

October 11th – The Balm of Gilead

“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 8:22).

Including today’s reference, the balm of Gilead is mentioned three times in the Bible. A balm is an aromatic, medicinal substance derived from plants. Gilead was an area east of the Jordan River, well known for its spices and ointments. Thus, the balm of Gilead was a high-quality ointment with healing properties. The Bible uses the balm of Gilead metaphorically as an example of something with healing or soothing powers.

Jeremiah was one of God’s many prophets who tried to call the southern kingdom of Judah to repentance. Already they had seen their countrymen, Israel, carried away by the Assyrians. Now the Babylonians were breathing down their necks. All Judah had to do was turn back to God, but time and again they chose to “steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods” (Jer. 7:9).

By speaking of Gilead, God wanted His people to know that healing was available. Just as there are balms and doctors in Gilead, so the Great Physician dwells in the heavens. The forgiveness and salvation He provides is much better than any medicine produced by a pharmaceutical company. And yet Judah was not healed because she wouldn’t turn to the Healer. How about you? Is there a sin sickness in your life? The Great Physician is on duty, but will you set aside time for an appointment? Let Him apply His healing balm to your suffering soul.