speaks through His word!

What Job had as his testing is the very basis for making the royal family of God strong...it is the doctrine resident in your soul! That is the greatest power in the world today. So that in Job 23:13-17, Job expresses the fact that he doesn't understand the silence of God.

**“But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him. Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence; When I consider, I am terrified of Him. It is God who has made my heart faint, And the Almighty who has dismayed me, But I am not silenced by the darkness, Nor deep gloom which covers me. (Job 23:13-17)**

Job fails to recognize that the silence of God is the greatest compliment to the doctrine resident in the soul! The silence of God is actually a compliment to the mature believer. God speaks through His word and the highest compliment ever given to the royal family is the silence of God as the believer uses the greatest power in the world, Bible doctrine. This is when you can make personal application and throw away the crutches and stop depending on this person and that person for counseling. When you have the doctrine in your own soul, you will stop depending on what other's think! Sooner or later, if it hasn't happened already, you are going to have to face the test of the silence of God.

When that test comes remember that it is a compliment...you have learned the doctrine it's just a matter of it's proper application. Always remember Heb 11:6, **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.** Faith is that which is needed during the silence of God.