

## "A BALM in GILEAD"

**TEXT:** Jeremiah 8

Balsam. A thorny tree growing 10-15 feet tall with clusters of green flowers, also known as the Jericho balsam.

Balsam was highly valued during Bible times (Gen 37:25; 43:11; Jer 8:22; 46:11; 51:8; Ezek 27:17). It produced a fragrant, resinous gum called balm. This was an article of export (Gen 37:25) and was given as a gift by Jacob (Gen 43:11). Balm was used as a symbol in Jer 8:22 to refer to spiritual healing.

A vegetable product of GILEAD exported to such nations as Egypt and Phoenicia. After Joseph's brothers cast him into a pit, they saw an Ishmaelite caravan "coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh on their way to carry them down to Egypt" (Gen 37:25). The balm of Gilead was an aromatic resin used as an incense and a medical ointment used for the healing of wounds. Its identity, however, has not been clearly established. The prophet Jeremiah asked, "Is there no balm in Gilead, /Is there no physician there?" (Jer 8:22). The New Testament declares that there is a Balm in Gilead: Jesus Christ, the Great Physician.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. I suppose one of the worst situations in the world is to see someone hurting and know that you can't do anything.
2. Worse than this is when you know of people who are suffering from a spiritual ailment, and they refuse to be treated.
3. You can give them hope but they won't take it.
3. Judah, the southern part of the divided kingdom, & its chief city Jerusalem, was to be God's centerpiece of the world:

### **I. JERUSALEM'S TROUBLES, Jeremiah 8:1-17**

### **II. BALM IN GILEAD, Jeremiah 8:18-22**

- A. 20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."
  1. The last opportunity for Israel to repent and come and gone.
  2. Summer is nearly over "Summertime" carries with it all kinds of mental images.
  3. As Jeremiah looked out at God's disobedient people, he felt despair. They had foolishly used their short lives on earth to play and had failed to repent and prepare for the inevitable end to their spiritual "summer" and now it was too late.
4. Paul felt it in Romans 9:1-5 *"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ*

*came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*

10:1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. them eternal life!*

5. It breaks our hearts when close friends and loved ones see our Christian example, hear our pleas for obedience, and realize the frailty of life, only to reject the one Savior who can guarantee them eternal life!
6. Let us look at some things that we can do to insure that we & our loved ones do not die lost.

**I. BE PREPARED** (1Pet.3:15; 2Tim.2:15; 2Pet.3:18 "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ezek.3:1ff; Rev.10:8-10). Attend, learn, apply, try,

**II. PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH** (1Cor.11:1; Matt.23:1-12; Rev.2:10).

**III. REMEMBER THAT ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE HEARER** (Acts 8:36-38). Not only are we to do certain things, we are to stop doing other things (1Cor.6:9-11).

**IV. GO, SEEK THE LOST**, Don't wait for them to ask the questions, you initiate the discussion about their soul. Otherwise it will probably never come up! If they are uncomfortable with it they will let you know.(Mtt.28:18-20; Prov. 26:13-16; Jms.4:17; Jer.20:9) if you really believe it, you can't keep it in. You must tell someone. It would be like going all day without telling someone about you new grandchild.

**V. LET THEM SEE JESUS THROUGH YOU** Let them be amazed and wonder at the life you live and the reasons for it. (Gal. 2:20; Jno. 3:16; 1Peter 2:21-22 Christ left us an example that we should follow in His steps).

**VI. DON'T OVER-ESTIMATE THE HARDNESS OF THE HEART OF THE HEARER** (Mtt. 13:5,20; Jer.3:20; Mtt. 23:37; Prov.28:14).

D. 21, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me."

1. Jeremiah loved greatly and suffered deeply.

E. 22, "Is there no balm in Gilead;" Yes there is.

1. "is there no physician there?" there is a physician there

2. "why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

- a. Because the people refuse the balm--the medicine that will cure them
- b. Because they refuse the physician, the one who knows how to apply the balm
- c. Because they refuse to admit to, be ashamed of the very activities that are killing them!

Conclusion:

1. There is hope for the church:
2. There is hope for your health
3. Your finances
4. Your relationships.
5. The great physician Matthew 9:12