

Message #18**Jeremiah 14:1-22**

It is quite obvious from **verse 1** that this word of God given to Jeremiah, is about a drought. The actual Hebrew word “drought” is plural which indicates a judgment of more than just one drought or one type of judgment. God has an arsenal of things He may use.

Now a drought is a prolonged period of an abnormal shortage of life-giving water. When a drought hit everything dries up. There is no comforting shade from green leaves and there is no water to spare. If God sends a drought, the consequences are devastating.

Charles Feinberg said, “In Israel a drought was never viewed as a chance occurrence. Drought had been threatened for disobedience (Deut. 28:23-24)” (*Jeremiah*, p. 468).

The thing that causes God to send a drought is that His people refuse to turn away from their sin and return to God. As Dr. Feinberg said, “The Lord’s purpose in sending the drought was to bring the nation to repentance” (*Ibid.*, p. 468).

If God’s people become desensitized to their own sin, they are heading to serious drought chastising judgments. Every child of God needs to stay on top of his own spirituality and ask God to search him and see if there is any wicked way in him.

God’s people need to understand this point: if His people continue to sin and not turn from it, they will pass a point of no return and God will send chastising droughts against them and will not forgive them or help them.

God does not owe us anything if we persist in that which is contrary to His word. He is not obligated to respond to us even if we promise to repent.

WHEN GOD IS JUDGING HIS PEOPLE, THEY WILL LACK IN EVERYWAY AND THERE WILL BE AN UNUSUALLY HIGH LEVEL OF DROUGHT, DISASTER AND DEATH AND THE ONLY CHANCE THEY HAVE TO REVERSE THIS IS TO ADMIT THEIR SIN AND TURN FROM IT.

What this book of Jeremiah clearly shows us is that we want to take care of any sin matter before God has to deal with us. We want to be very sensitive to the conviction of His word and Spirit. To become lax in this is to put one on a course of disaster.

PART #1 – God was sending a drought judgment against His people. **14:1-6**

We may observe how **verse 1** begins, “that which came as the word of the LORD.” This phrase is unusual as it only occurs in **14:1**; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34. Literally in Hebrew this reads, “that which was a word of the LORD to Jeremiah.”

The emphasis of this construction seems to be a unique way to express that **this was God's judgment message given specifically to Jeremiah in regard to a drought**. This was direct revelatory communication between God and Jeremiah, in regard to a major judgmental drought.

In **verse 2**, we learn that Judah was mourning and was in terrible anguish because of it. People were crying out to God from Jerusalem. Prayers were ascending throughout the land. Things were becoming bad and people were crying out to God. **Life was very depressing for the people of God**. As Philip Ryken said, "The nation mourned. All flags were at half-mast. The only sound was crying" (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 244).

According to **verse 3**, the leaders sent their servants to get water. The status of the individual meant nothing. People of great status sent servants to get water, but there was none to be found. They went to various cisterns and could not find one drop of water. They covered their heads in a show of mourning. God had sent a judgment drought to the land. **When God sends His disastrous chastising judgment, it is no respecter of persons**.

We learn from **verse 4** that the ground was so dry it was cracked because there had been no rain on the land. The farmers had been put to shame and they covered their heads in humility. It did not matter if you lived in the city or the country; God's judgment affected everyone and all were in mourning.

According to **verses 5-6**, the lack of water was affecting every area of life including the animal world. A doe would abandon its own fawn because there was no grass to eat. This was something a doe would never typically do. Wild donkeys, who are known for their toughness and survival in tough areas, stand on dry ground panting. They could not find any water. All of creation was groaning because God was judging His people: city (v. 2); farms (v. 4); open fields (vs. 5-6). His corrupt people brought this on and it affected everyone. **When we sin we make a mess of everything and it affects everything**.

God had caused His blessings to dry up. God can literally send a drought on a people and He also can do that spiritually. When God's people cannot find a fresh supply of living water that comes from the word of God, it is a judgment of God.

PART #2 – Jeremiah admits they have sinned and prays to God. **14:7-12**

It is debated whether some of God's people were praying this prayer or Jeremiah was praying it in behalf of God's people. Either way, **the only chance God's people have for survival is to pray to God and admit the truth about themselves**.

Jeremiah knew that the reason why God was not blessing His own people was because of their sin. As he prayed and admitted that, he put himself in with them. In fact, in **verse 7**, Jeremiah spoke of "our iniquities," "our apostasies," "we have sinned." Jeremiah does not sugar coat this—God's people had committed iniquity, apostasy and sin. They deserved judgment.

Notice in **verse 7**, Jeremiah asks God to act because of “Your name’s sake.” God’s name is always good, even when our name isn’t.

This is important because if God did not come to the rescue of His people, then the world would think God did not have the power to save His own people.

In **verses 8-9**, Jeremiah admits that the only hope God’s people have for deliverance and salvation is in God.

Jeremiah asks God four questions:

(Question #1) - Why are You like a stranger in the land and not our Savior? **14:8a-**
Why are You like a stranger who doesn’t even seem to live here with Your people? God doesn’t seem to have any interest in the people living there.

(Question #2) - Why are You like a traveller that pitched his tent for a night? **14:8b-**
Why are You with us temporarily? It is like You were just here overnight with the people and then You are gone. It is like you are with us for a night or two and then You are gone.

(Question #3) - Why are You like a man who is dismayed? **14:9a-**
Why does there seem to be some confusion about whose side You are on?
This did not catch You off guard and You can save.
God did not appear to be interested in their situation.

(Question #4)- Why are You like a mighty man who cannot save? **14:9b-**
You have power to deliver so why are You acting like someone who does not have power? Why are you hesitating?

It is true that God does have all power and it is true that He can do whatever He wants to do. But here is the problem, there are times when God’s people reach a point in not dealing with their sin that God will appear not to listen to them or even be there.

There are times when God’s people are so fleshly He will not be close to them. When God’s people get into trouble, most of them do pray. Many people turn to God and pray when their world falls apart.

Larry Goetz, who was one of the Elders of our previous churches, had a father who fought in WW 2. He told Larry that he never met an atheist in a fox hole. He said regardless of what they said or thought, when they were in a foxhole they all believed in God and many were talking to God.

Now the only problem in this case with God’s people is that they may be talking with God when it is too late.

Now we certainly know that God's people could not turn to God and pray on the basis of their faithfulness, so they did so on the basis of their covenant relationship and on the basis of the fact that His name is on the line (v. 9). The people said we have sinned and we admit that but we are called by Your name and why don't You listen to us.

But here is what God's people need to know; when God's people are under a chastising drought judgment of God, it is not enough that they pray and admit they have sinned; they must repent and turn away completely from the sin. Remorse is not enough!

In verse 10, God says they may be talking to Me, but they never checked themselves to see whether or not they were walking in the ways of God. They pursued other gods. In other words, these people were not willing to check themselves in view of the word of God and turn away from their evil. Are we a consistent wanderer?

So just as Jeremiah asked God four questions, in **verses 11-12** God gives Jeremiah four replies and answers:

(Answer #1) - Do not pray for the welfare of this people. **14:11**

Their hearts are hard; they will not change. These people are beyond help.

(Answer #2) - When they fast and pray I will not listen. **14:12a** - regardless of religious ritual.

(Answer #3) - When they offer their burnt offerings and grain offerings I will not accept them.

14:12b - They can bring offerings and money and it won't work.

(Answer #4) - I am going to destroy My own people. **14:12c**

External acts in religion or emotional reactions in religion are not the same as a truthful heart reality of repentance and returning to the Lord.

Sword, famine and pestilence are mentioned together 15 times in Jeremiah. So not only would a drought be used for judgment, but God would allow His people to experience attacks from a sword, starvation from a famine and killer diseases.

These things are all references to the severe disastrous judgments of God. These same things show up in Revelation.

PART #3 – God's prophet protests against the false prophets. **14:13-16**

Jeremiah talked openly and honestly with God. Jeremiah continued to discuss this with God. He had such a relationship with Him that he talked with Him about everything.

Jeremiah says the blame should not be on the people, it should be on the false prophets and priests and ministers who have led the people astray. They were telling people that everything was fine.

Jeremiah said that the false prophets were telling the people that they were at peace with God. Jeremiah says to God, the people are being led astray by false prophets who are telling them wrong things.

What Jeremiah is doing there is trying to blame the leaders for the fact that the people had gone astray. There was certainly truth to what Jeremiah was saying. But God does not accept this argument.

In verse 14, God agreed that they had been led astray but He also makes it clear that people followed leaders not sent or commissioned by Him.

God says they are not My prophets and I have not sent them, commanded them and spoken to them. They are phony ministers. They are prophesying by false visions, divination and by the empty deceptions of their own minds.

Those leaders were not communicating the truth of God and the people had no business listening to them. The people should have never followed them and accepted them. They were leading people away from truth. **They were responsible and accountable for what they believed and who they followed.**

Those false prophets were telling people that God always loved them and that He would never judge His people and God says those prophets will come to their end.

Deep within the mind and heart of every human is some realization of right and wrong. When people are looting a store in some riot, I guarantee you the person stealing from that store, knows that is wrong. I truly believe that when a rock band is on a platform at a church, there is a sense among most people that this isn't right. But knowing what is right and doing what is right are two different things.

God's people knew they were not being taught the truth and they stayed with it anyway.

Verse 16 says that God says the people who are listening to them will be judged and thrown out. When we have the truth of God's word and we allow ourselves to be led away from the truth of God's word, we are culpable and accountable and God will punish us.

When God saves a person, He gives them His Spirit and He has given His word. His word is to be carefully taught by those God has gifted to teach. If a believer allows himself to be led by a false teacher who is not accurately handling the word, that believer will experience the judgment of God.

PART #4 – God’s prophet prays to God about this. **14:17-22**

Jeremiah was emotionally moved about this, so God sent him to His people with some messages:

Message #1 - I cry night and day because all I see is our people experiencing crushing judgment. **14:17**

God wanted His own people to see that His own heart was broken by this.

Message #2 - I go everywhere you send me and I see death everywhere. **14:18**

Message #3 - All Prophets and priests are gone. **14:18**

This may be a reference to seeing the leaders taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

Message #4 - Have you completely rejected your people so they are beyond healing? **14:19**

God’s people can reach a point where healing and forgiveness is beyond them because God will not grant it. Jeremiah thought it is very possible we have reached this point. God is a Physician who can heal.

Message #5 - We know our wickedness that our fathers have sinned and so have we. **14:20**

Jeremiah says, “We know our sickness, our iniquity and our sin.” He again admits this as in **verse 7. The wickedness of the people of God had brought on the chastising judgments of God.**

Messages #6 - Please remember our covenant and do not despise us or disgrace us. **14:21**

By referring to “the Throne of Your glory,” Jeremiah is referring to the Temple where God’s glory was originally displayed.

Message #7 - No false idol can help us; only You the LORD God can save us. **14:22a**

Message #8 - Our only hope is in You. **14:22b**

Jeremiah admitted there is no other hope except God.

Only God can put an end to chastising judgments He sends. Never forget this. The thing that will cause God to put an end to them is when His people turn from sin and turn to Him and His word.