

The Balm Of Gilead

Jeremiah 8:22 says, *"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"* Gilead is the name given to a ridge of mountains which extended from Lebanon southward to Palestine. These mountains gave their name to the whole district of country east of Galilee. This name was given in the covenant between Jacob and his uncle Laban (Genesis 31:48). This country had a great reputation in the days of Joseph for its production of a medicinal balm.

Jeremiah, after contemplating the morally diseased condition of the people, asks, *"Is there no balm in Gilead?"* Sin makes man sick (Isaiah 1:5-6). It diseases the heart, pulling man away from God to the point where man must ask the question, *"Is there no balm?"* The blood of Jesus is the sure cure for the diseased soul of man. No other volume in all the world can answer the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" The word of God reveals to man his state and danger, and the only remedy for his guilt and misery.

All the blessings connected with salvation are ascribed to the blood of Christ. We are redeemed, reconciled, forgiven, sanctified and cleansed from sin all from His blood (Isaiah 53:5). As in all cases, the possession of a remedy is not enough without its application. Just because man has the remedy, does not mean that all men will be saved. Only those who want to walk by faith and obey the gospel of Christ will receive the healing balm of Gilead.

Jeremiah also asks the question, *"Is there no physician there?"* The physician is Jesus. In the time of His earthly life, He went about healing the maladies of both the bodies and minds of men. Now, He goes about trying to heal the spiritual maladies of men. Like any doctor which a person would trust their lives to, Jesus possesses unlimited knowledge; He is distinguished for inexpressible tenderness; He is accessible at all times and places; He cures all the diseases of the soul without trouble; and His terms of pardon are the most gracious man has ever known given the wickedness of man's heart.

Although the balm of Gilead flows free, many continue to live in an uncured and diseased state. Why? Many believe themselves to be well, and require no healing. They were ignorant of the plague of their own hearts (Revelation 3:17). Many conclude that their sickness is not dangerous, and therefore do not care about Gilead's balm. Many try to heal themselves and neglect Jesus. Many will simply not submit to Christ's remedy. Many desire to be healed, but are prevented through indifference and apathy. Finally, many

wait until their dying hour, only to have the hour catch up to them. How terrible it is to have the balm right in your hand, but let it slip by!

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