

# "If My People..."

October 26, 2014

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## Setting the tone

- current events
- Sacred Assembly

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## Four Scriptural Sources that Defile the Land

Land: ground/dirt — a region — the people within that region

### Idolatry

- affection and allegiance given over to anything other than God
- Jeremiah 3:6-10
- illustrations of idolatry in our land and in the lives of followers of Jesus
  - where have we placed our affections, allegiances, dependence? our source?
  - knowledge, experience, people, giftedness, money/possessions, technology, etc.
  - church: denominations, traditions, buildings, ministries, leaders, style of ministry

### Immorality

Sexual conduct outside of scriptural bounds; also corruption, depravity, lawlessness

- Leviticus 18
  - not lie with a close relative
  - not lie sexually with your neighbor's wife
  - not lie with a male as with a woman — it is an abomination
  - not lie with an animal — it is a perversion
- Leviticus 18:24-30
  - the land became unclean
- illustrations of immorality in our land and in the lives of followers of Jesus
  - sexual sin is rampant in our land; pornography; lust of heart = adultery
  - corruption, selfishness, pride, greed
  - door opened by our national and spiritual leaders
  - the sins of the church (the people of God) are magnified in the world!

### Bloodshed

- Numbers 35:33-34
  - blood pollutes the land

- illustrations of bloodshed in our land and in the lives of followers of Jesus
  - the taking of life unnecessarily; shootings: schools, race; abortion

### **Broken Covenants**

- Isaiah 24:5-6
  - the earth lies defiled
- illustrations of broken covenants in our land and in the lives of followers of Jesus
  - Native Americans; Hawaii; marriages; vows made to God

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### **Four Judgments upon a Defiled Land**

The judgment of God is always born of a Father's love with the motivation of turning back!

- Ezekiel 14:12-23
  - verse 12: committing unfaithfulness
  - national sins bring national judgments
  - the intercession even of the holiest of men shall not avert judgment
  - the holiness of an individual will only save the individual himself

### **Famine**

- Isaiah 14:13
  - removal of plenty; lack of supply to meet needs
  - food — relationship — the Word and witness — spiritual growth and harvest — morality — divine protection — unity of the body of Christ
  - example: the bee crisis

### **Ecological Devastation**

- Isaiah 14:15-16
  - Winkie Pratney comments, "It is no secret that the Western world faces a staggering economic burden. The causes are many, the warnings dire, the consequences frightening. Yet the root cause is none of the usual factors on which we usually lay blame. The root cause is moral: personal selfishness, greed and carelessness."<sup>1</sup>
  - He goes on, "How true it is that if we sin against God, even nature turns against us! Earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, hurricanes, floods, draughts, wildfires, extreme temperatures. Between 2000-2012: 2.9B people impacted (40%). Desensitized!!!"<sup>2</sup>

### **War**

- Isaiah 14:17
  - not only of nations; but also anger, jealousy, resentment, competitiveness, aloofness, divisiveness; in our families; in the church of Jesus; relational conflicts; warfare in the workplace
  - Kuwait, 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan, war on terror

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<sup>1</sup> Winkie Pratney, *Healing the Land: A Supernatural View of Ecology*, (Chosen Books Publishing Company, 1993)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## Disease

- Isaiah 14:19-20
  - tracing the history of a disease to an actual time of defilement — in which the sin of the people gave the enemy legal access to that particular people
  - physical, emotional, mental, spiritual — Ebola!
  - God is saying, “Don’t ignore me!”

These four judgments are mentioned in several other places in Scripture:

- Leviticus 26:21-26
  - If you walk contrary to me...will not listen to me... I will loose the wild beasts — bring a sword upon you — send pestilence — break your supply of bread
- Revelation 6:8
  - authority given to them to... kill with sword — famine — pestilence — wild beasts

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## If My People

### 2 Chronicles 7:13-15

- If my people who are called by my Name
  - those identified with Him
- humble themselves
  - go low; posture recognizing He’s God and I’m not; yielded, submitted, dependent on Him
- pray
  - Ezekiel 22:30 — I sought for a man who would stand in the gap
- seek my face
  - getting in front of Him; audience; reveals His character, heart, we hear His words
- turn from their wicked ways — repentance/forgiveness
  - repentance, restitution, forgiveness; a turning towards obeying Jesus as a norm
- then I will hear from heaven
  - you have my attention and interest; I will listen
- I will forgive their sins
  - forgiveness, removal of guilt, cleansing, restoring
- heal their land
  - individual distresses, national issues, restored favor

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## Seven Blessings on the Land

### Leviticus 26:4-10

- ecological health (vs. 4)
- economic health (vs. 5)

- personal security (vs. 6a)
- domestic security (vs. 6b)
- international security (vs. 7-8)
- blessing and growth (vs. 9)
- innovation and creativity (vs. 10)

### **Leviticus 26:11-13**

- make My dwelling among you; My soul shall not abhor you; will walk among you; will be your God

### **2 Chronicles 7:13-15**

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.”

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Look at the illustrations of idolatry in our land and in the followers of Jesus. Do you make any of these your idols?
2. How does your individual idolatry contribute to “defiling our land”? What can you do about it?
3. In preparation for the Sacred Assembly, we prayed specifically about the sins of the church. How are the sins of the church more magnified than those of individuals?
4. How do the sins of the church affect our personal witness to others in the world? What truths do we have to share that are greater than the sins of the church?
5. How does becoming immune to hearing about the bloodshed in our land dull us as Christians?
6. Broken covenants are prevalent all around us. What is one that has particularly impacted you? What can you do to heal that covenant?
7. How do you believe that our corrupt condition as a people brings the justice of God in tangible ways?
8. Read Ezekiel 22:30. What kind of man was God looking for? Will you be that man?
9. 2 Chronicles 7:13-15 is quoted so often that it has almost become meaningless. You are part of “my people.” In the outline above, which points (from #2-#5) would be hardest for you to do?
10. The seven blessings in Leviticus 26:4-10 sound “too good to be true” — they sound “heavenly”! Why?