

Relevant Questions for Troubled Times (Part 1)

Jeremiah 8: 5, 14, 19b, 22b

Jeremiah was a prophet of God who ministered in difficult times. He began his ministry prior to the Babylonian captivity, and continued to preach a message of repentance even after the Jews were led away into bondage. Jeremiah preached for forty years, but the vast majority never heeded his call for repentance. Most who knew Jeremiah would've considered his work a failure, but he continued to share the word of God with a rebellious generation. He remained faithful to the call of God even when it seemed that no one cared or desired to turn from their wicked ways. There came a time when the Lord's mercy was removed and judgment came. We get a glimpse of the social and spiritual climate in [7:27-28](#).

I'm sure that you noticed there were questions asked in each of the verses that we read. The Lord had looked upon His people and is asking "Why" in regard to their lives. Could He not ask the same questions of us today? Do you ever look around at the situation of the world and wonder why? Why do people not seek the Lord and turn from their wicked ways? Why does it seem that there is no moral standard anymore? Why is it that the world has adopted an attitude of total rejection of all that is holy and pure?

I'm sure that God looks upon the world and asks the same questions, not that He doesn't already know, but it is amazing that the world has no regard for the Lord or His ways. Today I want to begin to look at each of these four questions asked concerning Jerusalem. Even though they were asked of Judah, there is also application for us as well. I want to look at these verses from our standpoint. Let's consider: [Relevant Questions for Troubled Times](#).

I. Why is America Indifferent? (5-6) – God asks the question concerning the backslidden state of Jerusalem. Why were they guilty of back sliding from Him? What caused this universal backslidden state, their indifference to God? The answer to that question is revealed in the text.

A. Their Desertion (5a) – As God looked upon His people, He saw a [perpetual backsliding](#). This wasn't just a small portion of the people, or a small drifting away from the things of God. This was a perpetual back-sliding, involving wholesale indifference toward the Lord. The word [perpetual](#) means "to be excessive or enduring, described as possessing a brightness that was noticed." God revealed that this was no minor problem. The people of Judah had completely abandoned His ways. They were no longer living according to the righteousness of God.

- Now this wasn't confined to the rich or worldly; all of Judah had engaged in this rebellion. It was an excessive indifference, one that endured regardless of the Word of God. It had become so prevalent that the people even prided themselves in what they had become. There

was no shame or remorse for their actions. Things had begun a downward spiral. Rather than seeing any improvement, it only grew worse with each passing day.

- As we look at the attitude of Judah and the state that she was in, we would have to admit that America finds herself in much the same condition. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a [perpetual backsliding](#). This isn't reserved for the indulgent in Hollywood or the greed seekers in corporate America, it is found on main streets and small towns all across our land. It seems as if the nation as a whole has turned its back on God.
- There seems to be a desire to push the envelope in an effort to see just how far into sin many can go. There is no shame or remorse for the sins in our land. People openly parade their sinful ways in arrogant pride. They are determined to force their views upon those who object and demand to be accepted in the mainstream.
- There seems to be a universal glamorization of open sin and immorality. Many influential people and politicians have taken up the banner to defend and even promote the wholesale depravity that has invaded our land. America has deserted the true and living God for the pleasures of the flesh. Christian values have been abandoned in order to defend and promote the desires of the flesh.

B. Their Defiance (5b-6a) – In the face of Jeremiah's preaching and the conviction of God they refused to return. [They held fast to their deceit](#). They regarded themselves as right with God. They rebuked the man of God's words and declared, "What have we done? Where have we erred from the faith? What could possibly be wrong with the way we are living? Why do we need to repent?" Judah had become a defiant people who refused to turn from their wicked ways and seek the Lord. Their hearts had grown cold and they could no longer see the error of their ways.

- What truth we find in these verses regarding the spiritual climate in America. You can hardly find anyone who will admit their need of repentance. Few ever seek the Lord or pray for forgiveness any more. We live in a generation who feels as if they have done nothing to merit seeking God or His forgiveness. We live in a land that has enjoyed the goodness of God and yet many shake a defiant fist toward heaven and refuse to acknowledge their sin or need for God. [Ps.33:12 - Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.](#) [Is.5:20 - Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!](#)

C. Their Determination (6b) – [every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.](#) Jeremiah offers a word picture that describes the people of Judah. They are as a horse that is

prepared for battle who knows only one thing, to rush head-long into the carnage. He has no perception of the danger or possible injury that might result from his journey. His only desire is to engage in that which he was trained to do. So it was with the people. They had only one desire, to rush head-long into their sinful indulgence. They seemed to have no perception of the danger and injury that will always result from sin. There was no concern for the consequences or the calamity that their actions would bring.

- How true that is in our day as well. We live in a generation that is determined to satisfy themselves whatever the cost. There is no regard for tomorrow or the life here after. Their only concern is to satisfy the insatiable hunger of the flesh. We live among a generation that is determined to continue their course of destruction and are committed to removing any attempt of deterring them from their desires.
- Have you ever known a time like this, one where the world is absolutely bent on having its way whatever the cost? You would have to agree that America is indifferent and she is guilty of much of the same that Judah was.

I. Why is America Indifferent? (5-6)

II. Why is America Idle? (14-15) – Jeremiah moves from Judah's indifference to her idleness. Not only had she refused to repent before the Lord, there was an attitude of idleness toward the Lord. Once again we can see a startling reflection of America in these verses. Let's consider the scope of this idleness. We find there was:

A. A Lack of Activity (14a) – [Why do we sit still?](#) Jeremiah was astounded that the people were content to sit idly by. There was no desire to move toward the Lord or seek His will or His way. The people no longer had a desire to assemble before the Lord and honor Him. They saw no need for action.

- Sadly this has become the norm for the average Christian in America. We live in a time where most refuse to see or admit the truth. I fear that God is asking, "Why do you sit idle?" Why are we living as if the world and those around us are right with God? How can we sit idly by and watch the world continue its ravaging pace with no desire to take a stand for the Lord? How can we be so indifferent to the needs of our day? Who do we think is going to stand if we don't?

- It is time for the church to arise and stand for the Lord. We have been silent and complacent far too long. I fear that the average church possesses neither the courage nor the desire to do much about the condition of our communities or the world around us. We have developed an attitude of apathy and are unconcerned about the troubles that we face. Who is willing to stand and make a difference?

B. A Lack of Humility (14a) – *Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there:* As Jeremiah called for them to assemble themselves, he also called for them to remain silent before the Lord. This has the idea of “*retreating behind the walls and silently waiting upon the Lord.*” The time for their excess had passed and it was now time to humble themselves before the Lord. Were it not for His mercies they would surely be consumed. They alone were to blame for the despair that they experienced. Their self indulgence and lack of commitment unto the Lord had brought them to where they were.

- It seems as if America has been lulled into complacency by her own prosperity. She has lived a life of greed and excess for generations and now turmoil has come upon us. We, like the people of Judah, have no reason to harbor ill will toward the Lord. The sins of our nation have brought us to where we are. The remedy for the problems we face will be found in repentance for our sin as we humble ourselves before God. It is time to shed the arrogance and pride and humbly seek the touch of God and His healing.

C. A Lack of Purity (14b) – *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.* The sins of the nation had not gone unnoticed by the Lord. He had not turned a deaf ear or blind eye to their iniquity. Because of the sins they were guilty of, God would send great affliction. Sin was the primary and ultimate cause for Judah’s demise. Had the people turned from their sin, they could’ve escaped the wrath of God.

- It is no secret that America lacks purity before the Lord. Much of our land is consumed by sinfulness and iniquity abounds on every hand. Many may feel as if they are getting by or going unnoticed, but God is aware of all that we do. He sees and knows the desires of our hearts and the actions we perform. When sin is not confessed, it must be judged. Repentance is the answer for America. Just as it was with Judah, if we fail to turn back to God, judgment is sure.

D. A Lack of Reality (15) – *We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!* The deception of the people was immense. They were on the brink of judgment and yet there was no perception of their need. While they lived a life of sinful indulgence, they still expected to receive God’s blessing. They had a sense of false security. They assumed that God would never judge His chosen people.

- In the midst of their deception they looked for peace, but only found difficulty. They looked for health and abundance, but only found trouble. The people never realized their need to turn from their wicked ways and back to God.
- This is much the same philosophy we see among us today. There are those who preach a doctrine that claims health and wealth to all who desire it. They only view God as One who supplies our every desire. The world never stops to consider the holiness of God or His righteous demands. We are in a day of wholesale depravity and few have enough discernment to realize it. We can try and sugar-coat the condition of our day, but it will never change the truth.
- It is time that we face the realities of our day and seek the Lord. Times are desperate and we must deal with the issues at hand. It is time for the church to rise up and stand for the cause of Christ. It is time for us to examine our own hearts and ensure that we are right with God.

These are difficult questions, but they are relevant for our day. I pray that we will get rid of our indifferent attitudes and rise to the occasion. If the church doesn't meet the challenge, the world never will!

How are things with you today? Is all well within your heart? Christian, are you all that you can and should be? Do we sense the urgency of our day? Maybe you are here and you have never come to the realization that you are lost and need the Lord. He paid the price for your sin if you will only come to Him in salvation.