

## Relevant Questions for Troubled Times (Part 2)

Jeremiah 8: 5, 14, 19, 22

Last week we began to look at these verses as we considered [Relevant Questions for Troubled Times](#). God had looked upon His people, Judah, and was asking “Why” in regard to their lives. Why had they turned away from Him? Why were they blinded to the desperate situation they faced? Why were the people idle and proud before the Lord? Why was there no righteousness among a people that had received so much from the Lord?

As we consider the questions of God, we too could ask the same questions in our day. There are few in our society who cares for the things of God. Most have no desire to serve the Lord or live according to His Word. Their only desire is to please the flesh and live a life of self-indulgence. There is no thought of the consequences of sin or any accountability to God.

Now I know that we had rather not think on these things. I know we had rather not consider the depravity of our day, but we must. If the church doesn't see her need and turn back unto the Lord, there is little hope for the world. We must open our eyes to the truth of our day and stand for the cause of Christ. Last week we considered: **Why is America Indifferent** and **Why is America Idle?** Today I want to look at the two remaining questions as we continue the thought: [Relevant Questions for Troubled Times](#).

**III. Why is America Idolatrous? (19-20)** – In these verses Jeremiah deals with the issue of idolatry among God's people. The people had engaged in wholesale idolatry. The Lord was no longer given the place of preeminence in their lives. They still held an outward form of godliness, but their hearts and genuine worship had been given to idols. The Lord was no longer viewed as the only God.

- We can see the same situation in America. The Lord is no longer given preeminence here. He is no longer viewed as the holy, sovereign God. In fact, in the eyes of many He is less than an image or philosophy made by man. Let's consider the aspects of this idolatry.

**A. The Testimony (19a)** – [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?](#) Things had grown desperate for the people of God. Israel had been scattered and defeated by the Assyrians. Judah was being threatened by Babylon. Rather than considering their sinful ways and the need to repent, Judah began to blame God. They cried because of the Babylonians. They questioned where God was. Is He not still in Zion? Has He forsaken His people? If God loved us why has He not spared us the judgment that is coming? The people refused to admit their sinfulness and could only blame God for their situation. This attitude only encouraged more indulgence in sin.

- Have we not all heard the same questions asked in our day? Those around us live as the please, never giving any thought to the consequences of sin or the damage that it always brings. They are determined to live a life that pleases the flesh. But when their world falls apart around them, they want to blame God. They simply cannot understand why things have happened in their lives as they have. I suppose they believe that there are never any consequences for sin.
- Many times people grow bitter toward the Lord. A life of sin may have ended in the death of a loved one and they want to blame God rather than admit that it was a life lived in sinful excess. We have witnessed some extreme weather conditions in our land. Many ask, if God loves us, why does He allow such things to happen? Why does God bring judgment if He is a God who loves us? Well He judges us many times because He loves us. He loves us too much to allow us to continue in sin without chastisement. I had rather felt the conviction of God than for Him to allow me to continue in my sin and die lost. I praise the Lord for His conviction!

**B. The Truth** (19b) – [Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?](#) The people had raised false accusations against God, but He revealed the truth unto them. They had provoked Him to anger and judgment because of their [graven images and strange vanities](#). The holy standard of God had been abandoned for the idols of pagans. The worship that should have been reserved for the Lord was offered unto idols.

- They had been chosen of God. He had brought them out of bondage, provided for their every need while they journeyed in the wilderness, and given them an abundant land of plenty to inhabit. You would think that Judah would have served the Lord faithfully. Sadly that was not the case. The people had become attracted to the idols of their neighbors, those little gods that appealed to the flesh. They had abandoned the true and living God for idols made of man.
- Much could be said about the current condition of America. We used to be one nation under God, but that is no longer the case. Our Lord and Savior has taken a back seat to everything imaginable. Our land is filled with idols that please the flesh. I realize there aren't idols of wood or stone set up in public places, but America has become a nation of idolatry.
- It comes in many forms. We may not like to admit it, but anything that comes before the Lord is an idol. Anything in our lives that takes priority over the Lord has become an idol. A lot of people worship their career, their children, their homes, their hobbies, their wealth, or even themselves. They never stop to think that each of those things are temporal; they will not last forever. Then they will have to seek something else to worship. Are you guilty of idolatry? If God isn't the priority then you are!

**C. The Tragedy** (20) – [The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.](#) Jerusalem was under siege for two years. For two long years they were held captive in their own land. We see the despair of the people in this verse. The summer harvest had ended; the time for plenty had come and gone and there was no harvest. The people were faced with a long winter without provision. They all feared they would die within the city walls. The moment for their salvation had come and gone and yet they remained in their dreadful state.

- This also had a profound spiritual application for them. God had sent warnings, time and again, and yet the people would not heed the call. They had wasted their opportunity for redemption. Judgment had been determined and it would come. Judah had crossed the line with God because they were unwilling to repent.

- I want us to consider the spiritual application for America. I fear that we are nearing the end of the harvest and yet many are not saved. We have been given a compassionate opportunity time and again and yet our nation has not turned to God. Do you remember the events of 9-11? Every person who stood before a camera pleaded for God to bless America. What they failed to realize is the fact that God had blessed America. There is no other nation in the world today who has heard the gospel message as America has, but may have rejected it.

- Where are all those who desired the blessing of God today? Who has looked to God for help and guidance for our current turmoil? Church we need to wake up and consider the gravity of our time. The harvest is soon ending and many are not saved! [Heb.2:3 – How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;](#)

### **III. Why is America Idolatrous?** (19-20)

**IV. Why is America Infected?** (21-22) – Jeremiah closes out this chapter with a final, relevant question. The people were in a desperate condition and he wondered why. America finds herself in a desperate condition today. The lives of untold millions across our land are infected with sin. Our land needs revival. We need a touch of God and a willingness to respond to Him. Notice:

**A. The Affliction** (21) – [For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.](#) This reveals the state of mourning that Jeremiah was in. He had preached to this people for years. He had seen their iniquity grow and spread. As he looked upon the people, it was the worst his eyes had ever seen. There was no hope left. The people had become so wicked that there was no resemblance of holiness.

- This is where we can draw a ray of hope today. I will admit that America is in the worst condition I have ever seen. We are in a mess! Our financial situation is desperate. We are lacking in genuine leadership on almost every level. There seems to be no end to the advance of sin and immorality. We are raising a generation that is ignorant to the things of God.

- But, as bad as things are, there is hope. The church is still here. All have not abandoned the Lord. There is still a gospel witness among our land. The message of the gospel is still going out and it is having an effect. Folks are still giving their lives to the Lord in salvation. We must not give up the fight. We must continue the course. There are eternal souls that hang in the balance. I pray that we will develop an attitude of mourning as Jeremiah did for the condition of America.

### **B. The Astonishment** (22b) – [why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?](#)

Jeremiah was bewildered at the state of Judah. Why were they in their destitute state? Why had they become so indifferent toward the Lord and forsaken Him?

- I know that there is a physical aspect that Jeremiah saw and considered, but I have no doubt that he is referring to their spiritual need. He wondered how a people so blessed of God, a people so exposed to the teachings and truth of God could have gotten into such a condition. Why were the people in the spiritual shape they were in? Why were they determined to live in sin and reject the mercies of God?

- I too wonder the same thing in our day. We live in the most blessed nation on earth. God has been far better to us than we could ever deserve. It is apparent to all who will only admit it that God has had His mighty hand upon us. Why then is America infected with sin? Why will men, women, and children not see their need and turn to God? Why, in a nation so blessed and exposed to the truth of God's Word, do we see the abundance of sin and corruption that has taken over our great nation? What is it going to take for America to see her need? I pray that we don't wait too long, until the nation as a whole lies condemned in the judgment of God.

### **C. The Antidote** (22a) – [Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?](#) Things were

desperate in Judah. Judgment was coming and it would last for seventy years. Things didn't have to turn out that way. There was an answer for their need. Jeremiah asked why the people had not applied the balm, the *salve or medicine*. He asked if there was no physician to attend to their needs. If so, why had the people not taken advantage of such help?

- Once again there was a great spiritual application and it has not changed in our day. There is only one remedy for sin. There is only one antidote for the infection that invades mankind due to sin. We must turn to the Balm of Gilead. We must seek the attendance of the

Great Physician. Jesus alone is the answer for the problems of the world. He alone can deliver a soul that is bound by sin and destined for an eternal hell. Man will never pull himself up or get out of his miserable state in himself. It will take the blood of Jesus being applied to his heart to be cleansed and made whole. [Is.53:4-5 - Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.](#)

- I'm glad that I received the healing that only Jesus can give. I rejoice that I have been washed in His precious blood. We need to be mindful of those around us haven't. We have the wonderful opportunity to share Jesus with a lost and dying world. He is their only hope. Without Him they will die in their sins. Let us do all we can to share Jesus, the only answer.

I pray that you have been challenged and burdened by the Word that we have considered the last two weeks. Our land is in a desperate situation, in need of repentance and salvation. We may choose to ignore it, but the problem will remain. What will we do about the needs today?

Have you trusted Christ in salvation? Has the Balm of Gilead brought healing to you? If not, you are yet in your sin and in need of Christ. Come to Him while there is time and opportunity.