

YOUR HOUSE LEFT DESOLATE

PART I

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL LEFT DESOLATE AT CHRIST'S FIRST COMING

By Arlen L. Chirwood

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:34-39).

When God called Israel out of Egypt under Moses, one central purpose was in view. The nation, God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:22, 23), had been called out of Egypt to enter another land — a land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — and exercise the rights of the firstborn, the rights of primogeniture, in that land (Ex. 19:5, 6). And everything which has occurred within Israeli history down through the years, from Moses' day until the present day, has had its roots within *Israel's calling as God's firstborn and that which Israel has done relative to this calling.*

A theocracy, with God's firstborn son realizing the rights of primogeniture within that theocracy,

was in the offing during Moses' day. But, because of unbelief, the people refused to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea and conquer the inhabitants, as God had commanded. And, as a result, the Israelites entering the land and realizing a theocracy within the land was delayed until that entire unbelieving and accountable generation (those twenty years old and above [Num. 14:29]) had passed off the scene.

And also, because Moses subsequently struck the rock in Num. 20:8-11, in direct disobedience to God's command, he was numbered with that generation as well and was not allowed to lead the Israelites into the land. The Lord, instead, appointed Joshua for this task (Num. 20:12; 27:12-14; Deut. 34:1-12).

Thus, once all those having a part in the unbelief exhibited at Kadesh-Barnea had died, along with Moses, Joshua was allowed to lead the nation into the land. And the theocracy, which had come into existence at Mt. Sinai almost forty years earlier when *the Glory of the Lord "filled the tabernacle"* (Ex. 40:34), first existed in the land under Joshua's leadership and lasted for about eight hundred years. The theocracy lasted until the time of the Babylonian captivity, when *the Glory departed from the temple* (Ezek. 8:4, 6-9; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23). The theocracy though, throughout the centuries of its existence, never came anywhere near the heights which God's calling for His son involved (because of continual disobedience on the son's part).

Then, when Christ came about six hundred years following the Babylonian captivity and the end of the theocracy, a remnant had returned to the land (a restoration which had begun under Zerubbabel over five centuries earlier). And though a remnant was in the land at this time, forming an Israeli nation, *there was no restoration of the theocracy, for there was no Glory.* The Glory would not return until following Israel's repentance and restoration (*cf.* Ezek. 36:16-38; 39:21-29; 43:1-5).

The Times of the Gentiles

The Times of the Gentiles (when the Gentiles are in control of world affairs, government, etc.) lies between the departure and the restoration of the Glory. The Times of the Gentiles was running its course when Christ was here the first time. Rome was the world power, and Rome not only possessed governmental control over the remnant in the land but also over the Jewish people scattered throughout the Roman world of that day.

Israel had been called into existence to exercise governmental power and control over the Gentile nations, for purposes involving God's blessings (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:17, 18; Ex. 19:5, 6). Israel was to dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy, at the head of the nations; and God was not only to bless Israel but God was to bless the nations of the earth *through* Israel. All spiritual blessings were to flow *to and through* Israel in this manner.

But events transpired which resulted in a *complete reversal* of the position Israel had been called to occupy relative to the nations. The Gentiles had been allowed to invade the land of Israel and take the Jewish people captive (the northern kingdom by the Assyrians about 722 B.C., and the southern kingdom by the Babylonians about 605 B.C. [beginning the Times of the Gentiles]). And centuries later, when Christ was upon earth, the Gentiles still exercised control over world affairs, something which has continued down to the present day and time.

Why had this been allowed to occur? Why had matters been allowed to go in this direction, with the Gentiles exercising governmental control after this fashion — control which included both the Jewish people and their land? Why had God dealt with Israel in this manner?

And not only was Israel under Gentile dominion when Christ came the first time, but the nation, in its unbelief and disobedience, wanted nothing to do with the One announced by the wise men to be Israel's King; nor did they want anything to do with the proffered kingdom.

Why? After all, acceptance would have freed them from Rome's control and Gentile dominion in general. But there was only *rejection* on Israel's part.

God went to great lengths in both an offer of the kingdom preceding Christ's crucifixion (an offer lasting about three and one-half years) and a reoffer of the kingdom following Christ's resurrection and ascension (a subsequent offer lasting about thirty additional years). But Israel rejected the proffered kingdom both times.

In the first offer of the kingdom, the Jewish people, in their rejection, went so far as to crucify the One making the offer. The religious leaders, even though they knew Christ's identity — One Who had come from God, *the Heir* of the vineyard — were not going to have this Man reign over them (*cf.* Matt. 21:38; John 3:2).

Then, in the reoffer of the kingdom, Israel's reli-

gious leaders reacted to the message the same way they had reacted in the original offer. They began to threaten, beat, imprison, and even kill the ones proclaiming the message (cf. Acts 5:40-42; 7:54-60; 8:1-3; 9:24, 29). They still were not going to have *the Heir* of the vineyard reign over them (which would have necessitated His return from heaven [cf. Acts 3:19-21; 7:56, 57]).

The entire nation, save “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5), followed the downward course set by its religious leaders; and this resulted in God eventually setting the nation aside (about 62 A.D.) for a dispensation. Jerusalem was then destroyed by the Gentile world power of that day (by Rome, in 70 A.D.), and the Jewish people were subsequently scattered among and left at the mercy of the Gentile nations.

But, even though Israel was set aside, allowing God to deal with a separate people for a dispensation (those forming *the one new man* “in Christ”), principles established by God relative to Israel and the nation’s calling still remained in effect. And these principles centered around *blessings* and *curses*, not only for Israel but for the Gentiles as well. Israel, because of disobedience, would fall into the latter category (curses); and the Gentiles, depending upon their attitude toward and treatment of Israel, could fall into either category (blessings or curses).

(God, through Moses, had outlined this entire matter in graphic and minute detail to Israel after He called the nation out of Egypt. There are two long chapters in the revelation given through Moses — Lev. 26; Deut. 28 — where God went to great lengths to relate that which would occur if the Jewish people were obedient to His commandments and that which, on the other hand, would occur if they were disobedient.)

Israel had chosen the latter path. Israel had been disobedient to the Lord’s commandments. And, true to His Word, God had allowed Gentile powers to come into the land and uproot the Jewish people (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64).

And throughout the remainder of that dispensation and the ensuing dispensation, during the time when Israel was out of favor with God, one thing could not occur — the Gentile nations could not be blessed in the manner which God had intended through Israel’s calling, for these blessings had to flow *through Israel dwelling in the land within a theocracy.*

Blessings of this nature would have to await a time when Israel was once again in favor with God. They would have to await Israel’s future restoration, which would, of necessity, have to include the restoration of the theocracy to Israel.

The picture is that of God’s firstborn son — whom the Father had called into existence to be the channel through which He would bless all the Gentile nations — being out of favor with the Father (through disobedience). As a result, chastisement has befallen this son, with the Father allowing the Gentile nations to subdue and control His son, resulting not only in the son being chastened by the Father but in the numerous blessings which God had reserved for the Gentile nations being withheld from these same nations.

However, some of the Gentiles (nations and individuals) — not really understanding that which has happened — have brought curses upon themselves by seeking to help God chasten His son.

“And I will...curse him that curseth thee...” (Gen. 12:3a).

“...I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [the Gentiles] that are at ease; for I was a little displeased [with my son], and they helped forward the affliction [anti-Semitic actions of the Gentiles]” (Zech. 1:14b, 15).

Others (nations and individuals), on the other hand — some understanding, some not understanding that which has happened — have brought blessings upon themselves by being a friend to the Father’s son (though not the abundance of blessings reserved for the Gentiles, with Israel in favor with God).

“And I will bless them that bless thee...” (Gen. 12:3a).

The whole of world conditions down through the centuries has revolved around God’s plans and purposes surrounding Israel in the preceding respect, His dealings with Israel relative to the nation’s calling, and His dealings with the Gentile nations relative to Israel’s calling. *Everything in this respect has revolved around and continues to revolve around Israel. ISRAEL ALONE IS THE KEY.*

And, apart from the Gentile nations of the world taking into account God’s plans and purposes surrounding Israel, there can not even be a *beginning* to

a solution of any one of the problems which confront these same nations. *That’s how IMPORTANT the nation of Israel is in the affairs of world history.*

Nor can that which has happened to Israel over the centuries — from the brickyards in Egypt to the ovens in Auschwitz, typified by the ever-burning bush in Arabia during Moses’ day, or the three Hebrew men in a furnace heated seven times hotter than normal during Daniel’s day — be explained any way other than that which is set forth in Scripture relative to the nation’s calling. The Father is *chastening His son, because of disobedience.* And, at times, the Gentile nations have stepped in and “helped forward the affliction [the chastisement],” something which God has allowed (though these same Gentile nations have paid or will pay dearly for their part in the matter [Gen. 12:3]).

As long as the son continues unrepentant, the chastisement will continue. And not only will it continue, but in the latter days, through the Gentiles seeking to help “forward the affliction,” conditions will deteriorate to the point that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. 24:22a).

But in That Day

But in that day God is going to intervene in man’s vain attempts to help chasten His son. God is going to supernaturally shorten those days, and He will do this for the sake of His son. And it will be following this time that all of the past chastisement will bear fruit. The son will ultimately be brought to the place of repentance, allowing God to restore Israel, restore the theocracy to Israel, and bring the Times of the Gentiles to an end.

There is that which *Scripture has to say* about the matter, and there is that which *man may think* about the matter. *The two are worlds apart.*

The Creator has stated the matter in no uncertain terms, and He has stated the matter to both *inform* and *warn* His son. *Obedience results in blessings, and disobedience results in curses.* God’s disobedient son *must* be brought to the place of repentance. *Only then* can God bless Israel and the Gentile nations through Israel.

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