

# THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

## Is God Asleep?

Text: Jer. 1:11-16

Introduction: Have you ever felt that God was asleep? If not asleep, at least inactive or unconcerned? People have asked, "If God is active, why doesn't He do something about war, drugs, poverty, hunger, the economy or the energy crisis?"

This question may seem modern and new. In fact, it is not new at all. It wasn't even new with Jeremiah. But he certainly asked the question.

**Jer. 12:1** Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?

A century before young Jeremiah was called, God spoke through several great prophets: Isaiah, Micah, Amos, Hosea. God said He was going to put an end to the idolatry, harlotry, dishonesty, bribery, and slavery. And in Israel He did.

But as Jeremiah walked the streets of Jerusalem after the death of King Josiah, he saw an altar to Baal on every hill and under every tree. He witnessed through moistened eyes the sanctioned prostitution in the temple of Asherah. He watched the merchants use false weights and measures in their trade. He heard of the bribery of judges publicly committed to administer divine justice. He stood helplessly by as a man was taken from his family and sold as a slave because he could not pay a debt equivalent to the price of a pair of sandals. "Why?" he cried.

**Jer. 12:1b** Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?

"Lord, are You asleep?" Ever wondered this in relation to a personal problem? A family problem? I have. Is God asleep?

Perhaps it was in the dead of winter when he has walking back to his country home after visiting the prosperous but wicked city that God sent him the answer to his question that Jeremiah would never forget.

The chilling January winds that blew across the Judean hills had painted the landscape brown all around the vicinity of Jerusalem. As Jeremiah walked, he felt that the deadness of things about him expressed the sentiments of his heart. "Perhaps," he thought, "God is dormant like all the plants around here." About that

time the eyes of Jeremiah were directed by God to the limbs of an almond tree growing by the road. God asked, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" Jeremiah replied, "Just the branch of an almond tree, Lord."

Then God began to remind Jeremiah of what he knew about the almond tree. The Hebrew word for almond tree literally meant "the wake tree" for it was the first plant to awake from its winter's nap to the coming of spring. Sometimes as early as January, certainly by mid-February the almond began to blossom even before its foliage appeared.

A country boy like Jeremiah could recognize an almond tree in the dead of winter before any blossoms appeared. And Jeremiah knew that this little branch was about to do what in its very nature it had promised to do. It was awake and ready to bloom declaring the coming of spring.

God drove His point home in a single statement to the silent prophet. He said literally, "Awake continually am I over My Word to perform it." Jeremiah knew that God's Word is a declaration of His purpose, His will. God was declaring a truth to Jeremiah that it was crucial that he never forget: God is awake and actively performing His purpose declared in His world.

## **I. GOD'S MESSAGE TO JEREMIAH IN THE ALMOND BRANCH: "I AM AWAKE, PERFORMING MY WORD."**

Jer. 1:11-12 <sup>11</sup> Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

Thousands of times, before and after the life of Jeremiah, God has substantiated His claim.

## **II. BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCES ABOUT THAT GOD IS PERFORMING HIS PURPOSE ACCORDING TO HIS WORD.**

Jeremiah saw God perform His purpose in his own life time.

### **A. The vision of a boiling pot.**

Jer. 1:13-16 <sup>13</sup> And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north." <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to me: "Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land. <sup>15</sup> For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD;

"They shall come and each one set his throne At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, Against all its walls all around, And against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup> I

will utter My judgments Against them concerning all their wickedness, Because they have forsaken Me, Burned incense to other gods, And worshiped the works of their own hands.

Describe: boiling cauldron being turned over and running down on Judah bringing destruction.

What Jeremiah saw was a vision. In years to come he witnessed the event God told him was coming.

The conquest of Judah and Jeremiah by Babylonians is not a pleasant story, but it is a well documented and complete one. Judah was ravaged and conquered just as God said.

The people ate, drank, cheated, lived in adultery, worshipped Baal, and laughingly called to Jeremiah, "Where is your God?" But God was far more active than they supposed. In 587 BC, the Babylonian army devastated Judah and sacked Jerusalem, destroying even the Temple. God had performed His Word, His Purpose.

One need not search for examples of God fulfilling His Word. The Bible and history are full of them. We are seeing examples of God performing His Word in the headlines every day.

- B. The alliance between Russia and Iran is predicted in God's word in Ezk. 38 and 39 and will ultimately lead to the battle of God and Magog against Israel. What is happening with the development of nuclear weapons in Iran could well lead to this war that will impact life in the whole world.
- C. All of the changes that are happening in Muslim nations in Africa and the middle east move those countries closer to the alignments declared in the Word of God for the beginning of the end times.
- D. What is happening is not random. God is not asleep! God is actively performing His Word!

### **III. TRUTH IS THE SAME: GOD IS ACTIVELY PERFORMING HIS WORD.**

- A. People in the midst of sin and corruption scoff at the idea of an active God.
  - 1. They use their drugs
  - 2. Drink their liquor
  - 3. Defile their bodies
  - 4. Fill their minds with trash
  - 5. Neglect their families
  - 6. Make no place for worship
  - 7. Raise their children like pagans
  - 8. Bribery in high places

9. Thieving by business men
10. Dishonesty in market place
11. Unfaithfulness in home
12. Rebellion in hearts of children
13. And laugh when someone says "God"

Galatians 6:7–8 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

God is actively against sin of every kind at every point. But God's work is not all negative. Jeremiah is told to pluck up, tear down, destroy, build up, and plant.

- B. Even God's own people forget the marvelous promises He has made and is actively performing.

"I will never leave you or forsake you."

"In my Father's house are many mansions."

"And if I go, I will come again, that where I am you may be also."

"I come as a thief in the night."

God is fulfilling His word.

Church – all authority as you go. I am with you. My word will not return void. I will never leave you.

Individual – free gift of eternal life. "I come that you might have life."

All – "I go to prepare place. I'll come again."

You can be confident. God is actively performing His word today.

Conclusion: I have a tree in my back yard. It looks dead, at least inactive. But it isn't. It is very much alive, very active. God's work may not have been real noticeable to you lately, but God is active, performing His word. He wants to be actively fulfilling His promises in your life. Will you let Him?

Tonight in Prayer First, Stan Kirkland is going to share his testimony of a God who was very much awake when Stan fell off of a roof with no one around. By all estimations, Stan should have died. If he lived, he should have been a quadriplegic. Stan is here today and he will tell his story tonight. But he will tell you, God is very much awake, performing His word!