

12/14/2025

Welcome / Prayer

So last week we introduced Ezra and some of his contemporaries.

- Israel was dragged into bondage under the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar for 70 years.
  - The head of gold
- He was overthrown by the Medo-Persian empire under King Cyrus
  - the Chest & Arms of silver
- Cyrus said, “The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.”
  - Not to ‘let my people go’ but to actually build God the house
- They were humbled due to rampant national sin so God “spoke to them” thru stammering lips (foreigners)

We left off discussing that God will displace whomever He wants. He can do it with any nation.

Jeremiah 18: 9 And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, 10 and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.

And that thankfully, our nation has no sin now that Orange Jesus is at the helm.

What are sins of our nation? What are things we pray for on Wed. PM?

- We have forsaken / are forsaking God as Lord (From Barna Research)
  - Red = practicing Christian, see how it started DROPPING during the great recession
  - Green = non-practicing Christian, see how it mostly swapped with Red
  - Yellow = Non-Christian, see how that is ebbing higher, like a tide.
- We no longer fear God and have become fools (fear of the lord is the beginning of what?)
- Our greatness is because of our own hand, not God’s blessing (Nebuchadnezzar)
- Caved to political correctness & pluralism
  - Every: our strength is in our diversity. What??

What else?

- Materialism – Prov 30: <sup>7</sup> Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: <sup>8</sup> Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: <sup>9</sup> Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.
- national addiction to sex, to money, to pleasure, to entertainment, to pornography, to technology, to drugs, to alcohol, to food, to television, to popularity, to ourselves (selfies)
- Number one producer of pornography

What else?

- 3<sup>rd</sup> highest among 1<sup>st</sup> world nations in obesity
- Unaffordable health care / social security & care for elderly
- Economic inequality & Greed (Is 5:8 house-to-house = monopolies)
- Inflation – the hidden theft tax
- Bribery / corruption in politics Ezek22 <sup>12</sup> "In you they have taken bribes to shed blood; you have taken interest and profits, and you have injured your neighbors for gain by oppression, and you have forgotten Me

What else?

- Drug addiction, opioid epidemic (and why??) Just saw Trump wanting to legalize pot
- Murder of the unborn, Prizker just signed Dec12 a MAID like assisted suicide. “Oh but that’s for terminally ill patients” – because it will stop there??
- Trafficking of children?

Are we just folding dirty laundry here? Is there biblical merit to confessing our sins and the sins of our nation?

Daniel 9: <sup>20</sup> Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, <sup>21</sup> while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.

This is tiring. Let's move on

Given all the above as part of Ezra 1 chapter summary,

- When the 70 years were completed, God permitted the Persian Empire to conquer the Babylonians.
  - Remember – Wicked Israel → Nebuchadnezzar / Daniel → the statue → Mene Mene Tekel & chest/arms of silver
- Cyrus, the Persian king, was directed by God to release the people of Judah to return to the Promised Land and rebuild the Temple (537 BC).
- **Their** journey was 900 miles on foot
- This would have taken months, not a few days like I thought (they took the Caravan), then I looked up what a Caravan was 😊
- Ezra 7: 9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem

We're looking at commonly 5,000 to 8,000 total people *in Ezra's wave*, 50,000 in total.

Again

**Ezra** 1: 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Cyrus announced that the people of Judah were freed from their captivity, which had been inflicted on them by the Babylonians.

He even arranged provisions & ordered citizens to help

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

He also re-dedicated the temple vessels that Neb stole and Belshazzar defiled on the handwriting scene

He sent

- chargers of gold,
- chargers of silver,
- knives,
- basons of gold,
- silver basons
- other vessels a thousand.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred.

Estimated worth of about \$50M today