

## “IS THERE NO BALM IN GILEAD?” (1)

BY KEITH GREER

*”The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved! For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; astonishment has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?” {Jeremiah 8:20-22}*

Because of Jeremiah’s tender heart, we refer to him as the weeping prophet. He prophesied during a time when Judah’s rebellion was leading her toward destruction by God. When we read the words Jeremiah spoke to the unfaithful nation, the outlook appeared hopeless and bleak. Yet, we might have the same bleak outlook about the world today. In Jeremiah’s day, the hopelessness was traceable to the false prophets and priests who were leading Judah into captivity. *“Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace.” {Jeremiah 6:13,14}* How bad was it? *“An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?” {Jeremiah 5:30,31}* Through His prophets, God provided a remedy, but the people rejected the prophets and refused to listen!

**Today’s False Prophets.** Sadly, we have the same problem—many false religious teachers who offer people fake remedies and assurances for their spiritual ailments. Some years ago, Jim Jones offered relief to those who were willing to drink purple kool-aid; or if they refused, they were gunned down—over 900 died! Sprouting up all over our country are mega churches, with their religious leaders and wealth-and-health religion philosophies such as Joel Osteen, Rev. Dollar, Rod Parsley, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, the TBN network, and more. All promise people they can serve God any way they choose, and He will accept and love them. Millions upon millions are being led astray by these religious false teachers and acceptance of their remedies.

Don’t think for a minute that this has not affected the Lord’s church. Many complain about book, chapter, and verse preaching. They want to hear a preacher who

motivates them and gives them a spiritual fix to keep them going throughout the week. Positive, uplifting, motivational, and feel-good preaching that rises no higher than the ceiling and lasts until they walk out the door. Faith so weak that it needs propped up to get them through. What's the problem? Brethren want painless religion—what is that? Religion that makes few demands and requires little effort, while returning a great reward. They demand less preaching, less Scripture, more stories, more embellishment to make the passages come alive. This is not gospel preaching; it's entertainment. Such attitudes are killing us spiritually! Rather than growing stronger, we get weaker; and instead of looking for solutions, we search for someone on whom to place blame. Spiritual minded people don't look for scape-goats, they look to God's word for answers and solutions. One common trait that seems to be true of those who fall away from the Lord's church—they have very little time for spiritual things that would make them stronger spiritually. Gospel meetings, attending personal studies, or even a personal study of their own, reading the Bible every day (daily reading plan)—why? No time. We're too busy!

The nation of Judah continually rejected the balm that God was offering them, accepting instead an inferior product that led to 70 years of captivity in Babylon. These words keep ringing in my ears: *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”* {Romans 15:4} Can we learn the lessons associated with past failures so we won't have to repeat them in our own time? Yes, there is a remedy for what ails us. Let us take a closer look at it and make sure we don't accept a counterfeit. \*\*\*