

Jer. 8:1 ¶ At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves:

Jer. 8:2 And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

Jer. 8:3 And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

This chapter continues in flow from the previous chapter regarding the time of desolation that is to come to Judah and Jerusalem. Indication is that the invading forces will even desecrate graves of royalty and priests in search for treasure. The IVP OT Commentary cited a specific example from history regarding motivation other than just seeking treasure: "Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, attacked the Elamite capital of Susa and carried off the bones of the dead with the purpose of 'imposing restlessness upon their spirits and depriving them of food offerings and libations.'"

Most translations infer that once taken into exile, many will wish they had died. After looking at the Hebrew, I'm not sure but what it indicates that many will choose suicide.

Of particular note is the declaration that the passion and energy the people of Judah had invested in the worship of the false gods that they identified in connection with the sun, moon and stars will be proven ineffective on their behalf.

Also being emphasized is the fact that it is YHWH in sovereign control over what is happening to His people. Their exile, though accomplished through wicked foreign nations, will be a result of His judgment against His people because of their sins.

Jer. 8:4 ¶ Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?

Jer. 8:5 Why *then* is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

Reminder is given that it is the LORD telling the prophet what to say. He is to pose a few questions to the people to cause them to think. The NLT expresses the intent quite clearly I think: "*When people fall down, don't they get up again? When they start down the wrong road and discover their mistake, don't they turn back? Then why do these people keep going along their self-destructive path, refusing to turn back, even though I have warned them?*"

The prophet seems to be declaring that the response of the people is not normal. It's normal to get up again when you fall down. It's normal to make correction when you know you have made a mistake. It's abnormal to continue down a path of self-destruction when you have been warned of the consequences. It's like the people have become addicted to their sin.

Point is made that these people are making their own choices, acting of their own free will. They are clinging to belief in lies and refusing to repent because the message is according to their own desires. Their sin isn't being identified or even recognized by their spiritual leaders; they see no need to repent. This is the same situation that exists in much of "Christendom" today.

Jer. 8:6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

Jer. 8:7 Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

The LORD is saying that He is listening for the response of the people to the declarations of His prophets. He hears nothing good. No one is repentant. Everyone is making choices according to his own desires.

In verse 7 the LORD is painting a word picture. Even animals know to follow the instincts God has given them; the stork, the turtle, the crane and the swallow dependably follow their migration patterns. Mindless creatures were smarter in their actions than the people of Judah. The people of Judah couldn't even seem to understand the very clear declarations YHWH had given them of the pros and cons of breaking covenant with Him. I just read through the book of Deuteronomy again these last few days and Moses' written record is explicit. Not only did they have the Torah (the books of Moses), God had been faithful to send His prophets to warn His people of judgment if they did not repent.

Jer. 8:8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.

Jer. 8:9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

I liked the reading of the NIV for verse 8: *"How can you say, 'We are wise, for we have the law of the LORD,' when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely?"*

This is an important point. Possession of God's Word means nothing if not rightly divided. Jeremiah is making the point that the scribes had misinterpreted scripture to their own purposes. This is one of the main problems in the "church" today. There are so many in leadership and teaching positions that twist the word of God to make it say what they want it to. They quote it out of context. They insist that it needs to be made relevant for today and can't be taken literally. It seems Satan has been successful in promoting this type of

deception for thousands of years.

The LORD declares that those who declare themselves to be wise are going to be put to shame and caught in the trap of their own lies. They have rejected God's word, the source of truth and wisdom. Their "wisdom" will be proven to be foolishness.

Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Jer. 8:10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, *and* their fields to them that shall inherit *them*: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Jer. 8:11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is no peace*.

The declared judgment for the ones to whom Jeremiah is speaking is specific. YHWH is going to allow their wives to be taken away from them by their captors. Their fields are going to be given to others. He is specific in declaring that the people—from the poorest to the wealthiest—are greedy and intent on making a dishonest profit. Because of this, they are going to lose everything. Even the priests and the prophets can't be trusted. They are putting the people at ease by assuring them of peace and prosperity when judgment is coming. It's interesting to note that the prophets and priests are working together. Ezekiel is prophesying in Babylon and makes similar accusation. Following is an excerpt from that journal:

Ezekiel 13:10-12 Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?

God is declaring judgment upon the people because of their wickedness and the false prophets who are declaring peace. They were working as a team in presenting their lies and deceit. One would make a statement and others would build on that statement with their own lies. I like the wording of the CJB: "...If someone builds a wall without mortar, they 'plaster' it with whitewash [to make it appear strong]. Tell these 'plasterers' that a cloudburst is coming, with huge hailstones and gale-force winds; and the wall will fall down."

In other words the Lord is going to fulfill His prophecy of judgment, and then the people will know that they have listened to lies and deceit. They will be quick to lay the blame at the feet of the false prophets. [end of excerpt]

False teachers work the same way today; there is nothing new under the sun. They too are going to be proven for who they really are one day.

Jer. 8:12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Jer. 8:13 ¶ I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: *there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.*

Point is made that they have no excuse for their sin; God has faithfully reminded them over and again of His truth, His will for them. His people aren't even ashamed of their sin. It had become such an accepted way of life that they weren't even shamed when confronted with their sin. So God states that He is going to cause them to fall in judgment. His judgment is going to be so harsh that few will be left. Just as they benefitted from the fruit of the land when they conquered Canaan, so their conquerors will consume all that God has given them. Again, they are going to lose everything since they have chosen to reject the One Who has so richly blessed them.

(6/11) "Were they ashamed...neither could they blush" – Sad to say that this is descriptive of many places in the world today. It is certainly becoming more the norm in America.

Jer. 8:14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

Jer. 8:15 We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

At this point the prophet seems to indicate that the time will come when the people will understand that he is declaring the truth. According to the next verse, it seems that won't be until they hear that the enemy is approaching from the north. It seems they will choose to flee to the walled cities for protection; but that will prove futile. Once they realize that judgment is coming, they will finally acknowledge their sin. They will finally realize that instead of the peace and prosperity that was prophesied by the false prophets and assured by the priests, they are to face trouble and distress.

Jer. 8:16 The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

Jer. 8:17 For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which *will not be charmed*, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.

Reports have come from the north that the enemy is on the way. The conquering forces are many and mighty. They are leaving a path of destruction. The LORD is clear in stating that He is the One sending the enemy. He compares the

soldiers to poisonous snakes that can't be charmed. Their bite will be sure and deadly.

Jer. 8:18 *When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.*
Jer. 8:19 *Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?*

At this point Jeremiah expresses his grief at the plight of his people. It's like he is visualizing what will happen. He can already hear the cries of his people at the attack of the invading forces. I think that maybe the first part of verse 19 is a reference to the people in captivity in Babylon with Ezekiel. They are wondering if YHWH has deserted His land and His people.

The LORD's response—Why have my people chosen to provoke Me by worshipping worthless heathen idols?

Jer. 8:20 *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*
Jer. 8:21 *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.*
Jer. 8:22 *Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*

Verse 21 is very descriptive of the heart of the prophet; the CJB expresses it well: *"The daughter of my people is broken, and it's tearing me to pieces; everything looks dark to me, horror seizes me."*

True Christians today should have the heart of Jeremiah. Though we trust God and joyfully embrace His truth, our hearts should be breaking for the judgment we know is to come.

I had to look for some help on the last verse. It reminded me of a song we sang in church in my youth—"There is a Balm in Gilead." Truth is that healing was available to the people in the form of repentance and obedience to God. The problem wasn't that there was no physician. The problem was that the people rejected Him.