

#35 A SPOKEN WORD.....

As I sleep these words are spoken to me, "I am watching over my word to perform it."

This is the latter part of a verse found in Jeremiah 1:12. Jeremiah has been given a vision and asked by the Lord what he has seen. The prophet answers he has seen an almond tree and the Lord responds,

“Thou hast well seen: for I watch over my word to perform it.”

God is using symbolism and giving a kind of riddle to Jeremiah. The almond tree is the first of the food-bearing trees to blossom and produce after the long winter. The Hebrew word for watching and almond are very much alike. Watching over, hastening and wakening are all synonyms of the same word. Thus God is saying to Jeremiah that He is watching over, hastening and awakening His prophetic word to fulfill it in due season.

God was speaking the same word to me. He has an appointed time to answer prayers and we must await that timing. We need faith and endurance to inherit His promises. Often God gives us great promises, and after a period of time we find that they appear dead and fruitless. This is the time of winter for the vision. Winter is when all seems to die and become useless or hopeless. The trials of life and the enemy of our souls will surely test and shake our promises, yet these afflictions appear to be needed by us to mature our faith and steadfastness.

In the winter the fruit trees grow brown and the leaves die, and all that remains is a dead stump that appears lifeless for months on end. As the season passes and the warm sun draws closer in the spring, that same dead looking plant begins to take on a new appearance of fullness and life. So it is with our promises that pass through trying times. They have life in them throughout the winter but it is hidden and kept secret to the natural eye, yet it is there and at the right season will blossom quickly and begin to bear fruit.

Once there was another almond branch that was the rod of the high priest Aaron. It was dead to all appearances and may have been used for years as a shepherd's staff. One day it was placed before the Lord in the Holy of Holies, and the next morning the rod had sprouted buds and leaves and even brought forth almonds. God can and does cause life to come out of death. What He commands to die in us, He will use to cause new life to come forth.

Again, unless we die we remain alone and of no spiritual value to His kingdom. When we die to self He will give us new life that will bless and feed many. All things, whether it be ourselves, our gifts or our ministries, must pass through death and be raised up in resurrection before becoming useful to God and others. We eat fruit and meat to survive. Yes, these foods were once living, but before they could feed men and animals they had to die. They were killed and eaten and our systems reassimilated them so they could be of benefit to our bodies.

So it is in the spiritual realm. We also must die to self and receive new life in Jesus Christ before we can bring forth spiritual fruit unto God and be of benefit to others. The fruit or life therefrom will blossom if that person, ministry or gift has truly gone to the grave. Much Christian work is of wood, hay and stubble---useless in the spiritual realm. That which has been consigned to the cross will come forth as gold, silver and precious stones.