

## **ZEDEKIAH: The King Who Turned Out the Lights - 2 Kings 24:18 – 25:7**

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Mattaniah, meaning *gift from Jehovah*, who was later known as Zedekiah, meaning *righteousness of Jehovah*, was the third son of King Josiah of Judah; his mother was Hamutal, which made him a brother of King Jehoahaz of Judah (2 Kings 23:31, 24:17-18) reigning from about 597-586 B.C. Zedekiah, the last king of Israel, was twenty-one when he became king.

The fall of the kingdom of Judah came gradually, over a period of years, in which the Babylonians killed or exiled leading members of society, while leaving behind others who they thought that they could more easily control, in what became a subordinate kingdom. After **King Nebuchadnezzar** of Babylon removed King Jehoiachin of Judah, he chose 21 year old Mattaniah, who he renamed Zedekiah, as Judah's vassal king.

Although the prophet Jeremiah served as Zedekiah's advisor, Zedekiah "did what was evil in the sight of The Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For because of the anger of The Lord it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." (2 Kings 24:19-20 RSV). It was the final straw, for both the Babylonians, and God, Who then allowed the complete devastation of the kingdom of Judah and the capital city of Jerusalem.

King Zedekiah refused to accept the counsel of Jeremiah the prophet, who gave him messages of the Lord. He rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty. (2 Chronicles 36:12-13). King Nebuchadnezzar then laid siege to Jerusalem in the ninth year of the reign of King Zedekiah, and continued to the eleventh year. The food had run out, and Zedekiah tried to escape, but was captured in the plains of Jericho.

He was then taken to Riblah, where he was tried and sentenced before the King of Babylon. He was forced to watch as his sons were killed before his eyes, then his eyes were put out and he was taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:6-7). General Nebuzaradan of Babylon then burned down the Temple and the palace, and tore down the walls of Jerusalem.

With that act, a 400 hundred year period of darkness covered the land of Israel.

Zedekiah was unfaithful to God. Zedekiah blamed God for all the disasters and bad things that happened to him and to his kingdom.

Does that sound familiar? Don't we ask that nagging question, Why Me, God? Like Zedekiah, we blame God for all the bad things that happen in the world and especially in our life.

It was by one man's sin that death came upon all mankind. It is by our own evil thoughts, words, and actions that evil comes upon us and by the evil thoughts, words, and actions of all people bad things happen. Sin breeds evil and devastation and sorrow and grief.

But, God wants all people to be saved. God wants to give us joy in the midst of our sorrow. He wants to give us life instead of death. Because of Jesus, the Light of the world, God brought light and life to the world. God brings all things together to make them good to those who believe in Him. All this He does because He loves us.

Let us pray. Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for Your great love. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus to save us. Help us give up our sinful ways. Teach us to believe in You, our heavenly Father and in Your Son, Jesus Christ. We praise You and glorify You forever. Amen.