

Making Wrong Choices

Key Verse: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.”

—**Psalm 137:1**

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 36:15-21: Psalm 137:1-6
solemn oath to do the king's will, which would be the immediate cause of his downfall.—Ezek. 17:11-21

During his reign, Zedekiah continued to make choices in his life that were displeasing to God. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and rejected the direct words that came to him from the Heavenly Father through the prophet Jeremiah. We note his words, “Is there any word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.”—Jer. 37:17

The wrong course that the king took in this matter serves as an illustration of the general mistake that is made by all those who reject the LORD as their counselor. An evil heart of unbelief is inclined to trust in its own wisdom. This earthly wisdom we are reminded of as being, “sensual” and “devilish.” (James 3:15) The account goes on to tell us that, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure.”—vs. 17

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behavior often leads to painful consequences. This fact is illustrated to us in the story of Zedekiah, the last king on the throne of David. After being exalted to his position by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, he would reign eleven years in Jerusalem. He was given the throne upon the condition of taking a

—Ezek. 17:11-21

In Zedekiah's case, the LORD allowed the natural consequences of his wrong course to follow, and they would be very severe. He saw his sons slain, he was blinded and carried away to Babylon, where he was a prisoner until his death. Ruin would then come upon Jerusalem, and to the entire nation, as foretold by the prophet. The lessons that God had sent them, when he scattered the ten tribes on account of their idolatry, had not been taken to heart by the two tribes. Now he would remove his favor from them, and leave their land desolate for a period of seventy years. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." (Hos. 4:17) Jesus said, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind." (Matt. 15:14) They were also likened to "blind" watchmen (Isa. 56:10), for their lack of mental perception of the character and purposes of God.

It was during this period, too, in which there were those who still reverenced God—as, for instance, Daniel and Ezekiel. Although they were in exile, they would look back longingly to their land of promise. "O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." (Dan. 9:18) They would read more attentively than ever the accounts of the blessings that God had provided to them. (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 3:8) We can see this in the words from our Key Verse, as expressed by those who had been carried away as captives. 'By the rivers of Babylon, . . . yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.' As they reflected on the Lord's dealings with their nation, it would lead them to a better condition of heart and to the instruction of their children in the right way of the LORD.

Thank God for the great blessing and privilege of living with a spirit of praise by recalling what he has done for us. Let us continue to be faithful to our vow, waiting for the LORD in his own time, to establish his kingdom and to fulfill all the gracious promises of his Word. ■