
Message from God

by: Ronald L. Dart

I have a message from God. Now don't get me wrong, I haven't had any visions, I haven't heard any voices in my ear. The message comes straight from the Bible. All I'm doing is applying it to our generation. And I don't think we have realized how much trouble we are in. Oh, we worry a lot and when we are in an election-year the worries are multiplied. Everyone striving for public office is telling us how bad things are and how much better a job they are going to do. They tell us what a terrible job the incumbents have done, and they can do better.

The news media, you know that they live on bad news. I heard someone say that big media had forecast 40 of the last two recessions. Think about it, and this is the first time the public has come to a presidential election with no one in sight who seems to be the leader we need or the leader we want.

Tell Us the Truth

I really believe there is a cry going out from this country for someone who will just tell us the truth, but then, you know what happens when they tell us the truth, it gets blown up above all measure. The media blasts it all over the place, then the opposition comes in and twists it to say what they want it to say and the first thing you know, we are rejecting the guy who told us the truth.

So, politicians, if we can't forgive them for lying to us, at least we can understand why they do it. We want someone to tell us what we want to hear. It's as simple as that. Shall I say it again to be sure we got it. We want someone to tell us what we want to hear, and in spite of the fact that we know all the jokes about politicians' promises, we keep on electing them on the basis of their promises.

If they don't promise anything, we wouldn't vote for him, even if he was the best president in generations.

There's a good case to be made, I think, that we really get the kind of leadership we the people deserve, and God looking down on us from above is probably justified in thinking that we are getting the leadership we want, because after all, we pick them.

What Would God Say?

Now. I said I have a message from God. What would God have to say to a nation like ours? Well since there's been nations, not just one but many before who were just like ours and it happened that there was one that God did speak to. What did He say?

Jeremiah says in chapter 5 and verse 30, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesied falsely, the priests bear rule by their means and my people love to have it so. And what would you do in the end thereof."

Interesting thing about this, the prophets were supposed to be the people who spoke for God. They were also the political pundits of their age. They were preachers. But the preachers nowadays have opted out of the public square, and mostly preach to the choir. They preach to the church. The prophets went down to the city gate, the public square of that day, and they stood on a platform, and they preached. They gave God's judgment of society, government, and politics at all levels, and sometimes I think maybe the people today who have God's word, just retire back into the corners and shadows or go on with their churches, and sort of huddle with their people and never get out there and tell society what it is that God thinks about what they're doing.

Now if you want to know what a real prophet was like, get yourself a good modern translation like the living Bible, or the new living Bible and read Jeremiah. He is dynamite.

News Media

Now there were lying prophets in those days, just as there are lying news men in our day. Journalism has been thoroughly corrupted by the pursuit of profit. You need to keep that in mind. You can no more trust a journalist these days than anybody. You might as well go buy a used car because they, the car salesman, are there to make money. Their editors, their leaders, their directors are there to make money and if they don't make money they're out of business.

So, they do their new in such a way that is designed to keep us all stirred up, aggravated, annoyed, excited by having to come back and get more of it.

You're Getting What You Want

Now, the killer line in Jeremiah's statement that I just read to you is, "And my people love to have it so." So, the message from God to our generation is, "Stop complaining, you are getting what you wanted."

What else does God have to say? What other message does He have for this generation? Well you could go to some other prophet. You could drop-down almost anywhere it seems.

Take Isaiah 30 and verse 8, "Now go, write it before them in a table and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever." Well, I think we are still in the same time frame covered by this prophecy. It said for a time to come and forever and ever. Right?

You have heard the old saying, that "History repeats itself." Why is this that way? This isn't complicated. Human nature never changes and neither does the divine nature. We keep doing the same stupid things over and over again and God responds as He always has responded.

Stop Telling Us What God Says

So, what did Isaiah write down in this book that God told him to write? Well, here it is starting in verse nine of Isaiah 30, "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: {10} Which say to the seers, don't see, and to the prophets, don't prophesy to us right things, speak smooth things, prophesy deceit. {11} Get out of the way, turn aside out of the pack, cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us."

Good grief. Stop telling us what God says because we don't want to hear it! These were people of the lie, and us, well, we're no better than they were. We don't want to hear the law of God either. This started a long time ago with the theologians who decided that the law of God had been abolished, done away, nailed to the cross, rendered powerless, no longer operative, or however they like to state it. This set men free, sexually, which may have been the object in the first place and the law of unintended consequences came into play. We were left without any standard of right behavior, except what we legislate for ourselves.

This reminds me of something Os Guinness said, He said, "You can't hold back a moral landslide with laws, you will only add to the laws." And guess where we are today? Here's Congress and the only tool that they have to do anything with is legislation and because we are no longer a moral people, they have to legislate for us. We have to control ourselves with laws.

Now why don't the preachers tell us the truth? Well, because we told them not to, didn't we? We didn't want to hear it, did we?

After all, think about this now, the preacher has a family to take care of. He has children to feed and clothe. All they have done is to tell him what they hired him to tell you. Why should you expect anything more? Are you going to sit there and listen to the preacher, week after week, who makes you feel uncomfortable by telling you about your sins, telling you what you've done wrong, calling on you repent? Are you going to put up with that? Not many churches will. That's why their preachers don't do it.

Was Anybody Ready For 911?

Now where will all of this take us? It takes us to the same place it took Israel. Let's continue in verse 12 of Isaiah 30, "Wherefore thus saith the holy one of Israel, Because you despise this word, and you trust in oppression and perverseness, and you depend on it, {13} Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly at an instant."

Now imagine a brick wall, a retaining wall, holding back a hill side full of dirt. It is showing a few cracks, a little swelling out in places, but is holding. For now, when it rains it holds. It is going to fall some day and when the wall falls, will it fall in slow-motion? Will there be any warning? Will you be able to run, or will you just sit there until it falls on you? What the prophet is saying is that when the collapse comes, and it will come, it will come in a moment, suddenly, and because you have despised His way, you will not be ready. This is a constant of human nature. We are never ready for what falls on us. Was anybody ready for 911?

Isaiah went on to say in verse 14, "He shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: in fact, there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water out of a pit."

All the pieces of this broken pot are going to be so small you can't do anything with them.

Don't Hate Anyone Who Tells You the Truth

Now verse 15 of Isaiah 30, "For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and you just wouldn't have it."

The message of the prophet to us is age old. The liar lies to himself first and when he begins to believe his own lies he becomes morally blind and the next step is to hate anyone who tells him the truth that would destroy his shabby house of cards.

You know in the eyes of God, we must be a pathetic set of creatures.

As we continue I'll try to be more optimistic.

We Live in Danger Everyday

A while back, I read an interview with Michael Chertoff, the director of Homeland Security. I couldn't have found a better illustration of the danger that we are in every day. The interview was by J.J. Green of WTOP radio. He wrote this, "Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff's eyes narrow, and his voice develops a stern urgent tone as he reveals America's biggest vulnerability to terrorism." Now what do you suppose that is? Is it our ports, our airports? What would it be?

Here is what he said, quote, "The great weapon that the terrorists have is persistence and patience and the one weakness we have is the tendency to lose patience and become complacent. It strikes me," Michael Chertoff said, "It is hard to accept that anyone would believe the threat is over. There is nothing these terrorists are doing or saying that could lead a reasonable person to believe that they have somehow lost interest. Our biggest challenge is making sure we do not drop our guard because time passes."

You know, one of the greatest dangers is that politicians in their drive for power may play their cards all wrong. It must be written somewhere in the politician's handbook that members of the out party must oppose the party in power at all costs.

For example, take the Patriot Act, I will admit that there's good reason to be concerned about government encroachment on our freedom. The idea of big brother listening in on my phone calls and reading my e-mails and so forth, does not make me a happy camper. On the other hand, I keep waiting for one of the talking heads on television to ask our candidates this question, "When they oppose government surveillance, when they oppose the Patriot Act or whatever it is they're doing, here's the question I want asked, "How many American lives are you willing to stake on this bet you are making? Is it worth 3,000 American lives to hold ourselves above the pagans and the water boarding of terror suspects. Think about it. How about 30,000? Maybe 300,000? Are you willing to bet 300,000 American lives against putting a known terrorist, a murderer of women and children, on a water board to get the truth out of them about what they are planning to do? Is it worth 300,000 lives to you? It is not to me!

If Michael Chertoff's nightmare comes to pass, under what rock are these people, who prevented the presenters going to hide, that's my question, because when 30,000 or 300,000 Americans die, because we didn't catch people we might have caught. Where

are those people who opposed the methods that would've caught them? Where will they be hiding out? Where will we be looking for them?

Michael Chertoff went on to say, "If you're asking me what keeps me up at night, or what I most worry about, in the short term, obviously you worry about homegrown terrorists or somebody coming in with an explosive device, or some kind of act of violence or terror that we've actually seen, occasionally carried out in this country, by people who are simply nuts, or like a Timothy McVeigh. But in the longer run, in terms of something that would be really earth shattering, the kinds of things I'm worried about are a nuclear or a dirty bomb attack, or a biological attack. Now, I don't believe that capability to do that is around the corner, but I also think that the preparations we need to have in place to deal with this threat are going to take a while to build and we are building them as we speak."

But here's what Michael Chertoff thought that we need to understand, "They're not going to be done in six weeks, or even six months. So, what is important is to stay focused on making the investments now, so that we will be grateful for them in several years if someone does get their hands-on nuclear material or a biological agent."

I have a lot of confidence in the men and women, patriots all, who are tasked with this terrible job. I don't have a lot of confidence in the rest of us to stay focused and even less confidence in the political and the chattering classes. Why? Well, because human nature doesn't change, and I have all these old prophets nagging at me about this sort of thing.

What Are Real Prophets Concerned About?

Take Zachariah, for example, in chapter 7 verse 8, "The word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, {9} Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion every man to his brother: {10} Don't oppress the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."

I want you to understand something very important, because this probably has more to do with our security as a people than any number of, what shall we say, Geiger counters or radiation detectors that we might put here and there.

This is the constant message in Bible of every prophet. This is what the New Testament tells us is true religion. The real prophets are not interested in satisfying your curiosity about the future. They are concerned with how we treat one another.

And that's what God's concern is and that's what controls His desire to keep us safe or let us get hurt.

A Message from God

Do you want a message from God Almighty? Here it is, "Execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, oppress not the widow or the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor and let none of you even imagine evil against his brother in your heart" (Zechariah 7:10).

I told you earlier that I had a message from God. That's it! That's it! Just learn how to treat one another better than you have been doing. Exercise true judgment. If you're on the jury, be honest, don't countenance one or the other in their cause, judge on the evidence, not on your feelings, not on whether you like the people are not. Judge them on the truth and don't oppress people who are weak and unable to defend themselves.

Well, in this same message from Zechariah, he says these are the things that are important. This is what's going to head off the disasters in your life, it is how you live.

In having told them that, in Zechariah 23 and verse 11, "They refused to listen, they pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. {12} Yes, they made their hearts like an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts has sent in his spirit, by the former prophets."

They quit listening to what God had said to man because of it, "There came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts, {13} Therefore, it is come to pass, that, as he cried, they wouldn't hear, So they cried, and I would not hear, says the Lord of hosts, {14} But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not, the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through and nobody came back, they had laid the pleasant land desolate."

When people think they want prophecy, they do not know what they're asking for! They don't really understand that the prophets were telling people how to live their lives in the presence of God.

Prophets Were Supposed Tell the Truth

There is a category of people who in ancient times were supposed to tell people the truth. They were supposed to carry the word of God. They were supposed to speak that word faithfully and honestly to the people. Biblically, they are called prophets. You might call him whatever you want in the modern world, but Jeremiah 23 is where God really takes off on these people and in verse 28 He says this, "Let the prophet

who has a dream, tell his dream; but let the one who has my word, speak it faithfully. What does straw have to do with grain?"

You have these dreams and prophets out there claiming to speak for God about what's going to happen in the future. It's straw! But if you have God's word and we have it, it's right there on your coffee table in your living room or on a shelf in your bookcase. Take your Bible, read it and speak it faithfully.

The Oracle of the Lord

Let's continue in Jeremiah 23 and verse 29, "Is not my word like a fire?" declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? {30} "Therefore," declares the LORD, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me. "Yes," declares the Lord. "I am against the prophets who wagged their own tongues and yet declare, "The LORD says." Oh, yes, there are people doing it all the time. {32} "I'm against those who prophesy false dreams, they tell them, and they lead my people astray with their reckless lies, I didn't send them, I didn't appoint them. They shall not benefit these people in the least." {33} "Now, when these people," God says, "or a prophet or a priest asks you, "Well what is the Oracle of the Lord?"

People want to know, what does prophecy reveal about the last times, but what they really want to know is, when it's going to happen? What's going to happen and when? When they come asking you about this, you say to them, "What is an Oracle? I will forsake you, declares the LORD, I am leaving you. {34} If a prophet or a priest or anyone else claims, Well, this is the Oracle of the Lord. I will punish that man and his household."

Do Not Declare Yourself a Prophet

You really have to be careful about declaring yourself to be a prophet. This is absolutely, iron clad, in God's word. If you stick yourself up there as a prophet, you're going to get punished.

Jeremiah 23 and verse 35, ""This is what each of you keeps on saying to his friend or relative: 'What is the Lord's answer?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?' {36} But you must not mention 'the oracle of the LORD' again, because every man's own word becomes his oracle and you distort the words of the living God, the LORD Almighty, our God."

Every man's own word becomes his Oracle and isn't it the truth. We are all deciding what's right and what's wrong for ourselves.

Now don't get me wrong, the Bible allows you whether you are going to do right or wrong for yourself.

When you start deciding what the standards of conduct are, you are lost.

Although you claim this is the Oracle of the Lord, this is what the Lord says, "You use the words, this is the Oracle of the Lord even though I told you, you must not claim that. Therefore, I will surely forget you, cast you out of my presence, along with the city that I gave to your fathers, and I will bring upon you everlasting disgrace, everlasting shame that will not be forgotten."

A Message from God

I told you that I had a message from God. That's it! The message is really pretty simple, "Execute judgment, treat people right, live the life and don't stand up and proclaim that you have some special word from the Lord, apart from what God has already given." That's God's message, if you disobey God, it is going to come upon you as an everlasting disgrace and everlasting shame that will never be forgotten.

And now back to you and me, why should you criticize the preacher for telling you what you want to hear? If you reject the painful message again and again, sooner or later even the most dedicated preacher will give up.

A Famine of Hearing the Word of God

It is kind of shocking at one point in the prophet Amos's work, its chapter 8 and verse 11. I have read it so many times as I think about it, he says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: {12} They will wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."

I think I'm beginning to understand how that happens. It is because you just keep rejecting what God says, and sooner or later, it isn't there to be heard any longer. You have rejected it, and the man who might've given it to you, the man who might have spoken it to you, finally threw up his hands and walked away and said, "What's the point, they're not interested in hearing a word that God has said."

Now, I am not looking down on anyone. I'm one of you. We have all turned down the wrong road and after all, all this came down around Israel's ears, and most of them found themselves in captivity in Babylon. One of the most righteous men of them all prayed a prayer of repentance for all of them and he, Daniel, included himself among the sinners who had brought it on.

So, what are you and I supposed to do about this? Well on the grand scale, there's not much we can do. But on the personal scale, we can live the life. We can listen to the words of the prophets. We can respond to them personally, and we can try to keep out from under power of sin. But even righteous Daniel went into captivity, and he ended up running the Babylonian government.

A Message from God

Do you want a message from God Almighty? Here it is, "Execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, oppress not the widow or the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor and let none of you even imagine evil against his brother in your heart" (Zechariah 7:10).

Be faithful to God. That's where it's at

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. Are you guilty of only listening to people, news, books, etc... based on what you want to hear?
2. Have you ever thought of the news media being modern day lying prophets?
3. Why do you think 'history repeats itself'?
4. Would you be willing to listen to a minister that spoke only the truth?
5. Are the churches guilty of 'preaching to the choir'?

6. Are we guilty of reading the Bible in a detached/complacent way, as in reading the judgments that God had for Israel and not considering that He can/will do the same things to the nations of today?
7. What other references are there in the Bible that supports Zechariah 7:10 (*Execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion every man to his brother, oppress not the widow or the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor and let none of you even imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*)?
8. If you use Zechariah 7:10, as your standard of living, what actions do you do to live it?
9. What is the best way to test a so-called prophet?
10. What steps do you take to make sure you are following God's word?