

Names of God from the Bible

43 – The Potter

Every name of God is an eternal Name. God is still our Creator and we are His created beings.

Reading: Isaiah 29:13-24

The picture of God being the Potter and we being the clay in His hands is not to suggest that we are mere puppets in the hand of God. We are not robots, nor are we without the power to function on our own. God has a determined plan for our lives, however, we are still able to choose whether or not we will fulfill it.

God doesn't force His will on us. That is obvious, isn't it? Otherwise there would be no violence, no evil, no thieving, no murder, no sexual abuse, no injustice and no discrimination. If He forced His will on us, there would only be peace and righteousness throughout the universe. Adam and Eve would never have 'fallen' and sin would not have entered the human world.

A friend of mine told me of a visit he made to a potter's workshop. The potter was sat in front of his wheel. He took some clay and threw it on the wheel. He pummelled it, picked it up, manipulated it, hammered it and threw it back on the wheel. He tried to use it to form a bowl but it didn't yield to his fingers. So he removed it and discarded it to the floor.

The potter picked up another piece of clay and repeated the process. Only this time he was able to form it into a beautiful vessel for flower arrangements. Not only was it a beautiful shape but the potter was also able to decorate it so that the final specimen was a masterpiece, reflecting his handiwork and creativity.

My friend asked him about the first lump of clay. To his surprise, the potter sighed and said that the first lump would not respond to his fingers. Each lump of clay has to be manipulated to remove all the 'stress' within it. By the work and pressure the potter exerts on the clay, all the stress and resistance is removed. The potter is then able to work with the clay and form it into a desired article of beauty.

For some reason, some clay may not respond to the preparation treatment and so is incapable of becoming what it was intended to be. On the other hand, the second lump of clay responded to the potter's preparation and was subsequently turned into an article of beauty and usefulness.

When God addressed the people of Israel through the prophet Isaiah, He did not tell them that He would over-ride their freewill. God reminded them that He was their Creator and God. He was not a fellow-human being but the One who had formed them in the womb. Consequently, He was the One who had every right to tell them what to do and how to live.

God was able to prove from their history that He was a faithful, merciful and gracious God. He was their Redeemer, Saviour and Protector. However, as a nation, they had turned their backs on Him, gone their own way and were reaping the consequences of that action, whilst blaming God for it.

Just because God doesn't continually act against sin doesn't mean that He is incapable of doing so. It shouldn't give the people of Israel licence to mock God or treat Him with disrespect as if He was just their equal. They had forgotten that God was their Potter and that, in comparison, they were like clay in His hands.

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As the Potter, God had wonderful plans for Israel, but He needed Israel to yield to His guidance and instructions in order to bring them to the place of blessing. Then and only then would they reach their destiny and find true peace and satisfaction.

What does that name mean for us today

It is always good to remember that: a) the Lord is God and b) we are not. God, our Potter, is longing to make something beautiful out of our lives if we will let Him.

Prayer

Father, I thank You for being a good God and the Potter of my life. I yield myself again to You today, to do whatever You choose to make me the person You want me to be. Please make me to be more and more like Jesus, for Your glory. Amen

Additional Readings

- Isaiah 64:1-12
- Jeremiah 18:1-12
- Romans 9:6-26

Questions

1. How do you feel about God being your Potter?
2. Has God revealed Himself in this way to you? How and when?
3. Why does God want to make us increasingly like Jesus?