

Bones In the Sun

Jer. 8

Introduction:

1. Burial is a sign of respect, a sign of the value placed on the deceased. To open up a grave and throw the bones of the deceased upon the ground is a mark of extreme contempt.
2. Even in modern times in wars in the Middle East such desecration and insult have been perpetrated.
3. In Jer. 8 just such an insult would come to Judah as a result of her rebellion against the Lord.
4. Read with me Jer. 8:1-3.

Discussion:

- I. Invaders would bring divine judgment upon Judah. Adding insult to military defeat they would open the graves of the kings, the princes, the priests, the prophets and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and spread them abroad (1-3).
 - A. Why would such atrocities be perpetuated in Judah? Because of her stubborn rebellion against the Lord.
 1. Jer. 7 begins the message proclaimed from the temple gate. Read 1-7.
 2. It is a call to repentance, but there was no repentance.
 3. They offered sacrifices to Baal and walked after other gods (7:8-11). Note 7:16-20.
 4. They have served the sun, moon and all the host of heaven (8:2). They worshiped the creation rather than the Creator. Cf. Rom. 1:25.
 5. Their deeds reflected what they worshiped (Jer. 7:5-9).
 - B. The Lord God is a God of life, but they had chosen death rather than life (Jer. 8:3). Bones scattered on the surface of the ground was an appropriate image of the choice they had made. Cf. Jer. 7:32-34.
- II. They were unrepentant (Jer. 8:4-12).
 - A. Their impenitence is illustrated in a series of images.
 1. Men fall but they get up. Not Judah.
 2. One turns away, but turns back. Not Judah.
 3. Like a horse charging into battle Judah charged ahead in their course of wickedness.
 4. The birds know the time of their migration, but Judah did not know the ordinance of the Lord.
 - B. The Lord's wisdom had been turned into lies (8-12).
 1. The scribes are described as having "lying pens."
 2. The "wise men" are put to shame for having rejected the word of the Lord.
 3. Everyone was greedy for gain—prophet and priest.
 4. Everyone practices deceit. Truth and truth telling is founded upon God's faithfulness to His covenant. He cannot lie (Heb. 6:13, 18). We ought not (Matt.

5:33f; Eph. 4:25).

5. Even in their words of “healing” there was deceit (Jer. 8:11).

C. They were not ashamed (8:12).

D. The consequences (8:10, 12b).

III. Their blessings are removed and their enemies overpower them (Jer. 8:13-17).

A. No grapes and no figs (13).

B. They flee the fortified cities, but only to perish (14).

C. They looked for peace and healing but only terror (15-16).

D. Serpents would bite them (17).

IV. Jeremiah grieves over the situation (Jer. 8:18-22).

A. He cannot be healed (18).

B. Time is exhausted for salvation (19-20).

C. Jeremiah is broken. Mourning and dismay have taken hold of him. There is no healing (21-22).

V. Applications.

A. Is there no warning for nations that would turn away from the Lord?

B. Is there no warning for families that would turn away from the Lord?

C. Is there no warning for individuals that would turn away from the Lord?

D. Inherent in the message there is indication that God is gracious. He has called them to repentance. Cf. Jer. 7:3, 21-23. Is He calling you to repentance?

E. Inherent in the message is the fact that men are responsible for their actions.

1. No need to call them to repentance if they are unable.

2. Their unwillingness to listen indicates that they are capable (7:13f, 24-26).

F. God’s judgment is real.

G. Mourning is appropriate when God’s people turn from Him. Prayer for them is not (Jer. 7:16ff).

1. Some formally among us have drifted away. Their illness is slow to overtake them. Choosing to go their own course.

2. For some their illness is more acute. It appears to happen quickly. They too are choosing their own course.

3. We need to hold fast (Heb. 10:23-31).

Conclusion:

1. Can you imagine what it would be like to go by a cemetery and see all the graves opened up and bones scattered on the surface?

2. This is the image Jeremiah 8 uses to describe the result of Judah’s rejection of the Lord.

3. I don’t want to be bones on the surface of the cemetery grounds. I don’t think you do either.

4. Let’s give our attention to the Lord, to hearing His word, to doing those things that characterize Him who loves us so.

