

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

The words from Jeremiah are probably recorded about and refer to the situation just before the fall of Judah in 587 Before the Common Era. The vision of the prophet is one of destruction. Therefore, the words are ones of lament. This destruction is not the vision the secular state has. The secular state is intent on saving itself. Still, the politics of the time aside, an eternal question remains: is there a means for a balm, a means for saving grace to be present? Hear now this reading from the *Tanakh* in the section known as the Prophets and found in the Scroll of the Prophet Jeremiah.

A READING FROM THE *TANAKH* IN THE SECTION KNOWN AS THE PROPHETS

— Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 [ILV]

[18] My joy is gone. It has abandoned me.

There is no cure for my grief.

My heart is sick.

[19] Hark! Hear the cry of my people

who are in distress;

hear that cry far and wide,

hear that cry from a distant land:

“Is *Yahweh* not in Zion?

Is it’s ruler not in Zion,

not there anymore?”

And *Yahweh* replies:

“Why do they provoked me to anger

with their graven images,

with their carved images

with their useless foreign gods?”

[20] The harvest is past, the summer is ended,

and we are not saved.

[21] I am devastated

for my poor people are devastated.

I mourn. Dismay has taken hold of me.

Terror grips me.

[22] Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

Why, then, has the health of my people

not been attended to, restored?

[9:1] O that my head were a spring of water;

O that my eyes were a fountain of tears,
so that I might weep day and night
for the slain of my people!

Here ends this reading from Scripture.