

EARTHEN VESSELS

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Genesis 2: 7. *And the Lord God formed⁽³³³⁵⁾ man of the dust of the ground... Isa 64: 8.* *But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter⁽³³³⁵⁾; and we all are the work of thy hand.* When these two verses are connected together, they convey the idea of our Creator being like a potter who fashions us according to his will. The Hebrew word *yatsar*⁽³³³⁵⁾ in the KJ Bible, is translated “potter” seventeen times because of its association with words having to do with clay pots. We are vessels for a holy spirit, i.e. the mind of God (Phil 2:5). Vessels made from various materials present a different shade of meaning of the type vessel. For instance, gold is a symbol for faith, and silver is for desire. Gold and silver can be cleaned by scouring, but because clay is a porous material which absorbs some of what it contacts, it cannot be cleaned. Thus, understanding symbols helps us see the underlying spiritual lesson God would have us know.

Clay is made from very fine dust particles which comes from the wearing of stones. In the Bible a stone is a figure of a concept, or idea. The apostles and prophets (what they wrote) are the foundation (stones) of the church and Christ (author of their writings) is the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). A clay pot is a figure of the complex mental make-up of a human being. Our thoughts and ideas are shaped by the things we hear, read, study, etc. Like a clay pot, which absorbs some of whatever is put in it, the human mind absorbs mentally some of what the ears hear, the eyes see and the body feels. Consider that man’s mind is like a clay pot, originally formed by good and bad concepts of life, and what we think God is all about. However, God has a plan.

2 Cor 4: 6. *Because (it is) the God who said, “Out of darkness light (is) to shine,” who has shone in the hearts of us, to the advantage of enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of the God in the face (person) of Jesus Christ. 7. Moreover, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of the God, and not from us. [Greek Interlinear - (supplied)] Clay without moisture becomes hard and brittle, and like a clay pot that has been marred, all of man’s concepts and traditions must be broken, discarded and reformed. God is the potter - **Jer 23: 29.** *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?**

Rom 9: 17. *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens.* People generally do not grasp the idea that they owe all their abilities, all their wealth and all their success to the blessings of God. Pharaoh can be considered as a clay pot (self) in which the moisture (God’s word) has been removed. How did God harden Pharaoh? By giving him the opportunity to obey truth. Just as the sun hardens the clay, truth hardens the heart of the unbelieving. Notice the following verses: **Rom 9: 21.** *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? 22. What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory...* Do you see the contrast of verses 22 and 23? God endures with much patience the vessels of wrath. These examples are in the Bible to teach us the ways of God as compared to the ways of man.

So, if we choose to receive more moisture (God’s word), God will reshape our thinking (re-do the marred pot). **Rev 2: 26** *and he who is overcoming, and who is keeping unto the end my works, I will give to him authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron - as the vessels of the potter they shall be broken*

- as I also have received from my Father; 28 and I will give to him the morning star. (Young's Bible) Vessels of the potter (man's making) are likened to the nations, which are types of our sin problems. (Babylon represents pride, Media-Persia an unchanging heart, etc) A "rod" represents a message. A "rod of iron" is a message of truth that will, when obeyed, absolutely destroy our faulty character traits (clay pots) formed by our own ideas. The "morning star" is a symbol for Christ (Rev 22:16). It is the last star visible when the day dawns. Jesus Christ came to give us his light - his knowledge and wisdom are the rod of iron!

2 Tim 2: 20 *Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. 21 If a man therefore [clean out] himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, having been sanctified and useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work.* [Greek Interlinear] Considered outward, the vessels of various materials are the people of the house of God. Inward, these vessels represent our ideas and thoughts by which we live. We must be purged of our own ideas, and replace them with God's precepts. (Cf Isa 55:7-9)

Ps 31: 12 *I am forgotten in their heart as a dead man; I am become like a broken vessel.* (Darby's Bible) To the natural mind, Christ is like a broken vessel. Psalm 31 describes the Son's experience in the flesh. By putting to death the "old man" at the cross, he made a way for mankind to be purged of man's ideas, which eventually lead to destruction. **Heb 10: 20.** *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh...* The temple we enter by the blood of Jesus is not something made of brick and mortar, neither do we enter by his literal blood. The temple we enter is the mind of Christ and his blood is the principle of his life by which we enter. **Heb 10: 22** *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean (taught) from an evil conscience and our bodies (body of death - our thoughts) washed with pure water (living water of the word - Eph 5:26).* (Revised Standard)

Jesus Christ DID NOT DIE so that we could be forgiven of our sins. We were already forgiven! He died so that we can be DELIVERED from them. We use the idiom "iron-clad alibi" to convey the idea that was impossible for someone to have been present at the place of commission of an act. The idea is being taught that we will not stop sinning until Jesus literally returns and changes us. This concept severely weakens the gospel of truth, allowing a person to use that doctrine as an "iron-clad" alibi to excuse continuing in sin. Sin is not what we do, it is what we are! What we do is only the manifestation of the inward corruption. **Jn 8: 31.** *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Notice the "if". What Jesus said is conditional upon obedience to the truth at every step of the way. (See Mt 7:24) Receiving what Jesus speaks TO YOU (Jn 6:63), and obeying is the method whereby you can be freed from the bondage of the sin.

Thousands, today, are sitting in their denomination thinking they have the truth. Many are sincere at that level of understanding, and some will be saved. However, look at history. Denominations NEVER reform! Individuals reform. **Jer 23: 20.** *The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. 21. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* Israel and Judah are types, just as surely as are Sodom and Gomorrah. There are literally thousands of false teachers leading people toward eternal destruction. How will we know the difference between truth and error? Don't sit still with what you have been taught. Study, question, seek the Lord - He will give you understanding and He will guide you in the way of righteousness. Don't be surprised if most everything you have been taught is wrong. Follow God.

1 Thes 4: 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor...* AMEN!