

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part XX: God's Judgment On Everyone's Self-Deception
(Jeremiah 8:4-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Those we generally think are to be blamed for spiritual deception are the teachers who mislead their hearers, but according to 1 John 2:18-27, even immature believers will avoid deception if they rely on the Holy Spirit.
- B. Jeremiah 8:4-17 clarifies how everyone in Judah, from the least to the greatest of them, was held responsible by God for self-deception, and we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Judgment On Everyone's Self-Deception, Jeremiah 8:4-17 ESV.

- A. The Lord complained that Judah's people had not repented since they had held fast to deceit, Jeremiah 8:4-6:
 - 1. God observed that usually when men fall, they get back up, that usually when one turns off of the right path, he turns around to get back on the right path (Jeremiah 8:4), but that Judah's people had perpetually turned away in backsliding from the Lord, holding fast to deceit and thus refusing to repent, Jeremiah 8:5.
 - 2. Accordingly, the Lord said He had paid attention and listened for His people to repent, but they had not spoken rightly, relenting of their sin so as to question themselves, "What have I done?" (Jeremiah 8:6a)
 - 3. Rather, each had gone his own way as a reckless war horse plunging headlong into a battle, Jer. 8:6b.
- B. God observed that even birds, the stork, the turtledove, the swallow and crane, observed their migratory times to return to the land, but that His people did not even know the rules of God to turn back to them, Jer. 8:7.
- C. A contributing problem to Judah's deception was the lying ministries of the nation's scribes, Jeremiah 8:8:
 - 1. The Lord asked Judah's people how they could claim they were spiritually wise, that the Law of God was with them, for the lying pen of the scribes, the experts in the Law, had turned it into a lie, Jeremiah 8:8.
 - 2. This is the first time in Scripture that the scribes as a professional class is mentioned (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jer. 8:8), and this class had mishandled Scripture so as to direct the people unto a lie.
- D. Thus, God's judgment would fall on prophet, priest and people, from the greatest to the least, Jer. 8:9-10:
 - 1. The wise scribes would be put to shame in God's judgment, being dismayed and taken captive, for they had rejected the Lord in how they had mishandled His Word, leaving them with no real wisdom, Jer. 8:9.
 - 2. God would give their wives and fields to conquering Babylonians, for from the least to the greatest of them, everyone was greedy for unjust gain, everyone dealt falsely with his neighbor, even the prophets and priests who were those most expected in society to deal in truthfulness with others, Jeremiah 8:10.
- E. Specifically, the sins of the spiritual leaders were that they gave false assurances to the people without feeling any shame in doing so, Jeremiah 8:11-12a. Accordingly, they would fall in judgment, Jeremiah 8:12b:
 - 1. The prophets, priests (and scribes) had sought to heal the spiritual wound of the people for money by saying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace due to their terminal condition of apostasy, Jer. 8:11.
 - 2. Instead of being ashamed by such blatant misrepresentation of the truth for unjust gain, these spiritual leaders were not only not ashamed, but they did not even know how to blush in shame, Jeremiah 8:12a.
 - 3. For this reason, they would certainly fall among those who fell as God would overthrow them, Jer. 8:12b.
- F. Also, God would withdraw His agricultural bounty from Judah, Jer. 8:13: He would remove His harvest blessings so there would be no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig tree, and even the leaves would wither so that all God had given would pass away. Such a catastrophic turn of events would warn even the least educated in Judah that something was very wrong, that God was judging their sin! (cf. Deut. 28:15-19, 23-24)
- G. When the Babylonian invaders actually arrived, Judah's very self-deceived people would experience great disillusionment and terror, finally realizing that they had sinned and were being punished for it, Jer. 8:14-15.
- H. Describing the Babylonian advance, God warned He would send figurative poisonous snakes into Judah, the Babylonians who would not be charmed like an adder, and they would bite and kill people, Jeremiah 8:16-17. [Note a literal judgment of fiery serpents on Israel in Numbers 21:4-9 for her similarly sinning against God.]

Lesson: *God promised to cause all Judah, from the least to the scribal experts in the Law, to be judged, for all had clung to lying concepts when they should have heeded God's obvious warnings and the clear truth of His Word!*

Application: *(1) May we rely on the Holy Spirit to retain that form of healthy, true teachings of Scripture we must follow to please God for blessing, 2 Timothy 1:13-14. (2) May we who teach God's Word watch that we handle His Word accurately in teaching, and (3) may we who are taught pay attention to the obvious meaning of Scripture!*