

WHAT IF THERE IS NO REPENTANCE?

Jon Macon

Jeremiah 8:1-13 says, "At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts. Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them? Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. I will surely consume them, saith the Lord: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them." These thirteen verses have so much relevance to our own time, as we see iniquity abounding and the love of many waxing cold as has happened at times in the past (Matt 24:12).

The coming destruction

Jeremiah 8:1 establishes the time frame of what is to follow in this chapter. Verse one begins, "*At that time*, saith the Lord," referring to the time when Babylon was going to come against Jerusalem and turn the valley of Hinnom into the valley of slaughter. This is in reference to the preceding four verses, Jeremiah 7:31-34: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of

WHAT IF THERE IS NO REPENTANCE?

(continued)

Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.” At that time, according to Jeremiah 8:1-2, not only would the living be killed until there would be no place to bury them, but the Babylonians would then also dig up all of the bones of those who are already dead and buried. God said, “They shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshiped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth” (Jer 8:1-2).

Following their own course and refusing to repent

The initial cause of Israel’s impending doom was their idolatry. God said that the people of Judah loved, served, walked after, sought and worshiped “the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven” (Jer 8:2). God was going to make their bones be spread underneath these things that they had worshiped and served, but the sun, moon, stars, etc. would be unable to help the dead at that time. This would be a graphic repudiation of this false religion. But God’s people had also been given ample time by God to repent of their wickedness in order to avoid the outpouring of His wrath that they were now facing. In Jeremiah 8:5-7, the Lord asked, “Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.” Notice that God was listening to the people, hoping to hear words of repentance. He hoped to hear them say, “What have I done?” The people refused to repent and return to God, but rushed to their own course like a horse to battle.

Wise in their own eyes but not in heart

In Jeremiah 8:8, the people and scribes said, “We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us.” But though they actually possessed the word of God, and the scribes made copies of it, God said that it was in vain (Jer 8:8). It was in vain for them to have the law of the Lord with them because they had “rejected the word of the Lord” (Jer 8:9). So, although they claimed to be wise by having the law of God, since they rejected God’s word, they were not wise in reality. In Jeremiah 8:9, God said, “*What wisdom is in them?*” God said, “Every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one deals falsely. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer 8:10-12). That is why God was going to destroy them (Jer 8:12-13).