

## Exile

### Scripture Reading — Jeremiah 8:22-9:3

*Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? — Jeremiah 8:22*

A *jeremiad* is a long, mournful complaint, a list of woes. This word came into use as a description of long, woe-filled passages in the book of Jeremiah. Indeed, the prophet rails repeatedly against the people of God in his day.

The tone of Jeremiah's entire book is lament because the sins of the people are truly depressing: idolatry, adultery, mistreatment of the poor and widows and orphans. God's people, says Jeremiah, are like an unfaithful spouse and rebellious children. God's judgment on such unfaithfulness will inevitably come, Jeremiah declares. And it does. God's people lose the promised land and are exiled to Babylon.

In our passage today Jeremiah asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Literally, the balm of Gilead was a topical medicine made from a local tree. But that's not the treatment or the doctor Jeremiah is alluding to. He's talking about a physician who can salve the *eternal* wound of rebellion and separation from God himself. He's talking about salvation.

Thankfully, God doesn't leave his grieving people captive and far from home. Though the people suffer exile, God in his faithfulness heals and restores them. But the greater, eternal healing comes with the Great Physician, Jesus, who restores our souls.

### Prayer

*O Jesus, Great Physician, you alone are the balm we need to heal our sin-sick souls. We beg your forgiveness for our sins. Heal us, we pray. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Healing](#), [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [Salvation](#)

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Written by Kurt Selles — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/kurt-selles>

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