

## August 21 Answers

- 1) The exiles in Babylon did not take Ezekiel's warnings seriously. They still hoped for an early return to Judah, and they viewed the continued preservation of Jerusalem as a sign of hope. In response, God sent Ezekiel to refute their claims of peace and prosperity. First, God dealt with the belief that Ezekiel was speaking of events that were in the **distant** future (Ezek 12:22, 27). God's reply: "It will no longer be delayed, but in **your** days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God" (Ezek 12:25). This teaches us not to presume on God's patience and forbearance, for His kindness is meant to lead us to **repentance** (Rom 2:4)! Second, God dealt with the fact that Ezekiel was predicting disaster while the other prophets were saying "**Peace!**" (Ezek 13:10). The people had built a flimsy wall of wickedness, and instead of condemning the wall, the false prophets covered it with **whitewash**! God's reply: "I will break down the wall that you have smeared with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek 13:14). This teaches us that when we **cover** our sin rather than confessing it, we are setting the stage for our own destruction. Third, God dealt with the false piety of the elders who insisted they were listening to God's words. They would come and sit before Ezekiel and ask him to inquire of God on their behalf (Ezek 14:1). God's reply: "Repent and **turn** away from your idols...For anyone who separates himself from me, taking idols into his heart...and yet comes to a prophet to consult me...I will set my face against that man; I will make him and sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people" (Ezek 14:7-8). This teaches us not to **harbor** sin in our hearts and then come to God and act like all is well. If we do, we'll get God's attention, but it won't be the kind of attention we want! Last, God dealt with the belief that His wrath would not fall on Jerusalem as long as there were a few **righteous** people left (Ezek 14:13-14). God's reply: "Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their **own** lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God" (Ezek 14:14). This teaches us that we can't **rely** on the righteousness of others. We must have a righteousness that is our own (Phil 3:9).