

IMMERSE: Chronicles

Week 5 - ...*all who set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel*

July 21, 2024

Digging into these 6 books is such a such a necessity in our understanding of the entire Bible - OT & NT!

Israel WILL continue to exist...NOT because of Israel's obedience or Israel's faithfulness to God!!! BUT Israel WILL continue to exist because of WHO GOD IS!

Israel WILL continue to exist based on God's unconditional/unilateral covenants... unconditional-no conditions/no strings attached; unilateral-one-sided. God has obligated HIMSELF to deliver on the promises He made to Israel. These promises will impact the world! And, these promises look forward to Israel's restoration which will bring in the Millennial Kingdom – God's Kingdom on earth which Jesus will establish at His Second Coming.

Babylon attacked Israel three times: 605 BC, 597 BC, 586 BC. In 586 BC, Babylon destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and left the city of Jerusalem in ruins.

There were no kings in Jerusalem seated on King David's throne (Hosea 3:4-5) from 586 BC moving forward to today...UNTIL Jesus returns at His Second Coming when He will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and will judge the earth (Matt. 25) – and reign in righteousness seated on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Lk. 1:31-33; Psalms 2:7-12; Psalms 110; Isaiah 61/Luke 4:16ff; Acts 1:6-8)

Following 586 BC, dates were factored by the Gentile kings/Gentile emperors because 586 BC was the beginning of what is known as “the times of the Gentiles” – since 586 BC. (Lk. 21:24). “The times of the Gentiles” will be more clear as we read and discuss the book of Daniel.

When Chronicles was written, King David's descendants no longer ruled as monarchs over Israel. And, this was a fulfillment of the Prophet Hosea 3:4-5 - *For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols. <sup>5</sup> Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.*

There were no Kings in Israel when the “chronicler” wrote his two books between 450 and 430 BC. The books of Chronicles, written after the time of the exile, focuses upon: the unconditional promises to the house of David in the Davidic Covenant, the priority of the temple, and priesthood revolving around the true worship of God!

The “chronicler” desired that the Jewish people remember the royal Davidic lineage. WHY? Because God had promised a FUTURE RULER Who would rise from that genealogy!

Because the promise of the FUTURE RULER of Israel was to be fulfilled in the future, within the book of Ezra we read of foreshadowings. We read of Zerubbabel, the Governor, from the tribe of Judah. The Governor? Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah should be King. Zerubbabel is in the genealogy of Jesus, the tribe of Judah (Matt. 1:12-13). CONSIDER: Joseph, of Mary and Joseph, is of the tribe of Judah. Was Joseph a king? NO!

## 2

Back to Zerubbabel...he led the first of three returns from Babylon to Israel in 536 BC...for the purpose of rebuilding the Temple. In Zech. 6:9-12 we read of the Messiah building the Temple in the future. Ezra was a scribe of the priestly line of Levi. Ezra led the second return from Babylon to Israel in 458 BC. God used Ezra, a direct descendant of Aaron the High Priest (Ezra 7:1-5), to instill a passion in the Jewish people for the law of God/the word of God.

Understanding Israel's history through a priestly and kingly lens was intended to prepare the people for the future Messiah. Why? How can we understand Jesus, the Messiah, as priest and king? Currently Jesus is seated at the right hand of God as our Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16; Heb. 7:17 – Jesus is a *priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*. Melchizedek was priest of God Most High and King of Salem/peace; his name means “King of Righteousness” [Gen. 14:18]. Heb. 7:25 - *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*) And, Jesus will be returning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16). And, Jesus will establish His Kingdom on earth (Dan. 2:31-35; Dan. 2:44-45; Matt. 25:31).

How many Jewish people were taken into exile in Babylon?

Jer. 52:28-30 - *These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; <sup>29</sup> in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; <sup>30</sup> in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons were four thousand six hundred.*

In II Kings 24:14 we read of an additional 10,000 Judeans taken as captives to Babylon. The 10,000 included leaders of the military and those whose skills would support the military. The Prophet Ezekiel and his wife were included in this deportation (Eze. 1:1-3).

How many returned to the land of Israel? Ezra 2:64-65 tells us that 49,897 people returned to Judah,

What was God's message to those Jewish people who were taken into exile in Babylon? Jer. 29:1-7 - ...God told them that He had caused their being carried away. God encouraged them...

when they were in Babylon...to build homes and dwell in those homes...to plant gardens and eat their fruit. God told them to arrange marriages so that sons and daughters would be born – so that they, the Jewish people, would increase in #. And, God told the Jewish people to pray for the peace of the city – in this case, Babylon – as God’s people, His chosen people – the Jews – were at that time living in Babylon.

God’s purpose in creating Israel will never fail! If the nation of Israel is eliminated, wiped off the face of the earth, then God’s plan for WORLD redemption fails. Israel is the vehicle for world redemption (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18; Romans 15:8-10; Rom. 11:12-15).

I am strongly suggesting that there are NO lost tribes of Israel!!! There is NO verse in Scripture that speaks of the lost tribes of Israel. Consider the following verses:

Ezra 6:17 – Once back in the land of Israel, *they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.*

For ALL Israel, twelve male goats were sacrificed – for all the tribes of Israel. That tells me they are NOT lost!

Backstory:

- King David and then King Solomon ruled over 12 tribes. It was a united kingdom.
- Enter Jeroboam (I Kings 11:28), a servant of King Solomon. The Prophet Ahijah approached Jeroboam with a prophecy. The prophet tore a new cloak into 12 pieces and said, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes’” (I Kings 11:31). Idol worship of the Israelites caused God to divide the kingdom (I Kings 11:33). I Kings 11:40 - “Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt . . . and stayed there until Solomon’s death”
- When Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, was crowned King of the 12 tribes of Israel
- King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, foolishly threatened to make life more difficult for the people of the land (I Kings 12:14) which led to a rebellion against Rehoboam. The ten northern tribes crowned Jeroboam as their king (1 Kings 12:20).
- The Kingdom GOD had given to Israel became a DIVIDED Kingdom – beginning in 931 BC.
- King Rehoboam ruled over the Kingdom of Judah...over which two tribes? Benjamin and Judah.
- King Jeroboam ruled over the Kingdom of Israel – comprised of the ten tribes to the north.

- Jeroboam, thinking that his people would return to Jerusalem to worship. To avoid that from occurring, Jeroboam made two calves of gold in the north and told his people, over whom he was ruling. “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.” Jeroboam also erected shrines on the high places (pagan altars). And, Jeroboam assigned as priests those from every class of people who were NOT of the sons of Levi!

Because of Jeroboam’s severe idolatry, there were those who left the Kingdom of Israel in the north and traveled to the south – to the Kingdom of Judah!

II Chron. 11:13-17 - *And from all their territories (48 cities; Num. 18:21, 23-24; Num. 35) the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him (Rehoboam). <sup>14</sup> For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. <sup>15</sup> Then he (Jeroboam) appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. <sup>16</sup> And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. <sup>17</sup> So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. Therefore, those who were carried away by the Babylonians from the Kingdom of Judah included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the Levites, AND the Jewish people from the Kingdom of Israel – all who set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel!*

And that’s why we read of Anna in Luke 2:16 – Anna, a prophetess, came into the Temple at the moment that Jesus was brought into the Temple by Mary and Joseph for His dedication as firstborn son. Anna was from the tribe...a tribe from northern Israel – the tribe

4

of Asher. She had been praying for the redemption in Israel...and, in the Temple, she gazed on the Redeemer!

In reading about the reforms of King Asa in Judah including restoring the altar of the LORD...then...

II Chron. 15:9 – King Asa gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with Judah and Benjamin...from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon (from the northern tribes), *for they came over to him (Asa) in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.*

“Lost tribes of Israel”? There are NO lost tribes of Israel. GOD knows where they are!!

In our reading of Scripture, we encounter the 12 tribes in the book of Revelation at the beginning of the “time of Jacob’s trouble.” What’s that? The 7-year tribulation (time, times and half a time; 1260 days – one half of the tribulation; the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel – which is 7 years...)

We encounter the 12 tribes of Israel at the beginning of the tribulation in Rev. 7 – 144,000 – from the 12 tribes of Israel!!

Luke 22:30 – Jesus promised the disciples that they will *sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel* – in the Millennial Kingdom.

With so many from the 10 northern tribes making their way to the Kingdom of Judah prior to the exile in Babylon, shouldn't there have been more than 49,897 returning to Israel?

- Many living in the Kingdom of Judah were killed in the attacks carried out by the Babylonians upon sacking Jerusalem and destroying the wall and the homes.
- The Jewish people were active members of Babylonian society. Many prospered. Many had no interest in leaving. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, held a position in the gate of Susa. He was an official.
- Many of the Israelites had been born in captivity. They never knew their homeland, Israel.
- Perhaps many Jewish Babylonians, desiring to fit in with the Babylonian culture, discarded God's Word and Israel.
- With the good size Jewish population in Babylon, synagogues dotted the empire. With no Temple in Babylon, Priests were not necessary. Rabbis replaced Priests
- Jewish scholars remaining in Babylon transitioned well within the Medo-Persian Empire and compiled what is called the Babylonian Talmud circa 500 AD. The Babylonian Talmud, which is Rabbinic opinion/Rabbinic commentary/Rabbinic debates on how to live the law, holds greater authority within Rabbinic Judaism than the Jerusalem Talmud!

The book of Ezra begins with the same words which close the book of II Chronicles – the words of Cyrus, king of Persia, who decrees the reestablishment and restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem. These words were God breathed – inspired by the Holy Spirit – and speak to the significance of God's plan of restoration for Israel which will impact the world.