

# Jeremiah 18:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

The crucial observation: "the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter." The Hebrew nishchat (נִשְׁחַת, marred/ruined) indicates the vessel became flawed, unusable for its intended purpose. Significantly, this happens "in the hand of the potter"—under his direct control and observation. The potter immediately recognizes the problem and responds decisively: "so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

The phrase "as seemed good to the potter" (ka-asher yashar be-einei ha-yotzer, כְּאֶשֶׁר יִשְׁ�ֵךְ בְּעִינֵי הַיּוֹצֵר) emphasizes the potter's sovereign judgment—he determines what vessel to make based on his assessment and purpose. He doesn't discard the clay but reworks it into a different vessel. The potter's freedom to reshape corresponds to God's freedom to alter His dealings with nations based on their response to Him.

This verse introduces a tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The clay is passive, yet the passage will show that nations make real choices affecting their destiny. Reformed theology maintains both truths: God sovereignly controls all, yet humans genuinely choose and bear responsibility. The mystery of how both operate simultaneously exceeds human comprehension but reflects biblical testimony.

## Historical Context

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Potters regularly reworked flawed vessels. Clay remained workable until fired in the kiln. If a vessel collapsed, developed air bubbles, or took improper shape, the potter would simply remold it while still wet. This wasteless approach reflected economic necessity—clay had value and shouldn't be discarded unnecessarily. The image would resonate with Jeremiah's audience, who understood both the craft and the economic implications.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does this image of God reworking marred vessels provide hope when you feel ruined by sin or failure?
2. What does the potter's right to remake the vessel teach about God's sovereign purposes in your life?
3. How do you balance trusting God's sovereign reshaping with your own responsibility to respond in obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיְנַשֵּׁם תְּ	כֹּל יְ	לְעֵשׂוֹתָ	בְּחַדְרָה	בְּיַד
<b>was marred</b>	<b>And the vessel</b>	H834	H1931	<b>so he made</b>
H7843	H3627			H6213
רְ	לְעֵשׂוֹתָ	כֹּל יְ	כֹּל יְ	רְ
רְ	וְשָׁבַתְ	אֲחֵר	אֲחֵר	רְ
<b>of the potter</b>	<b>it again</b>	H6213	<b>And the vessel</b>	<b>another</b>
H3335	H7725		H3627	H312
רְ	לְעֵשׂוֹתָ	כֹּל יְ	כֹּל יְ	רְ
רְ	בְּיַצְרָה	אֲחֵר	אֲחֵר	רְ
<b>as seemed</b>	<b>of the potter</b>	H6213	<b>so he made</b>	<b>good</b>
H5869	H3335			H3474
רְ	לְעֵשׂוֹתָ	כֹּל יְ	כֹּל יְ	רְ
רְ	בְּעֵינָה	אֲחֵר	אֲחֵר	רְ
<b>as seemed</b>	<b>of the potter</b>	H6213	<b>so he made</b>	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 18:6** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Isaiah 45:9** (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?