

The Fall of Jerusalem

Key Verse: “*For because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*”
—II Kings 24:20,
New King James
Version

Selected Scriptures:
II Kings 24:18-20;
25:1-21

defy God’s judgments.

The Prophet Jeremiah clearly marked out the coming judgments and how Judah should properly respond. “Thus says the LORD: He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live. Thus says the LORD: This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon’s army, which shall take it.” (Jer. 38:2,3, NKJV) In other words, “Humble yourselves under

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” (George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 1905) The people of ancient Israel fell prey to this truism. Cycling through reigns of some good kings, but many evil kings, Israel and Judah exhausted the Lord’s mercy and patience toward them. Their past did not inform their present and, as a result, they were condemned. The polity of the Ten-Tribe Kingdom of Israel had been annihilated by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, approximately 135 years before Zedekiah’s defeat. (II Kings 18:9-12) Rather than learn from history, Zedekiah chose to

God's mighty hand. Surrender to the Chaldeans, accept this divine punishment and you will live. Resist and you will surely die of disease, starvation, or violence." Rejecting humility and embracing hubris, Zedekiah chose the path of defiance. He did not believe or trust in God's power. —II Kings 24:18-20

We may take a lesson from this account and make application of it to our Christian lives. Primarily, obey God. Do not seek "other options" to doing his will. There are none for the Christian. "Be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."—I Pet. 5:5-7, *NKJV*

Does the will of God seem unpleasant, disagreeable to our earthly desires? Reflect on the message spoken through King Solomon: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights." (Prov. 3:11,12, *NKJV*) The Apostle Paul offers a lovely insight into Solomon's counsel, "Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."—Heb. 12:9,10, *NKJV*

If King Zedekiah had such understanding as we have obtained, he may have chosen to be in subjection to the Lord and lived. Chastenings from God are generally perceived to be punitive. To some degree that is so. However, the grander lesson and realization is that his chastening is for our benefit. It fosters growth in godliness. God corrects us to help us. Had Judah obeyed they would have lived, despite Jerusalem's destruction. For the Christian, accepting God's chastening is to their profit, that they may be "partakers of His holiness." ■