

August 26 Answers

- 1) What happened to Jeremiah during the third and final siege of Jerusalem? The siege provoked a return to covenant obedience. Zedekiah, the officials and the people made a **covenant** together, and they freed all their Hebrew **slaves** (cf. Exod 21:1–4). Sadly, their obedience didn't last long. When Nebuchadnezzar left Jerusalem to deal with the threat from Pharaoh Hophra's army, the king and the people went back on their word and forced the slaves to return to service. This shows us that repentance which is born in the heat of the moment **fades** quickly once the pressure is gone. If we really desire God's blessing, we will **persist** in obedience instead of going back to our old ways. While Nebuchadnezzar was gone, Jeremiah tried to leave Jerusalem on business. When he tried to pass through the Gate of Benjamin, Irijah, the captain of the guard, accused him of defecting to the Babylonians. Jeremiah protested his innocence, but they beat him and threw him into a dungeon. This teaches us that we can be in the center of God's will, doing God's work, and yet be falsely accused and **persecuted**. Such is the life of those who stand firm in the midst of an wicked and perverse generation. Eventually, Zedekiah rescued him, but he wouldn't listen to Jeremiah's warnings. He was interested in what God had to say ("Is there a word from the LORD?"), but he wasn't willing to **humble** himself to do God's will. Jeremiah didn't allow the threat of death to keep him from speaking the truth (Jer 38:1–3), and it wasn't long before he was thrown into an empty well to die from hunger and exposure. Ebed-Melech rescued Jeremiah, and he remained in the court of the guardhouse until Jerusalem was captured. Once Jeremiah was out of the well, Zedekiah wanted to speak to him again. Yet he still wouldn't listen! He was more afraid of his officials and the Jews who had gone over to the Babylonians than he was of God. We show who we fear the most by whom we choose to **obey** (Matt 10:28).