

# The Potter's House

Sunday, September 3, 2006

**The figure of the potter and his clay products comprises two vitally-important symbolic lessons in Scripture: 1. The twin doctrines of election and predestination, and, 2. The eschatological (last things) doctrine of the final destruction of all the workers of iniquity.**

- 1. Election and Reprobation: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. 9:21.**
- 2. Final destruction of the workers of iniquity: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel, (i.e., easily, utterly, and irrecoverably), that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet (Hell), till there be no place to bury." Jer. 19:11.**

## 1. ELECTION AND REPROBATION

Only by visiting the potter's house can you learn the twin doctrines of election and reprobation. "The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words." Jer. 18:1-2. It is a simple lesson. It is a profound lesson. In the wisdom of God, none can "hear" except those whom God invites to meet Him in the potter's house.

Having learned the lessons in the potter's house, you must faithfully preach it – including the most offensive doctrine of all – to wit: Reprobation: "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...(yet, notwithstanding, you are commanded to repent: "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." Jer. 18:11.

Whereupon, you will be immediately and viciously attacked, vilified and ridiculed by all: Gill: Being enraged at the judgments threatened them, they propose to enter into a confederacy and consultation together (conspiracy), to think of ways and means to stop the mouth of the prophet, and even to take away his life. "And they said, There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices (free will, not predestination), and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart."

Whereupon, God is enraged, and again threatens doom to Israel: "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...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." Jer. 18:13-17.

And Jeremiah prays for their eternal damnation: “Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against 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. Jer. 18:23.

## **2. From the Potter's house to Hell**

From the potter's house, Jeremiah is ordered to take the most senior and important political and religious leaders of the nation to the valley of Hinnom (Tophet, Hell – the Gehenna of the New Testament), there to preach to these leaders – and through them to the whole nation – the utter, irresistible, and irrecoverable doom of Israel – and to do this preaching by use of the potter's vessel.

“Thus saith the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate (the dung gate, through the filth and refuse of the city was hauled to Gehenna, a fitting symbol of Hell), and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee.” Jer. 19:1-2.

It was nothing short of miraculous that these leaders – including the Sanhedrin – would go with the hated and despised prophet. Gill: And the Lord, who sent the prophet to them, no doubt inclined their hearts to go along with him; who, otherwise, in all probability, would have refused; and perhaps would have charged him with impertinence and boldness, and would have rejected his motion with contempt, as foolish or mad.

Jeremiah's message to these leaders was unmitigated, horrendous, imminent, and inescapable wrath, concluded by the violent dashing of the clay potter's vessel into smithereens, saying: “Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet.

This violent gesture – signifying utter, irresistible, irrecoverable doom (a metal vessel as of bronze, brass, iron, gold or silver – when broken – could be repaired and restored. But not a clay vessel. Broken to smithereens – utter and unrepairable. Even so, Israel's – read, America's, this evil world's – certain doom – will be utter, and irrecoverable.

The dramatic dashing of the potter's vessel put an exclamation mark to these words: “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one of the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.” Jer. 19:9.

And simultaneously with the dramatic dashing, these words: “Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord.” Jer. 19:11-12.