

Balm in Gilead

Scripture Reading — Jeremiah 8:4-7, 13-22

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? — Jeremiah 8:22

In this frightening passage, the prophet Jeremiah refers to Gilead, a region in Israel that was known for its medicinal balm, or healing salve. In the midst of destruction, there was no place of refuge, no place even for the wounded to find help or healing.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah lived to see the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem by the invading powers from the north: Assyria and Babylon. The people were being punished for worshipping other gods since the days of Solomon. But they refused to repent. Isaiah says, “Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great. . . . They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel. . . . Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil” (Isaiah 1:4-6). For Israel’s deep-seated rebellion, God allowed other nations to overtake them.

Later, when Jesus came, he did not come as the builder of an ark like Noah, or as a warrior like David. He came as the Great Physician, healing the lame, the sick, and the blind. Still today, our world persists in rebellion against God and is full of wounds and welts. Only in Christ can we be saved, brought back to God, and healed.

Prayer

Heal us, Lord Jesus, of the sickness that afflicts all people. Heal us, and we will be saved. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Healing](#), [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [God](#), [Jesus](#), [Attributes of God](#)

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