

August 9 Answers

- 1) The last of Jeremiah's prophecies during the reign of king Josiah. The people had promised to keep God's covenant (2 Kgs 23:3), but they were disobeying one of its fundamental commands: "Remember the **Sabbath** day, to keep it holy" (Exod 20:8). Jeremiah warned them that if they didn't obey, a **fire** would devour the gates and palaces of Jerusalem. This teaches us the importance of honoring God's day of rest. When we refrain from working on Sunday, we are **sanctifying** the day as God's and showing others that we respect His commands. It didn't take long for the people to get tired of hearing Jeremiah tell them that Jerusalem would be destroyed. They argued with him, insisting that God had **promised** to build up Judah and so the city couldn't be destroyed. God sent Jeremiah down to the potter's house and showed him that God's promises were **conditional**: they depended on the actions of the people. **Sin** could keep God from prospering a nation, while **repentance** could keep God from destroying a nation (Jer 18:7–10). If this is true of a nation, is it also true of an **individual**? (cf. Ezek 18:24; 33:12–13; Rom 11:20–24). These verses teach us that our relationship with God depends on how we **respond** to His grace. If God didn't spare His chosen people when they turned away from Him, God won't spare us if we reject the precious blood of His **Son** (Heb 2:1–3). The object lesson of the broken jar—"I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel"—proved to be the last straw for **Pashhur** the priest. He seized Jeremiah, beat him and forced him to spend a night in the stocks. Jeremiah was humiliated by the experience and complained bitterly to God: "I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. Cursed be the day on which I was born!" (Jer 20:7, 14). This teaches us that we can expect to be persecuted when we tell people the truth. We need to remember that **success** is found in obedience to God, not in the reactions of the people we're serving.