

August 20 Answers

- 1) Ezekiel's vision of the departure of God's glory from Jerusalem. Consider the beliefs that were behind the people's idolatry. First, the elders of Judah said, "The LORD does not **see** us, the LORD has **forsaken** the land" (Ezek 8:12). Rather than admitting that their bondage to Babylon was the result of their own wickedness, the elders used God's judgment as an excuse to say that God was no longer around. Since God was gone, they were free to turn to other gods. The irony is that God's glorious presence was right there, hovering over their heads as they burned incense to their idols. Such is the foolishness of those who think God does not see! This teaches us that if we reject God's word, we will become futile in our thinking and our hearts will be **darkened** (Rom 1:21–23). Second, the princes of Judah counseled, "Is it not a good time to **build** houses? This city is like an iron pot. We are safe inside it like meat in a pot" (Ezek 11:3 NLT). God had said that the city would be destroyed, yet the leaders of the people were encouraging them to build homes and feel secure. This teaches us that if we allow sin in our hearts, we will lead those under our authority into **disaster**! Lastly, the people who had been left behind in Jerusalem said to the exiles in Babylon, "Go far from the LORD; to **us** this land is given for a possession" (Ezek 11:15). They believed that those who had been carried into captivity were the ones being judged for sin, and they saw themselves as the **sacred** remnant who would be preserved and blessed. Unbelievable! This shows us that when we refuse to believe the truth, the only thing left to believe is a lie. We will end up heading straight for a devil's hell, all the while thinking that we're right and everyone else is wrong (cf. Matt 7:22–23). May it never be! Ezekiel had a vision of one of the greatest tragedies in human history—God's glory left Jerusalem and the people didn't even know that He was gone. The message to us? "Do not become proud, but **fear**. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you" (Rom 11:20–21)!