

Message #12**Jeremiah 8:1-22**

We are living in a time when various political leaders are trying to convince the people that everything will be good and peaceful, even if we continue to do things that anger God and that are an abomination to God.

There are some who suggest that we will have a great life if we elect people who support killing babies. We are told if we elect people who support same sex relationships and not homophobic people, we will all live happily ever after. We are told that diseases will go away and hurricanes and fires will go away if we follow the science.

This past Monday was Columbus Day. Well if Christopher Columbus would have followed the science, he would have never discovered the Americas. The scientists told him the world was flat and that he should not go out there because he would fall off the end of the world. But the scientists were wrong. God created this world with a spherical design, something He said in His word.

Frankly what these politicians are doing is lying to the American people. But this kind of thing is not new. The religious and political leaders were doing the same thing back in the days of Jeremiah. They were lying to the people and the people were following them to the judgment of God.

BECAUSE GOD'S OWN PEOPLE FOLLOW LEADERS WHO ARE NOT TELLING THEM THE TRUTH OF GOD AND THEY REFUSE TO HONESTLY DEAL WITH THEIR SIN, GOD WILL TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY HUMILIATE THEM, PUNISH THEM AND DESTROY THEM.

Again I remind us all that these verses are aimed at God's own people. These verses were not aimed at the lost Gentiles nations. Jeremiah was standing at the Temple proclaiming these things to the people of God.

REALITY #1 – God will permit His own people to be humiliated and desecrated. **8:1-3**

In these verses, we get a glimpse of the destruction and humiliation and carnage that God would permit His own people to experience because they were so evil and rebellious.

The description here is that God allowed the dead bones of priests and prophets and princes and people to be dug out of their graves and spread out and scattered all over the land. Notice **verse 2**: the Jews worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, so their corpses are spread under them.

When an enemy would come and take over a land, they would often dig up graves to see if there were any valuable items buried with the person who died. They would just leave the bodies out on the ground. It was insulting and degrading.

God would allow this to happen to His own people. The dead bodies of the kings, princes, priests and prophets would lie out in the sun and bake like animal dung.

According to **verse 3**, if there were any survivors of this brutality, they would wish they were dead. This describes what the Tribulation will be like—“in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die and death flees from them” (Rev. 9:6).

Notice the pronoun “I” in **verse 3**. God is the One doing all of these horrible things to His own people because they will not amend their ways and return to Him and His word.

REALITY #2 – God warns His people that their worship is a sham and not based on truth.
8:4-12

There are ten sad realities about the way His people lived their lives. I want you to keep this in your mind; these are God’s own people. If it can happen to God’s people then, it can happen to us now. When you read this, you can certainly see why His people deserved the death described in the first three verses:

(Pathetic Reality #1) - Most people who fall repent and get up and get going again,
but not My people. **8:4**

God asks two rhetorical questions that did not expect an answer because the answer is so obvious. The normal and natural thing for a person to do when he/she falls is to get up and get going again. You don’t stay down and crawl around in the dirt when you fall, you get up.

The normal thing is that you learn from the thing that caused the fall and you correct it. The normal thing for a child of God to do when he has fallen and sinned is to resolve it. It is not normal to continue to crawl around in the filth. God wants His people to confess it and turn from it and get going again for Him, just like any person who fell.

(Pathetic Reality #2) - My people refuse to repent and continue to live a life of deceit. **8:5**

God again asks more rhetorical questions why do My people continually fall and why do they refuse to return. God’s own people continually turned away from God’s word.

God’s people response was not normal or natural. God’s people continually and deliberately turned away from God and His word. They deliberately chose to sin and then they held tight to their deceitful life and refused to return to the Lord. God’s people not only refused to admit they had fallen and they refused to repent.

(Pathetic Reality #3) - My people have pursued their own way. **8:6**

Look at this verse. God’s people do not speak what is right and true. They did not repent of their wickedness. They never said, “What have I done.” Then they turned to their own sinful ways and charged into evil like a charging war horse.

One writer said this is really not self-condemnation. O yes it is. We need to judge ourselves and condemn ourselves. That is what Paul taught the Corinthians.

(Pathetic Reality #4) - My people do not understand My program or My word. **8:7**

Jeremiah uses a bird illustration to communicate how unnatural it was for the people of God not to want to draw close to God and His word. The birds know the seasons when it is time for migrations. They can read the times and the temperature changes. If you cannot see that God is permitting something to go drastically wrong in this nation, there is something terribly wrong. God's people should be able to see that it is time for them to migrate back to God.

They were not being blessed by God. They should have known instinctively that we are not right with God. But at the end of **verse 7**, God's people do not even know this. They do not know God's word, His ordinances or what God was doing.

(Pathetic Reality #5) - My people believe a lie that they keep the law of God and the teachers do not accurately teach the law of God. **8:8**

These people were involved in horrible sin and they convinced themselves that they were not guilty but were right with God. They had an arrogance and confidence to them. They believed they were obeying God's word. They were getting their confidence from false teachers who were butchering God's word.

This is the first use in Jeremiah of the word "scribe." The religious leaders were liars. They were telling people that they were keeping the law just fine and were in a right relationship with God. If one rejects the word of God, one is a fool no matter how wise one appears to be.

God's word must be carefully handled and the only way to do that is to carefully and systematically and exegetically study and teach it verse by verse.

(Pathetic Reality #6) - My people have followed the shameful wise men who reject My word. **8:9**

The supposed wise men handled the word of God falsely and led people to follow them in their shameful and disgraceful ways. These wise men actually rejected the word of God. Do you see this? These were the leaders who not only were liars, but they rejected the word of God.

The verbs "put to shame," "dismayed" and "caught" are in Hebrew prophetic perfects, which indicates the future is sealed. At the time Jeremiah said this, they were still in power and leading people away from truth. But in the future, their judgment was as good as done.

(Pathetic Reality #7) - My people are greedy. **8:10a**

There is nothing wrong with thanking God and enjoying what God has given to you, but these people were greedy and they would walk over helpless people to get more. Even the prophets and priests did this and God said My people will pay a severe price. God would permit everything they had to be taken from them.

(Pathetic Reality #8) - My people are deceitful. **8:10b**

God's people are supposed to be people of truth and integrity. God says My people, including the prophets and priests, are deceitful. They are living deceitful lives and they are doing deceitful things.

(Pathetic Reality #9) - My people who are broken are superficially told they are at peace. **8:11**

People who were going through difficulties, who perhaps were being convicted were being told that they were at peace with God. The leaders were telling the people you have nothing to fear because you are at peace with God. There was no peace and they were not at peace with God.

(Pathetic Reality #10) - My people are not ashamed of their sin and do not blush over their sin. **8:12a**

God said it did not matter what sin they committed, they were never ashamed of it and they never blushed over it. If you do not feel ashamed of yourself when you sin, you are not right in your relationship with God. It doesn't matter what you project.

REALITY #3 – God will punish His people. **8:12b-13**

In the book of Deuteronomy, God promises to bless His people if they are obedient and He promises to curse His people if they are disobedient (Deut. 28:3, 11, 18-42). Can God's people reach a point where they cannot repent? Absolutely—Heb. 6:4-6.

God says I am about to bring My own people down. I will cause you to fall. I will take away your blessings. God says I have been blessing you in this land but no more. You refuse to be ashamed of your sin so I will bring you down. God says He will literally stop the growth of crops as a judgment. No more grapes; no more figs; no more leaves and I will cause what I have given you to wither.

People do not realize that God can take away everything He has given to His own people.

REALITY #4 – God's people need to respond in view of God's judgment. **8:14-15**

I want you to notice the personal pronouns "we" and "us." Jeremiah was living at this time and as God's prophet, he too would experience the same kinds of things as the rest of God's people. As God's prophet, he did not just sit around. He knew with pending judgment coming that they needed to respond to the warning.

Jeremiah asks, "Why are you sitting still?" He just told them judgment was coming and they aren't doing anything.

Jeremiah says you need to get to the fortified cities and we will perish there. Jeremiah says we will die there because God has doomed us to His judgment. The reason is seen at the end of **verse 14**, "we have sinned against the LORD."

We thought we would have peace, because that is what the religious leaders were telling us, but there is no peace. We are not at peace with God and we have so sinned against God that He is sending terror on us.

REALITY #5 – God’s people everywhere will experience His severe judgment. **8:16-17**

Notice it is God who is sending these ferocious things against His own people. Dan was an area in the far north of the Promised Land. It is very possible that the judgment had already started to happen.

God says I am sending a ferocious military enemy to sweep down against My own people and I will use deadly serpents to kill you.

REALITY #6 – God’s true servant is broken by what He sees and understands. **8:18-22**

Just remember that Jeremiah has been singled out by God to see all of this and proclaim all of this and his heart was broken. **In fact, starting here and on into chapter 9, this is the text that led teachers of Scripture to call Jeremiah the “weeping prophet.”**

What man of God wouldn’t weep over this? If God said this is what He would do to our country, our state, our city, our church or to us, who wouldn’t be sad over this news.

Fact #1 - Jeremiah’s sorrow was beyond healing. **8:18a**

Fact #2 - Jeremiah’s heart was faint. **8:18b**

Fact #3 - Jeremiah heard the people crying. **8:19**

The people had been scattered because of their idolatry. They were crying that God was no longer on Israel’s side. He was no longer in Zion and He was no longer King over her.

When you see a son or daughter or someone you deeply care about who wanders away from God into sin, it will break your heart. They no longer experience the blessings of God and you will see them cry and there will not be one thing you can do or say to stop it.

Fact #4 - God’s people can reach a point where they are not saved or savable. **8:20**

What Jeremiah means by this is that God’s elect nation was beyond God saving and delivering. Opportunity to get right with God had passed them by. Everything was falling apart by sovereign decree of God and it was too late to save them. There is nothing sadder than someone dying in a bed who is not saved.

Fact #5 - God's true leader can reach a point where he is broken. **8:21**

When a leader of God finds no joy in any of the people, it is depressing. When God's people reach a point where they are broken beyond remedy, it breaks the heart of God. **God wants to bless His people, not break His people.**

When His people get involved in sin to the point that God has to demolish them, it breaks His heart.

Fact #6 - God's people can reach a point where they have no potential healing. **8:22a**

The "balm in Gilead" was something these people would have clearly understood. Gilead was a region that had mountains that was located north of Jerusalem and east of the Jordan River. It was known for its storax trees that contained healing resin or gum that became an ointment that was known for healing (Gen. 37:25; Jer. 46:11).

The point is the people who were sick could go to a physician and get this medicine and get better. God says it is too late for you to come to Me and get better. I will not heal you. I will not cure you because of your sin. You refuse to turn to Me and amend your ways, therefore there is no healing.

Fact #7 - God's people can reach a point where they have no potential restoration. **8:22b**

Because you refuse to turn to Me, there is no restoration.

Again why hasn't God intervened and restored and blessed His people? The answer is simple: because they refuse to face their sin and turn from it.

Charles Spurgeon made four observations about Migratory Birds:

- 1) They know when to come and go.
- 2) They know where they need to go.
- 3) They know the way they are to go.
- 4) They have wisdom to go to the sunny Land.

Hopefully we have as much sense as migratory birds.