

8:1 At that time, saith Yahweh, 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;

See Baruch 2:24, 25.

2 and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, and after which they have walked, and which they have sought, and which they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried, they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

3 And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue that remain of this evil family, that remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith Yahweh of hosts.

4 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh: Shall men fall, and not rise up again? Shall one turn away, and not return?

It is as possible for sinners to return from their sin to God, for his grace is ever at hand to assist, as it is for God, who is pouring out his judgments, to return to them on their return to him. But these held fast deceit, and refused to return; they would not be undeceived.

5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turneth to his course, as a horse that rusheth headlong in the battle.

This describes the unthinking, careless desperation of their conduct.

7 Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle-dove and the swallow and the crane observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the law of Yahweh.

The birds of passage know the times of their going and return, and punctually observe them; they obey the dictates of nature, but my people do not obey my law.

8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely.

They have written falsely, though they had the truth before them.

9 The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of Yahweh; and what manner of wisdom is in them?

10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall possess 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.

11 And they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

12 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 Yahweh.

13 I will utterly consume them, saith Yahweh: 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.

14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the fortified cities, and let us be silent there; for Yahweh our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against Yahweh.

15 We looked for peace, but no good came; [and] for a time of healing, and, behold, dismay!

Cf. 6:13-15.

16 The snorting of his horses is heard from Dan: at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones the whole land trembleth; for they are come, and have devoured the land and all that is in it; the city and those that dwell therein.

So terrible was the united neighing of the cavalry of the Babylonians that the reverberation of the air caused the ground to tremble.

17 For, behold, I will send serpents, adders, among you, which will not be charmed; and they shall bite you, saith Yahweh.

18 Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my heart is faint within me.

19 Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: is not Yahweh in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with foreign vanities?

20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

The siege of Jerusalem lasted two years; for Nebuchadnezzar came against it in the ninth year of Zedekiah, and the city was taken in the eleventh.

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me.

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

The name of an odoriferous resin said to be brought from Gilead by Ishmaelite Arabs on their way to Egypt (Gen 37:25). It is translated “balm” in the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American), but is called “mastic,” the Revised Version, margin. In Gen 43:11 it is one of the gifts sent by Jacob to Joseph, and in Eze 27:17 it is named as one of the exports from Judea to Tyre. The prophet Jeremiah refers figuratively to its medicinal properties as an application to wounds and as a sedative (Jer 8:22; Jer 46:11; Jer 51:8). The name is derived from a root signifying “to leak,” and is applied to it

as being an exudation. There is a sticky, honeylike gum resin prepared at the present day at Jericho, extracted from the *Balanites Aegyptiaca* grown in the *Ghōr*, and sold to travelers in small tin boxes as “**Balm of Gilead**,” but it is improbable that this is the real *cōrī* and it has no medicinal value. The material to which the classic authors applied the name is that known as Mecca balsam, which is still imported into Egypt from Arabia, as it was in early times. This is the exudation from the *Balsamodendron opobalsamum*, a native of southern Arabia and Abyssinia. The tree is small, ragged-looking and with a yellowish bark like that of a plane tree, and the exudation is said to be gathered from its smaller branches. At the present day it grows nowhere in Palestine. Dr. Post and other botanists have sought for it on the *Ghōr* and in Gilead, and have not found it, and there is no trace of it in the neighborhood of Jericho, which Pliny says is its only habitat. Strabo describes it as growing by the Sea of Galilee, as well as at Jericho, but both these and other ancient writers give inconsistent and incorrect descriptions of the tree evidently at second hand. We learn from Theophrastus that many of the spices of the farther East reached the Mediterranean shore through Palestine, being brought by Arab caravans which would traverse the indefinitely bounded tract East of Jordan to which the name Gilead is given, and it was probably thus that the balm received its local name. *Mecca balsam* is an orange-yellow fluid, mildly irritating to the skin, possibly a weak local stimulant and antiseptic, but of very little remedial value.

9:1 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

2 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

Jeremiah would flee into the wilderness, far away from his people; because amidst such a corrupt, false, and cunning people, life had become unbearable.

3 And they bend their tongue, [as it were] their bow, for falsehood; and they are grown strong in the land, but not for truth: for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith Yahweh.

4 Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will go about with slanders.

They weary themselves out, put themselves to great labour, in order to deal corruptly.

5 And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity.

6 Thy habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith Yahweh.

7 Therefore thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how [else] should I do, because of the daughter of my people?

8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he layeth wait for him.

9 Shall I not visit them for these things? saith Yahweh; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

10 For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the pastures of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none passeth through; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the birds of the heavens and the beasts are fled, they are gone.

11 And I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling-place of jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.

12 Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and [who is] he to whom the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken, that he may declare it? wherefore is the land perished and burned up like a wilderness, so that none passeth through?

13 And Yahweh saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein,

Universal apostasy from God and His law cannot but bring down punishment. But such wisdom and such spiritual enlightenment is not found in the infatuated people.

14 but have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart, and after the Baalim, which their fathers taught them;

15 therefore thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

To feed with wormwood and give gall to drink is a figure for sore and bitter suffering at the overthrow of the kingdom and in exile.

16 I will scatter them also among the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them.

17 Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for the skilful women, that they may come:

They are to raise their laments for the very persons who summon them, and for the death of these same, which has yet to happen.

18 and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.

19 For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we ruined! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because they have cast down our dwellings.

The land vomited out its inhabitants.

20 Yet hear the word of Yahweh, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth; and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation.

21 For death is come up into our windows, it is entered into our palaces; to cut off the children from without, [and] the young men from the streets.

The numbers of the dead will be so great, that the bodies will be left lying unburied.

22 Speak, Thus saith Yahweh, The dead bodies of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman; and none shall gather [them].

23 Thus saith Yahweh, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches;

24 but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Yahweh who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Yahweh.

25 Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will punish all them that are circumcised in [their] uncircumcision:

It is not a reliance on one's own wisdom and strength that brings well-being, but the knowledge of the Lord and of His dealings in grace and justice.

26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that have the corners [of their hair] cut off, that dwell in the wilderness; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.

10:1 Hear ye the word which Yahweh speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:

2 thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them.

This is addressed to the house of Israel, i.e., to the whole covenant people.

3 For the customs of the peoples are vanity; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe.

4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

5 They are like a palm-tree, of turned work, and speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.

The religious ideas and customs of the heathen, are vanity.

6 There is none like unto thee, O Yahweh; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

7 Who should not fear thee, O King of the nations? for to thee doth it appertain; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their royal estate, there is none like unto thee.

8 But they are together brutish and foolish: the instruction of idols! it is but a stock.

9 There is silver beaten into plates, which is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the artificer and of the hands of the goldsmith; blue and purple for their clothing; they are all the work of skilful men.

Their παιδεία is wood, i.e., not: wooden, but nothing else than that which the gods themselves are - wood, which, however it be decked up (Jer 10:9), remains a mere lifeless block.

10 But Yahweh is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations are not able to abide his indignation.

The true God is the one making the earth by His power = is He that made, etc.

11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens.

12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens:

13 when he uttereth his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

14 Every man is become brutish [and is] without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

In presence of such marvels of divine power and wisdom, all men seem brutish and ignorant (away from knowledge = without knowledge), and all makers of idols are put to shame "because of the image" which they make for a god, and which is but a deception, has no breath of life.

15 They are vanity, a work of delusion: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

16 The portion of Jacob is not like these; for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance: Yahweh of hosts is his name.

17 Gather up thy wares out of the land, O thou that abidest in the siege.

18 For thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this time, and will distress them, that they may feel [it].

19 Woe is me because of my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is [my] grief, and I must bear it.

This harassment will bring the people to their senses, so that they shall humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

20 My tent is destroyed, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth from me, and they are not: there is none to spread my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds are become brutish, and have not inquired of Yahweh: therefore they have not prospered, and all their flocks are scattered.

22 The voice of tidings, behold, it cometh, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a dwelling-place of jackals.

23 O Yahweh, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

24 O Yahweh, correct me, but in measure: not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

25 Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have devoured Jacob, yea, they have devoured him and consumed him, and have laid waste his habitation.

The suffering which the congregation must bear consists in the spoliation of the land and the captivity of the people, represented in Jer 10:20 under the figure of a destruction of their tent and the disappearance of their sons.