

Kingdom Report

Week of 31 August 2019

Part 5 Creating Ekklesia-City States Across Southern Africa: A New Vision of the Church

It is critically important for the Christians of Southern Africa to catch the vision of the City-Church. These are the New Jerusalem's, the Ekklesia's, the many "sheep nations" that will establish the Kingdom of God in Southern Africa.

I want to apply the lessons of the exodus out of Babylon that we have been following in a practical way to our vision for Southern Africa. I am claiming that the Lord gave the answer to our question "Can these bones live again..." Yes they can, yes they did and that revival of the bones of Israel to restoration are recorded in the books and ministries of Ezra, Nehemiah, Zachariah, Haggai, Malachi.

There is a clear roadmap outlined for us there. I want to explain that roadmap with some historical facts and let's see how we can apply that to the church of Southern Africa.

The prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel all relate to the demise and destruction of first the nation of Israel (the 10 northern tribes) taken in captivity by 721 BC by the Assyrians. then the captivity of the nation of Judah by the Babylonians in about 604 BC and then the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon by the Babylonians in 587 BC. No temple, no priesthood, no king, no nation, no Levites ministry, no nation, no Jerusalem. All gone, and now the people of God instead are building Babylon as indentured servants.

And that is my analysis of Southern Africa. We are the captured people of Southern Africa trapped into dying economies, nations like Zimbabwe already dead, and most others dying. Poverty, disease, joblessness, crime rife everywhere. We are shunned by the world's investors as dangerous and unprofitable. We are the object of pity and aid hand-outs. There are none of the blessings of Deuteronomy 28 to be seen in any of our nations.

Here we are a group of nations that have statistically the highest percentage of our population than any other region of the world who call themselves Christians...80%. We have the highest percentage of our population of any region in the world who call themselves charismatic-Pentecostal evangelical Christians...47% for both South Africa and Zimbabwe. We have the highest percentage of people who are actually in church on Sunday morning. Not like nations who call themselves 'Catholic' but are lucky to have 6% actually attending mass.

But what do we have to show for this? Are we a witness to the world of nations and people blessed of God? What has 40 years (from 1980-2020) of "prosperity preaching" meant practically for poverty alleviation in our nations? In those 40 years China has lifted 800 million people out of abject poverty and created 600 million new middle class people. The projection is by 2025 poverty will be eliminated entirely

from China. In 40 years from 1950-1990 a totally devastated and bombed out Japan rose from poverty to the second largest economy in the world. With the same amount of people that Southern Africa has but with none of our farmland, minerals or energy supplies. The same for South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan etc.

The empty factories of Bulawayo that used to employ thousands are now filled with churches. Mega-churches of many thousands of people are everywhere to be found in our African cities. Lagos has them by the tens of thousands in meetings. The fastest growing entrepreneurial class in South Africa is the spread of franchise churches in every block and neighborhood of our cities.

Praise God for the preaching of the gospel but don't you think we are missing something somewhere? With all this preaching and churches spreading should that not be reflected in our statistics of crime, corruption, assaults, rapes, divorces, murders, abortions? Why is Cape Town the 11th most dangerous city in the world?

In short....what happened to the vision? What happened to the vision of prosperity? What happened to the vision of blessing? What happened to the vision of changed lives that change a culture and society? Why are so many preachers getting a "call" from God to start a church in America or Australia or New Zealand? (As if those nations actually needed more preachers from South Africa!)

Let me give you the roadmap out of this Babylon state capture that the Israelites took to regain their calling and their vision to be a light to the nations and prosperous people....

Let's look at the ministries of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah as told to us from these books of scripture and see God's roadmap to national rebuilding and prosperity.

Zerubbabel and the First Exodus 533 BC : Building the Temple

In about 539 BC Cyrus invaded Babylon and freed the Jews. He was greatly persuaded when the Jewish leaders showed him the ancient prophecies of Isaiah that named him personally (Isaiah 45).

The actual first exodus however took a number of years to organize and started in 533 BC under the leadership of Zerubbabel who was of the royal house of Judah and he was also a personal friend of the king of Persia, Darius Hystaspis, who took over from Cyrus the Mede. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that the captivity of Judah would last 70 years. (from 604 BC to 533 BC).

Zerubbabel was appointed governor of Judea and he took with him the high priest Jeshua. They started the great project of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Here is your reading assignment. The books of Zachariah and Haggai the prophets were written at that time as these two prophets encouraged the people in this first great task.

Ezra and the Second Exodus 459-458 BC

Ezra was a priest and received permission in the 7th year of Persian king Artaxerxes to take a contingent of new settlers to Jerusalem. Your reading assignment...read the book of Ezra in this context:

It is about 70 years since the first settlers had arrived in Jerusalem. Ezra took with him gifts from the Persian king for the house of God and allowed him to bring a contingent of priests and Levites with him.

Ezra was appalled at the situation he found there. There the people were discouraged. The people were hopelessly in debt, there was no real ministry in the temple, the priests had no book of law, the people did not know the word of God, the people of Israel were mingled in with other people there and no different in their lifestyles.

Ezra proceeded to cleanse the priests and trained them and the people in the laws of God teaching them Word of God. He started proper keeping of the Feasts of Israel, the sacrifices, the copying of the scriptures after he assembled the scriptures together.

Nehemiah and the Third Exodus 445 BC

Nehemiah who was the cup bearer of the king of Persia and a close friend heard of the economic conditions of his people in Jerusalem and asked if he could lead a new settlement group to Jerusalem and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. The king appointed him governor and Nehemiah left with a new group of 42,360 settlers and 200 singers.

When he arrived there he immediately set about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and set up its defenses by rebuilding its walls. This allowed an economic revival along with the spiritual revival that was started earlier by Ezra.

Your reading assignment: read the book of Nehemiah in the context of this great building program of restoring the vision and the prosperity and spiritual calling of the nation of Israel.

Please note the following issues as we apply these lessons to our situation in Southern Africa:

- First please note that this whole restoration process took over 100 years to accomplish.
- Note the importance of all the ministries involved...prophets, teachers, pastors, leaders, builders....this was Apostolic work...rebuilding the waste places!
- Note also that the secular leaders of the nations that the Jews were living in always helped in the process...God touched the hearts of the rulers to give help to the great work in Jerusalem.
- Note also that the whole vision of Jerusalem restored was not in opposition to Persia or Babylon or Greece or Rome...Jerusalem restored was a place of scripture and Word of God restored, a place for people to hear the Word of God and come to bring sacrifices and be blessed.
- History records that all the major rulers of the world empires from Babylon to Rome were introduced to the Lord through the restored Jerusalem....Alexander the great did not touch Jerusalem even though the Jews were on the side of the Persians in his

war...why? Because he saw a vision from God that warned him. Octavian (Augustus Caesar) visited Jerusalem after his battle with Anthony in Egypt and gave gifts from his own treasure asking the High Priest to make a daily sacrifice every day for the rest of his life to the God of Israel.

Here is my application for the roadmap to our restoration in Southern Africa....

- 1) We have done what Zerubbabel did in the first wave...we have built churches in all our cities of the land.
- 2) We have done what Ezra the priest did in the second wave of God's restoration process...we have restored the Word of God, we have restored the priesthood and heard the prophets encourage us. We have had ministries of teaching and revival and holiness unto the Lord.
- 3) Now we need the Third Wave of Nehemiah!

The coming Third Wave movement....Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem

When Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem he created a city of God. He created a vessel which separated the people of God from the world. He would not accept the help of the outsiders in this great endeavor. He said this is God's city, this is where we bring our worship, our gifts our lives our efforts.

It is this city concept this city-state in the midst of the Persian empire that said although we are a part of the great Persian empire, yet here in this city we are God's people and here we do things God's way! Here we are a blessing to the nations, here we teach the nations, but this only belongs to the people of God.

This is the idea of the "ekklesia" that Jesus spoke about. Jesus did not say I will build my synagogues, He said I will build my "Church"....and that word "ekklesia" spoken by Jesus and Paul had a meaning to those people that has lost a meaning to our day and age. It was a political city state. That is what Babylon, Rome, Athens were...."ekklesias" city states.

When Jesus spoke of separating out "sheep nations" from "goat nations", when God told Abraham that he would be a father to a multitude of nations...this is what Paul in Romans 4 was talking about.

This is what God wants in the Third wave of coming revival....the vision and ministry of Nehemiah.

In every city of Southern Africa....Joburg, Harare, Bulawayo, Pretoria, Lilongwe, Maputo...there needs to be a "Church of Pretoria" a "Church of Cape Town". It means that the Christians of every city across our region must come together and like Nehemiah start building walls around God's people for protection, prosperity and blessing...we create our own economies, we create our own courts, we create our own schools, we create our own industries....that is what a City Church can do that a home church cannot do.

You can set up a hundred tabernacles in a city. You can have a thousand home meetings. But if we are to rebuild our nations and if we are to bring blessing and prosperity to our lands...we need to do the next great move of God!

This is not easy...our biggest problem will be convincing our church leaders that we need to start working together. We need to convince our great business and educationists and many others that we need to create a new society of God's people who work with other of God's people.

We are not there yet. Southern Africa is going to degrade politically and economically much further. But I prophetically state the time is coming and I am preparing for it when the people of God are going to get off their knees and start taking action and start the exodus out of the collapsing system and not exit to America or England or Australia....but exit to build the New Jerusalems!

More of this revelation ahead.....