

MINISTERING TO SPIRITUAL DECLINING NATION (part two)

This is the second lesson on the subject of Ministering to a Spiritually Declining Nation.

Today's lesson will study Jesus' ministry to the Priest-Nation of Israel while under the 4th cycle of Divine Discipline recorded in our lesson text.

In our last lesson we studied the Parable of Tenants recorded in Matt.21:33-46. It was one of the final warnings given by Jesus to Priest-Nation of Israel of the coming of the 5th cycle of Divine Discipline.

This lesson will study six aspects of Jesus Ministering to the Spiritually Declining Priest-Nation of Israel.

1. The entire earthly ministry of Jesus was to the Priest-Nation under the 4th of five cycles of Divine Discipline as recorded in (Deut.28:14-68) and (Lev.26:14-46).

We will briefly examine the Five Cycles of Divine Discipline as recorded in (Lev.26:14-46).

- 1st cycle (Lev.26:14-17) Health issues (vs.14-15)
- 2nd cycle (Lev.26:18-20) Health (7 times more) **plus** economic issues (vs.18-19)
- 3rd cycle (Lev.26:21-22) Economic (7 times more) **plus** crime issues (vs.21)
- **4th cycle (Lev.26:23-26) Crime (7 times more) plus sword and pestilence issues (vs.23-24)**
- 5th cycle (Lev.26:27-46) Sword and pestilence (7 times more) **plus** fall of Priest-Nation (vs.27-28)

2. Notice that the 4th cycle comes with 7 times more health, economic crisis and crime - plus wars, rumors of war and pestilence causing wide-spread hunger and fear.

Jesus spoke about it from **Isa.5** in the Temple Discourse (Matt.21-23).

Jesus also mentioned the coming of 5th Cycle in His Lament over Jerusalem in (Matt.23:37-39) "Behold, your house is being left to you **desolate!**" (Matt.23:38; Lev.26:32-35; Jer.22:5)

3. (Lev.26:40-46) explains how to recover from ANY Cycle of Divine Discipline -"If they confess their iniquity." (Lev.26:40; 1 John 1:9)

5th Cycle Promise:

(Lev.26:44-45) "Yet in spite of this, when they are **in the land of their enemies**, I will not reject them, **nor will I** so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. **But I will** remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that **I might be** their God. I am the Lord."

Restoration to the land brings them back to Priest-Nation status (Deut.30:1-5).

4. The 5th cycle reduced Israel to client nation status. Under Cyrus, Israelites were allowed to return to their land. This is the period between Nehemiah and the birth of Jesus Christ (432-5 BC).

We call this the inter-biblical period of Persians, Hellenism, Hasmoneans/ Maccabean, and Romans.

5. The spiritual decline of the Priest-Nation was due to their failure of understanding the importance of their responsibility of custodianship of the Word of God, The Gospel of Christ, and Evangelism (Ex.19:6; Isa.42:6-7; 49:6; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47).

Between Nehemiah and the birth of Jesus Christ (432-5BC) [Probably during Hasmoneans], Pharisaical Judaism took custodianship of Shadow Christology, the Word of God, and Evangelism of Gospel of Christ. But they ignored the doctrinal importance of Shadow Christology to the Gospel of Christ and Grace Salvation. (Gal.3:16; Gen.3:15).

This failure created a spiritual vacuum and the substitution of works of the Law for grace salvation through believing the gospel of Christ (Gal.2:16; 3:8).

They substituted rigid morality, nationalism, and religious works for the Gospel of Christ (John 3:1-21).

6. The final apostasy of the Priest-Nation is recorded in the Parable of the Tenants (Matt.21:33-46).

(Matt.21:37-39) “But afterward He sent His Son to them, saying, ‘They will respect My Son.’ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill and seize His inheritance.’ They took Him, and threw Him out of the vineyard and killed Him.”

The final apostasy was the killing of the Son of God. It brought the 5th cycle and the destruction of Israel by Rome (70 AD).

(Matt.21:40-41) “Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will He do to those vine-growers? They said to Him, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay Him the proceeds at the proper seasons.’”

Ryrie on Matt.21:41

“Taken from the Jews and given to the church, which is composed largely of Gentiles (1 Pet.2:9).

NIV on Matt.21:41

“Other tenants – Gentiles, to whom Paul turned when the Jews, for the most part, rejected the gospel (Acts13:46; 18:6). By the second century the church was composed almost entirely of Gentiles.”

This will be the subject of our third lesson on the Church Ministering to the Spiritually Declining Nation of America.