

Desolation of the Temple

I see five states of people's righteousness, being repeated over and over again throughout the Bible. These are :-

- 1) Establishment of God's people.
- 2) Defilement and corruption of God's people.
- 3) Repentance of God's people.
- 4) Salvation of God's people.
- 5) Restoration of God's people.

Sole (Soul) nation of God's People through God's laws and 'The Law', introduced to Man
Abraham (Abram) was first to believe God and his faith and was counted as righteousness. Abraham's descendants moved to Egypt during a seven year drought. Joseph saved the nation of Israel by becoming a righteous governor in Egypt. The descendants of Abraham became a large number in Egypt during the following 430 years. God appointed Moses as His representative on earth to lead His chosen people out of captivity and introduced God's Law (10 Commandments) and other laws (sacrificial and religious) to Man. The Law and laws for sacrifices were for the covering of the peoples sin, and the instruction on righteous living and how not to sin against God. Prophets guided the people of God by telling the people what God said and wanted them to do. Judges judged the people during disputes over the interpretation of God's laws and then rewarded or punished them accordingly.

The Hebrew nation later rejected God as King over them and demanded a natural King from Samuel; who was loved by the Lord, despite being warned of the high cost of maintaining one.

1st King - King Saul quickly fell out of favour with God, twice by disobedience.

2nd King - King David was a man of God - a man after God's heart.

David desired the presence of God near to him. David first brought the Ark of God which was housed in a tent, to Jerusalem. When David desired to build God a magnificent house. He misunderstood the prophet's instructions about him not building a house for God. He thought that 'your descendant will build My house' meant his son Solomon would build God a house, and not Jesus Christ much later.

"So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations." (Mat 1:17)

King David's son Solomon, built a magnificent Temple for God, called the house of prayer. Kings ruled after Solomon which were mostly wicked, and the Laws of God were regularly replaced by the wicked laws of selfishness and greed. The Nation of God had accumulated a huge debt of Sin, that even the radical return to righteousness of King Josiah could not cover.

As the old covenant law of God worked with National responsibility, not individual responsibility, the people were on a doomed path of National punishment for the accumulated Sin committed against God. The grand Temple of Solomon was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Hebrew people were taken into exile to Babylon.

The Book of Judith describes what one Israelite widow accomplishes, through her faith in God, the conversion of a gentile, Achior and the salvation of the Israelite people of Bethulia.

In the book of Daniel we are introduced to four sons of Judah in exile, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They were blessed by God and acquired great wisdom. They refused to eat the king's rich food or drink wine, instead they asked for plain vegetables and water. In the book of Daniel :

1:17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

1: 19 Then the King interviewed them and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.

1:20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the King examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.

The accounts of Daniel and his three friends are also found in the books of 'The prayer of Azariah and the Song of the three young men' and 'Bel and the dragon'. Both accounts are similar because the Kings make decrees regarding not worshipping false gods, which was punishable by death. Daniel's three friends were thrown into a fiery furnace and later emerged unharmed, Daniel was thrown into a lions den and also emerged unscathed. In their obedience to God, God protects and delivered them through their trials.

In Daniel chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar makes an image of gold and commands his people to worship this image. Daniel's three friends refuse and are bound and thrown into a burning fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar is recorded as saying,

Dan 3:25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

The King tells them to come out, and after they came out of the furnace unharmed.

Dan 3:27 ... and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

Nebuchadnezzar was impressed, blessed their God, and made a decree saying:

Dan 3:29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

Daniel later served under King Darius, he was highly favoured due to his wisdom, and this upset the other sub-rulers of the kingdom. They devise a wicked plan to have Daniel executed.

Dan 6:7 "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions."

King Darius signed the decree and Daniel was arrested after he prayed and gave thanks before his God, which he did three times a day. King Darius was caught out by his own ruling, although he liked Daniel he was compelled by his decree, to have the offender Daniel thrown into the lions den.

Dan 6:16 So the King gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the King spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

The King returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. When the King returned to the pit he cried out in a lamenting voice to Daniel;

Dan 6:20 "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Dan 6:21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!

Dan 6:22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

The King was very glad and had the wicked accusers, their wives and their children thrown into the den of lions.

Dan 6:25 Then Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you.

Dan 6:26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end.

Dan 6:27 He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

Daniel makes a number of amazing prophecies regarding the future of kings and kingdoms of the region. He spoke about the coming of the Messiah and the events leading right up to the End Time.

1) Daniel through a vision spoke about the first 'transgression of desolation'.

Dan 8:13 "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"

Dan 8:14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

2) Daniel through another vision of Gabriel spoke about the coming Messiah.

Dan 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

Dan 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times."

Dan 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined."

Dan 9:27 "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined is poured out on the desolate."

3) God tells Daniel of a third 'desolation of the temple'.

Dan 11:31 "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."

Dan 11:32 "Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Dan 11:33 "And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by the sword and flame, by captivity and plundering."

Dan 12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Dan 12:12 "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."

Cyrus King of Persia issues a decree for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem and the people start to return and begin restoration of the temple. King Darius issues a decree for the return of the treasures from Babylon to the new temple, and for the assistance by the governors of the surrounding region regarding the rebuilding of the new temple. The older people cry when they see the new temple's foundation laid.

Ezra 3:12 "But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes."

Ezra and Nehemiah restore the Law and temple worship but the tribulation of the Israelites was not over.

Ezra 9:8 "And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage."

After the conquest of Babylon there came another conqueror to oppress Jerusalem and its people of God in the form of Antiochus Epiphanes who becomes King of Syria in the year 137 (175BC). (1Mac 1:10)

These accounts are found in the books of 1&2 Maccabees. In 1 Maccabees :

1:38 "The people of Jerusalem fled in fear, and the city became a colony of foreigners."

Jerusalem was foreign to its own people, who had been forced to abandon the city.

1:39 "Her temple was as empty as a wilderness; her festivals were turned into days of mourning, her Sabbath into shame. Her honour became an object of ridicule."

1:40 "Her shame was as great as her former glory, and her pride was turned into deepest mourning."

Antiochus tries to implement one pagan religion, not God's and one unified Gentile people.

1:41 *Antiochus now issued a decree that all nations in his empire should abandon their own customs and become one people. All the Gentiles and even many of the Israelites submitted to this decree. They adopted the official pagan religion, offered sacrifices to idols, and no longer observed the Sabbath.*

1:54 *On the fifteenth day of the month of Kislev in the year 145 (167BC), King Antiochus set up "The Awful Horror" on the altar of the Temple, and pagan altars were built in the towns throughout Judaea.*

1:56 *Any books of the Law which were found were torn up and burnt,*

1:57 *and anyone who was caught with a copy of the sacred books or who obeyed the Law was put to death by order of the king.*

1:60 *Mothers who had allowed their babies to be circumcised were put to death in accordance with the king's decree.*

1:61 *Their babies were hung round their necks, and their families and those who had circumcised them were put to death.*

1:63 *They preferred to die rather than break the holy covenant and eat unclean food - and many did die.*

1:64 *In his anger God made Israel suffer terribly.*

Priest Mattathias and his sons led in brave opposition to the wickedness.

2:19 *Mattathias answered in a loud voice, "I don't care if every Gentile in this empire has obeyed the King and yielded to the command to abandon the religion of his ancestors.*

2:20 *My sons, my relatives, and I will continue to keep the covenant that God made with our ancestors.*

2:21 *With God's help we will never abandon his Law or disobey his commands.*

2:22 *We will not obey the king's decree, and we will not change our way of worship in the least."*

2:27 *Then Mattathias went through the town shouting, "Everyone who is faithful to God's covenant and obeys His Law, follow me!"*

2:28 *With this, he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind all they owned.*

The first atrocity committed by the soldiers of King Antiochus.

2:38 *So the enemy attacked them on the Sabbath and killed the men, their wives, their children, and their livestock. A thousand people died.*

2:45 *Mattathias and his friends went everywhere tearing down pagan alters*

2:46 *and circumcising by force every uncircumcised boy they found within the borders of Israel.*

2:47 *They were also successful in hunting down the arrogant Gentile officials.*

2:48 *They rescued the Law of Moses from the Gentiles and their kings and broke the power of the wicked King Antiochus.*

After Mattathias dies his son Judas Maccabaeus takes his place. They had great victories with much smaller numbers of men, than those they fought against.

3:18 *"It is not difficult," Judas answered, "for a small group to overpower a large one. It makes no difference to the Lord whether we are rescued by many people or by just a few.*

3:19 *Victory in battle does not depend on who has the largest army; it is the Lord's power that determines the outcome."*

Jonathan the son of King Saul said in 1 Samuel 14:6
"For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few."

After Mattathias and his men triumphed over the king's armies they purified the temple.

4:36 *Judas and his brothers said, "Now that our enemies have been defeated, let's go to Jerusalem to purify the temple and rededicate it."*

More Atrocities committed by the soldiers of King Antiochus detailed in 2 Maccabees.

5:12 *Giving his men orders to cut down without mercy everyone they met and to slaughter anyone they found hiding in the houses.*

5:13 *They murdered everyone - men and women, boys and girls; even babies were butchered.*

5:14 *Three days later Jerusalem had lost eighty thousand people: forty thousand killed in the attack and at least that many taken away to be sold as slaves.*

5:15 *But Antiochus was still not satisfied. He dared to enter the holiest Temple in all the world, guided by Menelaus, who had become a traitor both to his religion and to his people.*

5:16 *With his filthy and unholy hands, Antiochus swept away the sacred utensils and the gifts which other kings had given to increase the glory and honour of the Temple.*

5:17 *He was so thrilled with his conquest that he did not realize that the Lord had let His holy Temple be defiled because the sin of the people of Jerusalem had made him angry for a while.*

6:1 *Not long after that, the King sent an elderly Athenian to force the Jews to abandon their religion and the customs of their ancestors.*

6:2 *He was also to defile their Temple by dedicating it to the Olympian god Zeus. The temple on Mount Gerizim was to be officially named "Temple of Zeus the God of Hospitality", as the people who lived there had requested.*

6:3 *The oppression was harsh and almost intolerable.*

6:4 *Gentiles filled the Temple with drinking parties and all sorts of immorality. They even had intercourse with prostitutes there. Forbidden objects were brought into the Temple,*

6:5 *and the altar was covered with detestable sacrifices prohibited by our Law.*

6:18 *There was an elderly and highly respected teacher of the Law by the name of Eleazar, whose mouth was being forced open to make him eat pork.*

6:19 *But he preferred an honourable death rather than a life of disgrace.*

6:20 *So he spat out the meat and went willingly to the place of torture, showing how people should have courage to refuse unclean food, even if it costs them their lives.*

These events have to be what Daniel chapter 8 was referring to, the persecution of Antiochus took place from 171BC to 165BC. I believe this to be the first 'transgression of desolation'.

The second 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel, I believe is referring to Jesus Christ, and the veil of the Temple being torn at His death, signified the end of Temple sacrifices for sin. The city of Jerusalem and Temple was destroyed again in 70AD by the Romans.

Dan 9:27 "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

It seems to me that the Temple will be restored again, and that sacrifices will be made there again according to the laws of Moses. I think the third 'desolation of the temple' will come to pass, and was also referred to by Jesus in the text of Matthew 24:15-31.

24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

24:22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

Reviewing all that King Antiochus did was pretty horrific, so these future times will be very trying for Christians and Jews who keep the Sabbath. I also believe that Daniel's prophecies have to be viewed from the old Jewish 'Law of Moses' perspective.

When I read from the book of Esther (the Greek version), which includes Xerxes' Proclamation against the Jews, I am reminded of what Prof. Veith said about the Protestant Christians who would not submit to the Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps someday a Unified Pagan Church may issue a similar decree. The Haman person being the future Anti-Christ!

3:4 "Recently Haman told us about a certain unruly people scattered among all the other peoples of the empire. He explained to us that these people have their own laws, are opposed to every other nation, and constantly ignore royal commands. As a result of their attitude, we are not able to establish the kind of unified government which we earnestly intend for the empire."

3:5 "These people are hostile to our government and commit terrible crimes which threaten the security of the empire. They follow strange customs, obey their own laws, and stand alone in their constant opposition to the whole human race."

3:6 "In light of these facts, we recommend the slaughter of the people referred to by Haman, our prime minister. All of them, including women and children, must be put to death; no one is to be spared. They are our enemies; we will show them no pity."

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