

August 22 Answers

- 1) God told Ezekiel a beautiful and tragic story about an unwanted **orphan** (Jerusalem) who abandoned her loving **husband** (the King of kings) to become an insatiable **prostitute**. This story is a record of God's love for Jerusalem, beginning with its birth, continuing with its wickedness and debauchery, and ending with its coming judgment. Yet the story doesn't end in despair! In a burst of hope, God revealed that in the distant future, He would restore the city and establish an everlasting covenant with His people. This allegory teaches us so much. First, that God's love is **unconditional**. When God found Jerusalem, it was unwanted and unloved, cast into a field to die. Yet God loved them! Why? Was it because of their size or wealth or goodness? No! (Deut 7:7–9). God loved them because that's who He is—God is love! (1 John 4:8). It also teaches us that God's love is **vulnerable**. God loved Jerusalem, not from a **distance**, but in the most intimate way possible—God **married** her. God did this knowing that He would suffer the pain of betrayal! Jesus demonstrated this kind of vulnerable love. He loved Peter, and Peter denied Him. He loved Judas, and Judas betrayed Him. He loved Jerusalem, and its leaders crucified Him. Such love, such wondrous love! It also teaches us that God's love is **sacrificial**. God promised that one day He would establish an everlasting covenant with His people, but the only way this could happen was for God to sacrifice His Son on the cross to pay the penalty for their sin. God manifested the depth of his love in the person of Jesus Christ: "While we were yet **sinners**, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). More than anything else, **giving** is the action most closely associated with God's love. As we think about this story, let's ask ourselves some tough questions. Do we love others the way God loves us? Is our love unconditional? Is our love vulnerable? Is it sacrificial? John summed it up well when he said, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16). Will we answer the call to love others the same way God loved us?