

The Gospel Herald

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD'S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by

Donald E. Martin, Sr.

Christians in America becoming vexed in a nation as a type of Israel's Babylonian captivity *Jeremiah 29:4-14*

When one reads the scriptural record of the children of Israel being led off into captivity into the Babylonian empire (geographically Iraq today), it is quite interesting as to what God had instructed them to do as His people being captives of this pagan nation.

We read first, “I have CAUSED you to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon” (Jerem. 29:4). As a persuaded believer that the God of the scriptures is the FIRST CAUSE of all things which come to pass, and even those things which have yet occurred, we see where God has decreed, determined, ordained, and predestined the children of Israel to be led away by the Babylonians. God further instructed them to do the following: “Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished” (Jerem.29: 5-6).

God instructed His people to get settled in, for they shall be captives for seventy years in a strange land. From this scriptural text, I would like to attempt to draw an analogy of we who are God's people in a land which is becoming more and more as a strange land compared to its initial Christian foundational principles and freedoms.

As you read the ten verses indicated in the above reference, you will see that God, by sovereign design and predestined purpose, has brought about all the experiences which they must go through, yet they never denounce their God.

I would like to look at the “I will” and the “I have” of God in the captivity of His people. Again, God reiterates, “I have CAUSED you to be carried away captives” (Jerem. 29:7). After seventy years of captivity in Babylon, “I WILL visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.” (Jerusalem) v. 10. Keep in mind that God’s people were to live peaceably and press on with their lives, multiplying, knowing that many over the seventy years shall mortally perished, as well.

God said to Israel, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, TO GIVE YOU AN EXPECTED END. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and, I WILL HEARKEN UNTO YOU. And ye shall seek me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I WILL BE FOUND of you, saith the Lord; and I WILL turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I HAVE DRIVEN YOU, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I CAUSED YOU to be carried away captive” (v. 11-14).

Now, in the finality of the text we have examined, it is without doubt that God SHALL unconditionally love His people even when they are CAUSED to go through the fires of afflictions, despair, and even captives by an ungodly, pagan nation. His ELECT shall persevere and shall be that light which shineth in the darkness of paganism. I see that even though America as a nation, as a majority, has turned a deaf ear to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the government has continued to be more and more anti-Christian by its laws and oppression of Christian morality and principles, even to the point it has been suggested that mosques and Christian churches be monitored as to their possibility of becoming radical in their religious intentions.

I am persuaded as a Christian, that the United States of America has SEEN THE BEST OF THE BEST from the 1960s to the year 2000 regarding the blessings of God. The Christian believer has, without question, become a greater minority than ever before in its two hundred and thirty-nine-year history as a republic of people.

What shall we do as believers of the scriptures and that glorious GOOD NEWS of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in a land which is day-by-day degenerating from the morality which the scriptures teach and exhort?

I say, dear beloved of God, it is by God’s sovereign mercy and great grace that we shall endure till the end, maintaining a hope and a solemn belief that our Lord Jesus Christ shall CAUSE us to press on as LIGHTS in a world of darkness, seeking Gods enabling grace to live peaceably among all men that they may know we are the Lord’s people and are “in the world, but not of the world.” Just as God, our Father, promised Israel He would deliver them from their captivity, so shall we be delivered from our captivity

from an ungodly nation (nations worldwide) by His promised advent return. And whether death succeeds in our mortal frame prior to His glorious return, “whether we live, or we die, we are the Lord’s;” that grand promise of being changed into an immortal and incorruptible body be manifested by our Lord’s divine promise: What shall we fear?

Can anything separate God’s elect from His sovereign love? The apostle penned that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39).

Yes, dear ones, we shall weep as the children of Israel when they were required to hang their instruments upon the willow trees in Babylon in captivity and were exempt of the joy of the Lord; yet, God never forsook them, for ALL their captivity experiences were predestined and determined of our sovereign God. He shall prove His people by His sustaining grace and divine mercy, which endureth forever!

We watch and weep over the demise of America and England, and those lands which once stood firm and strong for Christ’s everlasting gospel, yet the majority have departed with humanistic and materialistic pleasures, rejecting the God of the Bible. Does this not even more reveal that only a REMNANT shall be saved, and those of that REMNANT shall be blessed by grace to endure to the end (whether physical death, or the end of the world). For HE who has called us into such a lively HOPE cannot lie, neither is there any shadow of turning with Him.

To Christ be the glory and praise without end. For we are mere Pilgrims, Strangers, and Sojourners in a foreign land which is not our promised home; I’m homesick for a place I’ve never been.

Respectfully submitted