

August 25 Answers

- 1) On January 27, 589 BC, Nebuchadnezzar began the **third** and final siege of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 24). The tragedy is that it didn't need to happen. It could have been avoided if Zedekiah and the people had listened to God. This teaches us: "He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be **broken** beyond healing" (Prov 29:1). On the day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, God's word came to Ezekiel in Babylon: "Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (Ezek 24:2). Then God told him to speak a parable to the rebellious house: "Put on the pot...make it boil vigorously." Earlier, the people had defied God's call to repent saying, 'We're safe in Jerusalem, just like meat in a pot' (Ezek 11:3 NLT). Now God put a fire under that pot that would burn up all the wickedness and impurity in His holy city (Ezek 24:10–11). The same day that Jerusalem was besieged, God told Ezekiel that his **wife** was going to die, and she died that evening. God did not allow him to mourn, and when the people asked what it meant, God told them that he was about to **profane** the temple: "The pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul" (Ezek 24:21). Just as Ezekiel's cherished wife had been taken from him, the people's cherished temple would be taken from them. Ezekiel was a **living** testimony to the exiles; everything in his life communicated God's message of coming judgment. This shows us what it means to be **used** of God. Are we willing to suffer personal loss in order to minister to others? Zedekiah panicked when the siege began, and he ran to Jeremiah for help. Jeremiah told him the city was doomed. Those who wished to save their lives from disease and famine should leave the city and surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. Yet Zedekiah still would not listen! Rebellious to the end—may this never be said of us! Later, when Nebuchadnezzar lifted the siege of Jerusalem to deal with Pharaoh Hophra's army, Zedekiah thought the city had been saved (cf. Jer 37:5–10). Do we allow circumstances to bring **doubt** into our minds about the certainty of God's word? Do we remain steady and faithful even when it looks like God's promise has failed?