

LET THE EARTH HEAR HIS VOICE

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: Jeremiah 23:1-6. From Roy H. Enoch (10-31-1993).
- B. This passage has often been used for sermons.
 - 1. In 1969, Charles Coil gave the keynote address at the Harding Univ. Lectureship "Let the Earth Hear His Voice." He focused on the need for missionaries to carry the gospel throughout the earth.
 - 2. This summer at the Nashville Jubilee, F. LaGard Smith used theme to urge freedom from legalistic and liberal tendencies.
- C. Jeremiah had just referred to the death of good king Josiah and foretold the death or defeat of the next three kings of Judah.
 - 1. One would go away captive.
 - 2. One would die and be buried like an animal.
 - 3. The third would be exiled and none of his descendants would ascend the throne in Judah.
 - 4. Then comes the anguished cry that tears the heart of the patriot and prophet: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."
- D. We want to look at the setting of this plea and notice that we still need to hear the LORD rather than follow our own reasoning.
 - 1. The occasion for Jeremiah's cry was Judah's worldliness.
 - 2. Those addressed were God's own people.
 - 3. God's people today still need to be revived to genuine conviction from the heart to do what pleases God.

I. THE OCCASION FOR JEREMIAH'S CRY WAS JUDAH'S WORLTLINESS.

- A. Jeremiah was called to be a prophet in the 13th year of King Josiah's reign.
 - 1. It must have seemed like a good time to be a prophet.
 - a. Judah was subject to Assyria, but it was not interfering w/Judah's affairs.
 - b. Josiah, one of Judah's best kings, was on the throne.
 - 1) In his 8th year, Josiah "began to seek after the God of David his father" (2Chr. 34:3).
 - 2) In the 12th year he began a purge of idolatry in the nation.
 - 3) In the 18th year he began the restoration of national worship according to the law which had been found when cleaning and repairing the temple (2Chr. 34:8-33).
 - c. Jeremiah began to prophesy while these reforms were being carried out.
 - d. The year Jeremiah was called there was political change.
 - 1) Babylon, a rival to Assyria was established on the Euphrates.
 - 2) In Egypt there was a growing spirit of power and independence.
 - 3) These changes would tend to weaken Assyria's hold on Judah.
 - e. All of this must have seemed good to the people and to all of the prophets.
 - 1) Had not God promised to bless the nation when the king and people kept His law?
 - 2) Look at the reforms and the restoration of the temple and worship.
 - 3) The other prophets prophesied "peace" and "the law of the Lord is with us" (Jer. 8:8).
 - 4) They pointed with pride and assurance to the temple and the daily sacrifices (Jer. 7:4).
 - 2. But Jeremiah was forced to stand against the powers of patriotism and religious fervor.
 - a. God showed him that the reforms were outward and superficial.
 - b. It wasn't enough to call on the true God and worship at the right temple with the right sacrifices if one neglected Godly living.
 - 1) Jeremiah pointed out that some were adulterers (Jer. 5:7-8).
 - 2) Some were covetous (Jer. 6:13).
 - 3) Others were oppressors of the helpless, perverters of justice, liars, thieves and

idolaters (7:6-10).

- B. An emotional climax seems to be reached in the text of this lesson.
 - 1. Even though kings are slain and others go into exile never to return, Judah will not listen.
 - 2. She was like the Gentile nations described by Paul 600 years later as those who knew God but refused to glorify Him as God (Rom. 1:20).
 - 3. Thus, Jeremiah cried out in despair: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD."

II. THOSE ADDRESSED WERE GOD'S OWN PEOPLE.

- A. When Jeremiah cries out for the "earth" to hear, he is speaking to the humans.
 - 1. A parallel is quickly seen in Romans the 8th chapter (Rom. 8:21-24).
 - a. Paul refers to the "creation" being "delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8:21).
 - b. And ourselves having the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23).
 - c. He speaks of them being saved in 8:24.
 - 2. Paul told the Colossians that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (1:23). He was not speaking of the animal world.
- B. Jeremiah also specifically referred to the gospel age when he spoke of a "new covenant" that God would make (Jer. 31:31-34).

III. GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY STILL NEED TO BE REVIVED

TO A GENUINE CONVICTION IN THE HEART TO DO WHAT PLEASURES GOD.

- A. There are prophets who preach "peace" when people are not living according to God's will.
 - 1. Some preachers tell people to feel good about themselves even when they have been doing bad.
 - 2. Some tell people that God will be pleased with anything they want to do if they say that "it is to God's glory," or "in the name of the Lord." But Jesus says that "calling on the name of the Lord" involves more than saying it (Mt. 7:21-23).
- B. There are still some of God's people who are doctrinally correct, but worldly in their hearts.
 - 1. Some preached the truth with the wrong motive and attitude (Phil. 1:15-16).
 - 2. There are some today like the Pharisees, who may set their own standards for righteousness, yet do not keep them themselves.
 - 3. Some preach the truth and condemn sin with glee rather than with a heart full of grief like Jeremiah for the sins of the people.
 - 4. Some members of the church claim "faithfulness" but do not want sin plainly condemned like Israel in Isaiah's day (Isa. 30:9-11).
 - 5. Some are like the Laodiceans who were satisfied and did not realize their unfaithfulness (Rev. 3:16-17).
 - a. In almost any congregation some are active and working.
 - b. Some work occasionally and some don't even attend half of the services.
 - c. In some churches, almost all do nothing like Sardis (Rev. 3:1,4,5).
- C. We need to make a commitment to X. Attending services, studying regularly, helping others.

CONCLUSION.

- A. As Jeremiah found, some of God's people are worldly and indifferent.
- B. Some resent and rebel when their sins are pointed out.
- C. They need to be warned anyway.
- D. What is your condition as a servant of God today?