

IMMERSE: CHRONICLES

Week 4 – The Big Picture of “Chronicles” Within the Big Picture of Scripture!

July 14, 2024

WHAT do - I & II Chronicles have to do with Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel?

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Last week we concluded with II Chron. 7:12-14. This is Who God is...He pursues people; For God so loved the WORLD! He desires to be sought by all – and to receive their worship.. God forgives those who place their belief in Him. God promised land, with its boundaries set forth in Gen. 15:18-20 – to the physical descendants of Abraham. GOD told King Solomon about the FUTURE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL when He spoke of healing their land. Read II Sam. 7:22-24!

Last week we read that the “chronicler” highlighted the Davidic Covenant and the Temple in Jerusalem – Jerusalem, where God has placed His name (II Chron. 6:6). The Temple in Jerusalem is the focal point of God’s restoration of national Israel and the source of His blessing for the WORLD (Isa. 2:2-3; Isa. 56:6-7; Eze. 37:25-28; Micah 4:1-8). Please revisit your handout from Week 3 re: the significance of the Temple to God and to Israel and the impact on the Gentile nations!

In the last chapter of II Chronicles...II Chron. 36:14-21 – after the “chronicler” gave a rundown of the 20 kings of Judah out of which there were 8 kings who were considered “good,” “worthy,” “great,” “mostly virtuous”...we understand that sin was running rampant!

II Chron. 36:14-16 - ...*all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations (Israel was mimicking the nations; READ Eze. 8:5-10), and defiled the house of the LORD (the Temple) which He (God) had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy. AND SO WE READ...*

II Chron. 36:17-21 – the Chaldeans are coming against Judah. The Chaldeans are the Babylonians! The Babylonians destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. They took all the

implements in Solomon's Temple...implements used in the worship of God – all the treasures of the Temple were taken to the land of the Chaldeans – the land of Babylon. Then they burned the Temple, broke down the wall of Jerusalem. Much of Jerusalem was destroyed!

Those who were not killed were taken captive into the land of the Babylonians.

A timeframe is noted...

...*until the rule of the kingdom of Persia*, (The kingdom of Persia would conquer Babylon) ²¹ *to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years* (II Chron. 36:20-21). Observe how God cherishes the land and

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that He desires rest for the people and the land! Why the desolation? What is the Sabbath rest of the land?

Lev. 25:4 - God had told the children of Israel...*in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.*

One year out of every seven years this Sabbath rest of the land was to be obeyed. The people were neither to sow their field (to scatter seed for crops – to produce food to eat!!) nor prune (trim) their vineyard. The land was not to be worked for a total of 1 year out of 7 years. The children of Israel disobeyed this command for a total of 490 years (perhaps going back to King Saul's time) – not observing the Sabbath rest of the land for 1 year out of every 7 years throughout a 490-year timeframe. This means the land wouldn't rest for 70 years.

God was encouraging the children of Israel to trust Him to provide for them during one year out of seven!

Lev. 26:33-35 – There were consequences for not obeying the Sabbath rest of the land. God said, *I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.* ³⁴ *Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.* ³⁵ *As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.* The land did not rest under the children of Israel for how many years out of the 490 years? SEVENTY YEARS!

God told the Prophet Jeremiah (who ministered 22 years before the first Jewish people were carried away to Babylon) – Jeremiah told the people living in the Kingdom of Judah that their land (Judah's land) would be a wasteland, a desolation for 70 years (Jer. 25:11). They were going to remain under Babylon's rule for 70 years. 70 years is a specific time that's repeated many times. The 70-year timeframe was a fulfillment of

prophecy and the consequence noted in Scripture previously for disobeying the Sabbath rest for the land!! The 70 years of exile/captivity were based on what God SAID!!!

The Jewish people would remain in Babylon for 70 years until the kingdom of Persia conquered Babylon. In the book of Daniel, Daniel prophesied that the Medo-Persian Empire would overtake the Babylonian Empire (Dan. 2:36-39). Babylon was invaded by the Medo-Persians in 539 BC. The Persian Empire is modern day Iran.

Daniel, living under Persian rule as a trusted advisor – a governor, the most important governor (Dan. 6:1-3) within the kingdom that would later be ruled by Artaxerxes or Ahasuerus who married ESTHER who became Queen Esther!!!! While serving in the Persian gov't, Daniel was reading from the scroll of Jeremiah. And he understood...

Dan. 9:2b - ...that God would accomplish seventy years (this was God's plan!) in the desolations of Jerusalem. Daniel understood that God's plan would be COMPLETED and it would include the **RETURN** to the land of Israel!!!!

Jer. 29:10 – 22 years prior to captivity in Babylon ...thus says the LORD:
After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place – to the land of Israel that God had given them.

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Within these 6 books that come under the Chronicles' label, the children of Israel were carried into exile in Babylon...with the assured HOPE of their **return** after 70 years. The loving and just, gracious, merciful, eternal plan of God Who is faithful to His promises is woven through Scripture. GOD has REVEALED Himself and His plan for us. Are we marveling at Him?

Do we remember what God told the children of Israel who were carried away? Jer. 29:4-7, 10-14 – HE had **caused them** to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon. He told the Jewish people that, while in Babylon, they were to build houses and live in them...they were to plant gardens and eat from them. They were to have sons and daughters so the sons and daughters would have sons and daughters. AND – GOD told them to seek the peace of Babylon while the Jews resided in that country...and pray to the LORD for it (Babylon); for in its peace you will have peace (God's desire is that Israel has peace). ... ¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. (To whom is God speaking?) ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (God is telling Israel their future/their hope!!!!)

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; (God is specifically speaking to the Jewish people in captivity!! This is the context) I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

HOW was this RETURN to the land of Israel to be worked out? BY GOD!!!

Remember, Daniel had a most high-profile position in the government of Medo-Persia. This kingdom was later ruled by Artaxerxes II, or Ahasuerus, who married Esther! We know that Daniel had read the scroll of Jeremiah. May Daniel have read other scrolls written by prophets? Did Daniel have influence in the Medo-Persian Empire? Might God have used Daniel – living and serving in Persia - to influence Cyrus what was written in the scroll of Isaiah? Isaiah was written 150 years before...

Isa. 44:21-23, 24-28 - God... *28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'*

Isa. 45:1-6 - *Thus says the LORD to His anointed ("to set apart by God for His divine purpose") to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—to subdue nations before him (Dan. 5:30) and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut:² (There were many gates in the city wall of Babylon and history teaches that Cyrus entered with ease. Herodotus, the Greek Historian, reported that the openness of the city of Babylon was so great that the Persians were taking prisoners as they penetrated Babylon) God told Cyrus, 'I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and*

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cut the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness (in secret places) and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting (this expression is often used to speak of the entire earth) that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other....

AND SO, we come to

II Chron. 36:22-23 – the last chapter of II Chronicles... *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, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ²³ Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!*

And we turn to Ezra and read in Ezra 1...

Ezra 1:1-3 - *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, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ² Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. ³ Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up (and added to these verses which had repeated the verses from II Chron. 36:22-23) to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.*

God sets up Kings – Dan. 2:21!!!

Following 70 years of living away from Jerusalem, when Cyrus released the Jews to their homeland, not all of them elected to return to Judah. We know that Daniel remained and served in the Persian government. Consider: how did the Jewish people in what was then Persia, view the trek home – the 900-mile journey back to Jerusalem? And, to many, Babylon had become their home. Were they too comfortable?

Ezra 1:4 – *And whoever is left (of the Jewish people) in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem (Those Jewish who decided not to return to the land). Not only did Cyrus release the Jews, he also returned the stolen Temple articles and paid for the Jews' rebuilding efforts from the royal treasury (Ezra 6:4-5).*

All for the glory of God – for the fulfillment of His purpose!