

"As all mankind are, in the sight of God, lost sinners, we hold that Christ is their only righteousness, since by his obedience, he has wiped off our transgressions; by his sacrifice, appeased the divine anger; by his blood, washed away our stains; by his cross, borne our curse; and by his death made satisfaction for us. We maintain that in this way man is reconciled in Christ to God the Father, by no merit of his own, by no value of works, but by gratuitous mercy. When we embrace Christ by faith, and come, as it were, into communion with him, this we term, after the manner of Scripture, the righteousness of faith." - John Calvin.

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

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104. Q. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28, 29), of their faith to feed upon him (2 Cor. 13:5), of their repentance (1 Cor. 11:31), love (1 Cor. 10:16, 17), and new obedience (1 Cor. 5:7, 8), lest coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Cor. 11:28, 29).

105. Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up our desires to God (Ps. 62:8), by the assistance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26), for things agreeable to his will (1 Jn. 5:14; Rom. 8:27), in the name of Christ (Jn. 16:23), believing (Mt. 21:22; James 1:6), with confession of our sins (Ps. 32:5, 6; Dan. 9:4), and thankful acknowledgments of his mercies (Ph. 4:6).

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Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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NO BALM IN GILEAD?

Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Jeremiah 8:22

We who know the Lord know the answer to this question. There is balm in Gilead and the Great Physician is there. Of course, the terms are figurative. The prophet draws from an apt illustration to emphasize the great error of his people.

I have often listened as people, in feigned amazement, observe that something from the Old Testament seems to be written for today. They incorporate it into their sensational approach to the Word of God and think themselves to be in possession of great wisdom. They make such empty statements as “the Bible is being fulfilled every day.” When asked what they mean they fall silent since they have been exposed to carefully orchestrated depictions of things to come and so have very little knowledge of the substance of the scriptures. That being said, there be may some validity to what they say even if they don’t understand it.

Certain things will be discovered as true in any generation. Among those things are the descriptions of behaviors that were a cause of Jeremiah’s lamentation in this passage. Two things stand out. The first is the question in verse 19, “Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?” The second thing is exposed as the Lord answered with another question: “Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?” It was certainly true then and it is so today. There is a refusal to recognize that the Lord God omnipotent reigns and He is in His place. The

declaration of the prophet is counted a strange thing to them: *But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. Habakkuk 2:20.* Such a view of God (or lack of a view of God) inevitably leads to idolatry and the pursuit of strange ways. While we don’t always see the graven images as depicted here, there is unashamed reference made to “teen idols” and sacrifice being offered to all sorts of entertainments, materialistic desires, and the pursuit of those things identified as offensive to God. It is obvious that: *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. Psalms 10:4.* (The sense of that passage is that God is not in any of his thoughts).

Jeremiah’s amazement was not that they were afflicted. It was that they refused the remedy that was near at hand. These people were suffering because of their sin and idolatry. The effects of moral decline were all about and the enemy was at the door. Yet, they persisted in the pursuit of their own remedies while clinging tightly to their idols. The first question of our text is rhetorical. Jeremiah had been preaching and would continue to preach the source of their recovery. While the reference to balm in Gilead is figurative, the Lord who heals is real (Jehovah-Rophe). Yet, the message of healing delivered by Jeremiah was met with hostility.

It has always been interesting to note how easily the offender becomes the victim. Men

convicted of heinous crimes are protected from inhumane treatment at the hands of the state. As long as one is allowed he will continue along the way in an ungodly manner. When, even as a result of his own wickedness, one is injured, or some perceived right is violated he assumes the role of the injured party. We have heard accusations cast toward God in the wake of many recent disasters. How strange it is that a nation who will defend all sorts of false religion will cry out against the very God who has sustained it for so long. The perversion of marriage has now become a national institution and that in opposition to the pattern whereby the Lord would relate to His church. Motherhood was God's gracious gift to women. Now, millions kill their babies and the rest of the country is indifferent at best. How quickly the question arises "How could God..." The fact is that God responds to offences as would any other. They hit and don't think they should be hit. When Jeremiah declared that the Lord was offended and set before them the remedy they took offence. This and other things never change.

It is in consideration of these things that we are the more in pursuit of the Kingdom of God. It is the only thing in the world among men that reveals the divine order. It is from this present evil world that we are delivered. It is with great joy and confidence that we bow to our Blessed

Lord. While the world is wondering at the "acts of God" that seem to them so evil, those who are the redeemed of the Lord are wondering that He has been so merciful and gracious to them. The balm in Gilead referred either to some medicinal plant derivative there or to some substance from somewhere else but available there. In either case, it was nearby. The Gospel is freely declared by many in this land and is the power of God unto salvation. There is healing in the blood of Christ. The precious Balm of mercy and grace produces a wellness that defies understanding and rejoices the hearts of those who are so healed. *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Malachi 4:2.*

The response continues to amaze us as we preach the Gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. With many, there is outright rejection. With others, there is willful subjection to a false gospel and the hurt is only "slightly healed" (See Jeremiah 6:14) which is no healing at all.

Can we ever forget? *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5.* May we learn to weep over the sins of our nation as did Jeremiah, but cling tenaciously to our "Lord who heals." *bhs*

Not with Superiority of Speech

When Paul mentioned "superiority of speech," he was referring to worldly techniques in public speech. Specifically, he had in mind those methods gleaned from the Greek orators of his day. Only 45 miles from Corinth lay the city of Athens—the fountainhead of Greek philosophy and the epicenter of its refined culture. This is where the great philosophers were born and lived. This is where the great orators learned their speaking skills. Because of its close proximity, what was birthed in Athens soon played on Broadway in Corinth. **Lofty Speech Rejected** The precise meaning of "superiority"—as in "superiority of speech"—is "high" speech. It is a metaphorical reference to the speech that communicates with the use of lofty words or high-sounding rhetoric. We might say today that such a speaker used big words or highfalutin language. Paul resolutely

refused to preach in this way. He asserted, “I did not come speaking over your heads. I did not come parading my intellect with highbrow speech.” The apostle emphatically stated that he did not rely upon soaring speech or towering rhetoric to wow them. If that was the source of his appeal, he knew that he would surely lose them to the next dazzling speaker to come to town. When Paul said he came “not with superiority of speech,” he meant that he did not communicate like the Greek orators. He did not butter up his listeners or employ calculated techniques to manipulate people. He did not fall back on rhetorical tactics or trained vocal inflections to hypnotize the easily infatuated Corinthians. Paul did not lean on learned debate strategies or commanding gestures to make his points. Nor did he utilize flowery eloquence or playacting skills learned in Athens. He did not put on a mask of pretense, as though he was onstage, in order to play a character role. He did not present himself to be someone he was not. Simply put, the apostle did not use the art of crafty speech in order to contrive a response. –Steven Lawson *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses*

God’s Foreknowledge – Arthur Pink

What controversies have been engendered by this subject in the past! But what truth of Holy Scripture is there which has not been made the occasion of theological and ecclesiastical battles? The deity of Christ, his virgin birth, his atoning death, his second advent; the believer’s justification, sanctification, security; the church, its organization, officers, discipline; baptism, the Lord’s supper, and a score of other precious truths might be mentioned. Yet, the controversies which have been waged over them did not close the mouths of God’s faithful servants; why, then, should we avoid the vexed questions of God’s Foreknowledge, because, forsooth, there are some who will charge us with fomenting strife? Let others contend if they will, our duty is to bear witness according to the light vouchsafed us. There are two things concerning the Foreknowledge of God about which many are in ignorance: the meaning of the term, its Scriptural scope. Because this ignorance is so widespread, it is an easy matter for preachers and teachers to palm off perversions of this subject, even upon the people of God. There is only one safeguard against error, and that is to be established in the faith; and for that, there has to be prayerful and diligent study, and a receiving with meekness the engrafted Word of God. Only then are we fortified against the attacks of those who assail us. There are those today who are misusing this very truth in order to discredit and deny the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners. Just as higher critics are repudiating the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures; evolutionists, the work of God in creation; so some pseudo Bible teachers are perverting his foreknowledge in order to set aside his unconditional election unto eternal life.

The fatherhood of God is inextricably intertwined with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perkins said that the purpose of the gospel is to reveal God “not only as a Creator, but as a Father,” and to draw us to know Him as “our Father in Christ; and consequently to carry ourselves as dutiful children to him in all subjection and obedience. They which do not this, know not the intent of the gospel.” Joel Beeke