

MESSAGE CONCERNING THE DROUGHT

TEXT: JEREMIAH 14:1-22

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jeremiah 14:1 says, "The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth."
2. The word "dearth" means lack of water, i.e., a draught (cf. 17:8).
3. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "The significance of a drought at this time was very great. It was one of the signs predicted in the Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 28:23, 24), and already fulfilled in part in the reign of Ahab (I Kings 17:1, etc.). As that sign had been followed, even though after a long interval, by the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom, it should have been received by Judah as a most solemn warning" (p. 787).
4. Scofield says, "It should have been received by Judah as a most solemn warning." But it wasn't.
5. Earlier, the LORD said to the prophet Jeremiah, "Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also" (3:6-8).
6. In other words, the LORD was giving the people of Judah many warnings, but they were not listening to the LORD. They preferred to listen to the false prophets (14:13-16).

I. GOD SENT THE DROUGHT (14:1-6)

1. God had already warned them about the consequences of breaking their covenant (11:1-4). They were under God's curse because of their disobedience and their backsliding (11:3; 14:7).
2. Deuteronomy 28:23 and 24 says, "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed."
3. Jeremiah, along with Moses and Elijah and Daniel and the apostle Paul, is one of the great intercessors in Scripture.
4. In Jeremiah's intercessory prayer, he confessed the sins of the people and pleaded for them (14:7-9).

5. Jeremiah did not want the LORD's name to be disgraced and dishonored by the behaviour of His backslidden people (14:7, 9, 21).
6. The LORD had been like a "stranger" to them because of their perpetual backsliding (14:8; cf. 8:5).
7. Jeremiah's intercession was based on:
 - admission of sin (14:7, 20)
 - Unlike a disinterested traveling or wayfaring man, God was genuinely interested in His people (14:8).
 - Unlike a helpless and "astonied" (astonished) man, God was able to deliver them (14:9).
 - The people were called by His name (14:9, 21).
8. The LORD responded to Jeremiah's intercessory prayer by saying, "Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good" (14:10, 11; cf. 7:16; 11:14).
9. Merrill Unger wrote, God's "outraged holiness demanded its immediate punishment. Hence, Jeremiah was commanded once more to cease his intercession" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
10. Judah had crossed the point of no return. Fasting would not change God's mind (14:12). Burnt offerings and other sacrifices would do no good because the people were hypocrites (14:12; cf. 7:9, 10).
11. The LORD promised to "consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence" (14:12b).

II. GOD DID NOT SEND THE FALSE PROPHETS (14:13-16)

1. Much of the people's problems were caused by their foolishly listening to the false prophets (14:13-15).
2. The same is true today. Second Peter 2:1 says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."
3. America's problems are spiritual. Most Americans are misled by false teachers. Consider the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the world's largest religious network.
4. TBN promotes the heretical "prosperity gospel." Some of the false prophets on this station are Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, Rod Parsley, John Hagee, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Eddie Long, Jesse Duplantis, Paula White, TD Jakes, and Kenneth Copeland.

5. In addition to being false teachers, most of them are adulterers. Paul Crouch, the founder and president of TBN is an alleged homosexual. Back in September 2004, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Paul Crouch had paid Enoch Lonnie Ford, a former TBN employee, a \$425,000 to keep quiet about their homosexual relationship.
6. TBN is very ecumenical and pro-Roman Catholic. They are even pro-Islam. Hal Lindsey and Jack Van Impe both left TBN because TBN would not allow them to preach against Islam.
7. This is just the tip of the iceberg. I could literally spend hours talking about all of the false teachers that are leading America down the path to hell.
8. John Hagee is a Pentecostal pastor in Texas who was caught cheating on his wife. They got divorced and then he married his mistress (a young lady from his congregation). Hagee teaches Jews do not have to believe in Jesus to get to heaven.
9. America is in bad shape today because most Americans do not read the Bible, and because they are following false prophets (cf. Jer. 14:14-16; 23:16, 21; 27:9).

III. GOD SENT JEREMIAH TO WARN THEM (14:17).

1. Merrill Unger says Jeremiah 14:17 refers to Judah as a "virgin" because "up to that time it never was under foreign yoke" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
2. Jeremiah prophesied that if he were look about he would see great devastation -- people slain with the sword, and others sick with famine (14:18).
3. Jeremiah blamed this devastation on the prophets and the priests. And both the prophet and the priest would go about into a land that they knew not, i.e., Babylon (14:18b).
4. Jeremiah continues his intercessory prayer in verse 19.
5. The "vanities" (idols) of the Gentile pagans could not end the drought. And neither could the heavens give showers apart from God, who created the heavens as well as the rain (14:22).
6. This is also a reminder of the foolishness of worshipping the heavenly hosts (cf. 8:1, 2).

CONCLUSION:

1. H.A. Ironside said, "It is therefore quite in harmony with (God's) ways that we find the people of Judah in great distress for lack of food and water. The real famine was within. The outward misery was but the reflection of the moral state" (*Jeremiah*).

2. The situation is very similar to ours today!