

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36

X. Learning To Trust God's Faithfulness To His Plan Regardless Of Man's Failure

(2 Chronicles 36:22-23 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. It is easy to be so discouraged by sin in ourselves or in God's people that we give up living a godly life.
- B. However, we need to shift our eyes from sinful man to a gracious, sovereign God Who always keeps His program on track so that we not lose heart at such times, a lesson supplied in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23:

II. Learning To Trust God's Faithfulness To His Plan Regardless Of Man's Failure.

- A. In 2 Chronicles 36:11-21, we learned that God finally let the Babylonians take Judah captive to Babylon.
- B. Once there, they were to stay in captivity for seventy years to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy, 2 Chron. 36:21.
- C. However, following that seventy-year captivity, the author of 2 Chronicles reported that Cyrus, king of Persia, in B. C. 538, made a proclamation that included Judah's reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple by returning Jewish exiles, 2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ft. to 2 Chronicles 36:22.
- D. This encouraging announcement fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that after those seventy years, the people of Judah would be released to return to their Promised Land, 2 Chronicles 36:22a,b.
- E. If we view the contexts of those prophecies about those seventy years, we are impressed with the theme of the great power and grace of God that carried on His program amid Judah's sinful failure (as follows):
 - 1. One key reason for Judah's seventy year captivity was God's sovereign punishment of **Judah's sin**:
 - a. As the author of 2 Chronicles 36:21 reveals, a key reason why Judah was to spend seventy years in captivity came from her failure to keep her land sabbatical rests, Lev. 25:4 and Lev. 26:34-35.
 - b. Another sin leading to the seventy year captivity was Judah's rebellious sin of idolatry against the Lord, cf. Jeremiah 25:4-11.
 - 2. However, God's **grace in keeping His eternal covenant with Abraham's seed** to bless them amid the nations of the earth led to the **LIMITATION** of Judah's **captivity** to **JUST** those **SEVENTY years**:
 - a. First, Jeremiah noted that God would limit Judah's servitude to the king of Babylon to seventy years since He wished to punish many Gentile nations like Babylon for their wickedness, Jeremiah 25:12-13. These nations included Egypt, Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, Dedan, Tema, Buz, Arabia, Zimri, Elam, Media and Sheshach, cf. Jeremiah 25:15-27. This all supports God's plan that **HE** would bless the **world's** nations in **HIS righteousness** through His **thus upright people** in accord with the **Abrahamic Covenant** of Genesis 12:1-3.
 - b. Also, Jeremiah reported the seventy-year limit to Judah's servitude would allow God to restore Judah to her land and bless her in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant, cf. Jer. 29:1-14: (1) When Babylon's king had taken the first wave of captives under Judah's king Jeconiah, Jeremiah was directed by the Lord to write them a letter, telling them that, contrary to the false prophets who told them they would soon be released to Judah, they were to settle down for a seventy-year stay in Babylon, and to seek the welfare of the nation that was ruling them, Jer. 29:1-10a. (2) Jeremiah explained that when Judah had learned in this captivity to heed the Lord and look to Him for mercy (Jeremiah 29:12-14a), God would restore them to their homeland, and bless them, Jeremiah 29:14b. (3) In that restoration, they would see God wanted to give them peace, not war, good, not calamity, and a hopeful future [all in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant of Gen. 12:1-3], Jer. 29:11 NIV.
- F. Thus, amid Judah's sin and God's judgment of Judah in the Babylonian Captivity, God was faithful to bless His people in His covenant-keeping grace, and thus to set her captivity term at seventy years!
- G. 2 Chronicles thus ends on a message of hope in God that offsets the sinful failure of the people of Judah!

Lesson: *Regardless of the sinful failure of his people and of God's judgment, the LENGTH of her JUDGMENT was LIMITED in God's GRACE to keep His GOOD LONG-TERM PLAN for His own!*

Application: *When we are tempted to be dismayed at the dreadful sin we see in ourselves and/or in others, may we shift our FOCUS to GOD'S FAITHFULNESS to HIMSELF in His GRACE to us that we BALANCE our DISMAY at MAN'S SINFUL FAILURE with HOPE in our GRACIOUS GOD!*