

## **Leaving Babylon, Returning to Zion to Build God's Dwelling Place**

*2 Chron 36:15-21; 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1,3-4*

### **I. Zion – God's Chosen Dwelling Place**

- A. "Zion" - A parched dry land - nothing appealing for the soul and flesh
- B. The city of our God, Joy of the whole earth, city of the Great King (Ps 48:1-2)
- C. God's choice and desire as His resting place forever (Ps 132:13-14)
- D. Dwelling place of God (Ps 9:11)
- E. The perfection of beauty, where God shines out His glory (Ps 50:2)
- F. Where God set His throne for judgment (Ps 122:5)
- G. Where God is united with His people and dwells with them (Ex 15:17; Ps 122:1-4; Rev 21:3)
  - 1. The tribes of Israel ascend the mountain and assemble together for the feasts in one chosen place (Deut 12:5,6, Ps 122:4)
  - 2. All nations will bring their offerings and sacrifices to His Holy Mountain (Is 56:7)
- H. Bride of Christ and the New Jerusalem (Eph 5:25; Rev 19:7-8; 21:2, 9-10)
- I. Only can be seen by revelation because it's spiritual
  - 1. Mystery of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32)
- J. How much do we love and care for it?
  - 1. God is zealous for Zion with great zeal (Zech 1:14)
  - 2. He chose Mount Zion which He loved (Ps 78:68)
  - 3. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps 87:2)
- K. In the current age, the Church represents Zion (Heb 12:22-23)

- L. If the Church is so beloved by the Lord then how can we tolerate the current blindness and practices of Christianity?
- M. If we don't see what it is and how much God loves it, then how can we properly represent it as the Church?

## **II. Babylon – A Captivity for God's People**

- A. Historically - prosperous, mixture of the world, religion and things of God (Ez 1:7)
- B. Babylon as prophesied - Rev 17:1-6; 18:1-6
  - 1. Appearance of holiness (Rev 17:4)
  - 2. Divisions (Gen 11:7-9)
  - 3. Rebellion against God (Ezek 3:7)
  - 4. False teachings
  - 5. Only flesh and soul, no Spirit (Is 30:9-10)
  - 6. Mixture with the world (Rev 18:9-15)
- C. Convenience of man vs God's choice (Deut 12:1-15)
- D. God will judge Babylon with a double portion (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 18:5-8,17)
- E. Calling His people out (Rev 18:4)
- F. Instrument of Satan to deceive the world, particularly Christians.
- G. Satan is a liar and father of it (John 8:44)
- H. Warning against false teachers (2 Peter 2)
- I. The world is in darkness and ruled by Satan (1 John 5:19)
- J. We mourn for those still in captivity and we hate it (Ps 126:4-6)
- K. If we love Zion, we will not be able to tolerate anything of Babylon (Ps 137)

### **III. Leaving Babylon and Returning to Zion**

#### **A. Leaving Babylon:**

1. A small number of Israelites were stirred up to leave Babylon behind (Ez:1:1-3)
2. God desires us to return from Babylon (Jer 29:10-14)
3. How did we end up in Babylon?: Sin and death, lawlessness abounding. (Gen 1-3, Matt. 24:12, Eph. 2)
4. Cannot sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land (Psalms 137:4)
5. Exalting Jerusalem above their chief joy (Ps 137:6)
6. Why do we need to leave? Our excuses, our comfort, keeping our lifestyle, “bury the dead”, love of money (Matt 10:37-38, Gal. 2:20)
7. Will not grow in spiritual maturity without leaving traditions. (Luke 9:62)
8. Hate the deeds of the flesh and lawlessness. Serving God and mammon is not possible. (Matt 6:24)
9. Babylon has aspects of the religious system and the material system. Do we accept everything or are we uncomfortable and long for God’s dwelling? (Ez 9:3-7, Matt 21:13)
10. Realizing Zion has abundant life (Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-8)

#### **B. Paying a price for Zion:**

1. Enemies are ahead, expect opposition – There is a cost to return (Neh 6:5-9, Acts 4:18-20)
2. Requires putting on the whole armor of God (Neh 4:17, Eph 6:10-12)
3. Being exercised with the Holy Spirit always (Ez 1:5, Zech 4:6, Matt 4:1, Rom 8:13)
4. Faith will be tested, (Heb 11:6, 2 Cor 13:5)
5. Careful of complaining, rebellion, looking back. (Ex 16:3, 17:3, 32:1, Num 12)

6. Pay attention: A little leaven will leaven the whole lump. (2 Thess 3:6, 1 Cor 5:7)
7. Eyes on the goal, crown of Life (Jam 1:12, 1 Pet 5:4).
8. Buy gold from the Lord (Rev 3:18, Matt 11:28)
9. Be sanctified by Truth (Jn 17:18-20, Ps 119:5, Ps 119:11, 1 John 2:27)
10. Remembering we're priests to our God. (Ex 19:5-6)

#### **IV. Rebuilding the Temple**

- A. Came together as ONE MAN in JERUSALEM, built an altar, immediately offered burnt offerings to the LORD (Ez 3:1-2)
- B. Oneness of the Church
  1. All the disciples were in one accord in one place (Acts 2:1)
  2. Although meeting house-to-house, they were one church and not divided (Acts 2:47)
    - a. One church, not many, in each city
  3. Despite being thousands of believers, they were of one heart and one soul mind (Acts 4:32)
  4. The Lord prayed for the oneness of His disciples (John 17:20-23)
  5. Christ broke down the wall of separation on the cross and created one new man in Himself (Eph 2:13-16)
  6. Love is the bond of perfection (Col 3:14)
  7. Love, binding us together in oneness, is the Church's testimony to the world (John 13:34,35; 17:23)
  8. True love is produced by His life (1 John 3:14)
  9. Division is a characteristic of Babylon - tolerating and accepting the current state of division
  10. A sign of carnality (flesh) (1 Cor 3:1-4; Gal 5:20)
  11. Any kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt 12:25; Luke 11:17)
  12. Oneness must be KEPT (Eph 4:3) - tolerating things

avoids conflict but conflict avoidance is not oneness -  
the conflict is still in the heart

13. Uniformity is NOT oneness
- C. Foundation of the Temple laid, people praised the Lord (Ez 3:8-13)
  1. No other foundation besides Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11)
- D. Opposition from the enemy began as soon as the foundation was laid (Ez 4)
  1. Israel's enemies:
    - a. Tried to help (it was fake) - deception (Ez 4:2)
    - b. Tried to discourage (Ez 4:4)
    - c. Tried to frustrate (Ez 4:5)
    - d. Tried to oppose - lied to King Artaxerxes about Jerusalem (Ez 4:11-16)
    - e. They convinced the king and stopped them by "force of arms" - violence (Ez 4:23-24)
  2. Haggai 1:3-10 - go up the mountain, bring wood, build My house
    - a. Our own labours to build our own houses will fail (Hag 1:6,9).
    - b. Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, then the Lord will take care of our daily needs (Matt 6:33)
- E. What does having "the right place" and "the right materials" mean in the Church?
  1. Not of this creation (Acts 7:48; Heb 9:11; 11:10,16)
  2. Patterned after the tabernacle, temple, New Jerusalem (Heb 8:5)
  3. Bride - no spot, wrinkle, etc. (Eph 5:27)
  4. Composed of foundation of the 12 apostles, jewels (Rev 21:9-27)
  5. Building with the right materials (1 Cor 3:10-15)
  6. We must eliminate works of the flesh, dead works, pride, reliance on man

7. The "right place" is oneness of the Spirit.
- F. Temple was completed (Ez 6:13-22)
  1. Priests and Levites purified themselves and kept the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Ez 6:19-22)
  2. They separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land to seek the LORD God (Ez 6:21)

## **V. The Subtle Leaven of Babylon**

- A. Mixture with the world
  1. The Church is part of the new creation, the Kingdom, Zion. The world is part of Satan's kingdom
  2. Basic principles of the world (Col 2:8)
  3. Separated from the world (John 15:18-19; 17:14-16)
  4. Cast out the bondwoman (Gal 4:29-30)
- B. Division
  1. Tower of Babel (Gen 11)
  2. A sign of carnality (flesh) (1 Cor 3:1-4; Gal 5:20)
  3. Any kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Matt 12:25; Luke 11:17)
- C. Caring for man's needs primarily (self and others)
  1. Building our own house and neglecting God's (Hag 1:3-10)
  2. Peter rebuking the Lord (Matt 16:21-23)
  3. The Lord being faithful to His purpose rather than only "good works" (Mark 1:36-38)
- D. False teachings
  1. Beware of false teachers among you (2 Pet 2:1-3, 15, 18-21)
  2. Evil men and impostors will grow worse (2 Tim 3:13)
  3. Galatians deceived to follow the law (flesh) (Gal 3:1-4)
- E. Flesh & Works of man
  1. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom 8:8)