

Chapter 10



The Restoration of the Davidic Government - Prophetic Timing

Part II

At the Council of Jerusalem in 50 A.D., a number of critical issues facing the early church were addressed. The Council of Jerusalem dealt with the growth dynamics and needs of early Christianity as it developed in the then-current world environment. The decisions made on these issues were to prove to be watershed positions which were to affect the direction of Christianity for centuries.

The 'restoration of David' was referenced by James, the brother of Jesus, at this council meeting (Acts 15:16-18) and was a textual extrapolation of Amos 9:11-12. Some issue decisions were delayed until they could be fully implemented in the 'restoration of David,' as James implied. Thus the future 'restoration of David' was an expected and anticipated reality of the early Christian church.

Part I reviewed the textual references that forecast the restoration of the Davidic government. In Part I a new land use plan of the restored Davidic government is cited, the forecasted Temple construction is shown, and the forecast of a Davidic civil government implementation is referenced. Part II addresses the prophetic timing of the restoration.

It is an axiomatic Christian view and tradition that no major event in the economy of the world which affects God's people has occurred without textual support and forecast. While exegetes may diverge on specifics, the presence and availability of prophetic documentation is well established. The restoration of the Davidic government is a circumstance for which there is substantial forecasting prophetic documentation. One specific textual forecast applies to this circumstance--it is the well-known prophecy in Daniel, entitled the 2,300-day prophecy. This chapter reviews that prophecy as a forecast of the Davidic government restoration. The prophecy is inextricably associated with economic justice issues.

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The Ancient Davidic Kingdom

The government of David (2 Samuel 1-24: 1 Kings 1-2) existed from approximately 1010 B.C. through 970 B.C. It was followed by the reign (970-930 B.C.) of David's son Solomon. (1 Kings 2-11) Together the Davidic/Solomonic government spanned only some eighty years.

In the seventh year of David's reign, he moved against Jerusalem, capturing it from the Jebusites (Canaanite control). Jerusalem was of great religious importance, as its history went back to Salem, the royal city of Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God. It was Melchizedek who received tithes from Abraham who recognized his authority--in turn, Melchizedek gave his blessing to Abraham. David now enhanced Jerusalem's importance with the tribes of Israel by bringing the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the city and placed it on Mount Zion, north of the city. According to the book of Deuteronomy, Yahweh had chosen Jerusalem as his dwelling place, and it carried his name. Jerusalem had become central to the tribes, and they were now under united control.

David's son, Solomon, inherited the government from his father and began an expansive building program which included a new palace, a separate palace for his queen, a new assembly hall, a new treasury (the house of the forest of Lebanon) and an imposing temple which he built north of the citadel, in the area where the Dome of the Rock and the el-Aqsa mosque now stands.

Solomon's extensive building programs and expensive life style brought his administration into heavy debt, requiring onerous taxation and forced labor--policies which turned the tribes of Israel against the house of David. It was Solomon's son, Rehoboam, who against advice, continued the heavy taxation policies of his father. And the kingdom subsequently divided over these oppressive administration policies. This division ultimately ended the dynasty of David. The promise of God, though, was to repair the damage done to David's kingdom by errors of his son and grandsons' administrations.

**"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old;.."
(Amos 9:11 RSV)**

Biblical Documents Predict the Restoration of the Davidic Government

Ancient Israel had been subjugated by Babylon and taken into exile because Israel had failed to institute social justice, opting instead to allow Bál land policies to create a wealthy class and a poverty class in Israel. A time prophecy given by Daniel indicated that the exile, the distress of Jacob, was to span 2,300 plus years, after which the exile judgment was to be reversed and there was to be a restoration of Israel. A specific message regarding this restoration was given by Jeremiah and is recorded in the 30th chapter of the book by his name. It reads:

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. For behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and will bring them back to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.

These are the words which the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah: 'Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? Alas! that day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it. And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will break the yoke from off their neck, and I will burst their bonds, and strangers shall no more make servants of them. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.' "

Jeremiah 30:1-9 RSV

Jeremiahs's prediction regarding the restoration of Israel was made in relation to the subjugation judgment brought by Israel's failure to follow God's instruction regarding the institution of social justice--specifically it was brought for failing to observe the Hebrew Jubilee. A brief background of this failure follows.

Land ownership practices in Israel at the time of Jesus had a history dating back to the 9th century. In the 9th century B.C., the striking difference in land policies between Israel and Phoenicia is illustrated in the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-19). King Ahab wished to add Naboth's vineyard to his adjacent estate. Naboth refused to sell or exchange his vineyard, claiming that to do so would violate the heritage of his clan. The Báal (Phoenician) system of land usage and ownership practices treated land not as an inheritance to be retained, but rather as a commodity to be bought and sold. Therefore, under the Báal system of commodity land laws, Naboth's insistence that his land heritage be maintained was a preposterous position. King Ahab's wife Jezebel subsequently had Naboth condemned in a public trial for blasphemy against the god Báal and the king. Naboth was executed and the vineyard was taken. This difference in land policy between Phoenicia and Israel caused Elijah the Tishbite to thunder in moral outrage, "If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Báal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18:21)

In the book of Leviticus (Leviticus 25:23), it was indicated that the land occupied by the Hebrews was not to be sold:

"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the country you possess, you shall grant a redemption of the land."

The hallmark spirit and character of Elijah the Tishbite (Elijah the Prophet) was in his opposition to Báal-inspired land practices in Israel. This opposition established his unique position in history as well as establishing the precedence for those who would follow him. Elijah's opposition to the Báal-inspired land policies in Israel along with activities against those who promoted these policies would become known to

posterity as 'the spirit and power of Elijah.' But in spite of efforts by Elijah (1 Kings 18:40), Gideon (Judges 6:25), Jehu (2 Kings 10:18), Jehoiada (2 Kings 11:18), and Josiah (2 Kings 23:4; 2 Chronicles 34:4) to destroy Báal worship, Báal observances continued. A reference in Jeremiah 23:27 indicates Israel had forgotten God for Báal. Jeremiah 32:29 records that incense was offered to Báal, and Jeremiah 32:35 indicates high places were built to Báal. Báal meant lord, master, possessor or owner, and Báal worship was enticing, in that Báal land ownership policies created an elitist wealthy class, an aristocracy, while at the same time creating a slave labor class. Jeremiah 23:13-40 makes plain that God would bring a longlasting reproach on Israel for instituting and continuing this error.

Although the Hebrew Jubilee was a critical social adjustment festival which was designed to correct the distribution imbalance caused by different land productivity rates, after the reign of Ahab and Jezebel the Jubilee was actually implemented only twice in Israel. The second attempted implementation of the Jubilee was short-lived, in that the resultant freeing of the slaves was soon reversed. This failure of instituting social justice in Israel brought the judgment of subjugation by Babylon. (See Chapter 3 for a more complete treatment of the land issue.)

This reference to the second institution of the Jubilee occurred during the reign of Zedekiah when Jerusalem was under Babylonian siege (587-586 B.C.). Zedekiah made a covenant with the people and "proclaimed freedom" to the slaves (Jeremiah 34:8). When the siege was temporarily lifted, however, the aristocracy changed their minds and took back their slaves (Jeremiah 34:11). Because of their hypocrisy, inspired by Báal cultural influences, the prophet Jeremiah announced that the people would be "set free"--to the sword, pestilence, and famine (vv. 15-17). (The Jubilee year and its prior sabbatical year were also observed in Hezekiah's time, when the Assyrians were besieging Jerusalem.)

When the Babylonians returned, resuming and completing the siege of Jerusalem and subjugating Israel, we are told that they left the poor as vinedressers in the land (II Kings 25:12). Thus God forcibly implemented social justice in Israel, permitting the laboring class to continue in the land but removing the aristocracy who had practiced Báal policies. However, even with this, the implementation of Báal-inspired

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