

Exile.

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Most of us born from above through faith in the Lord Jesus, the Christ, have gone, or are going through, similar experiences and frustrations.

With elders - problems. Without elders - problems.

The real issues though are much deeper.

In Daniel chapter 7, Daniel has a dream in which he is shown the 4 succeeding world kingdoms, Chaldean (Babylonian), Median-Persian, Greek starting with Alexander the Great and finally the Roman Empire with special mention of Constantine.

Dan 7:19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, (Rome) which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

Dan 7:20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up (Constantine), and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

Dan 7:21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

Dan 7:22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Dan 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

Dan 7:24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings (Constantine).

Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out (age, as in make old, in the Greek Septuagint version) the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Dan 7:26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

Dan 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

If we miss the fact that Constantine achieved this wearing out of the saints through the establishment of a world religion called Christianity, then we risk being caught up in it, in some form or another. He didn't invent the Roman Catholic Church or the Greek Orthodox Church. They arose later. So did a thousand other things like them.

In Daniel chapter 8 these four world kingdoms are further explained and identified, with Rome and ultimately Constantine pointed out. Jesus made reference to these chapters in the Gospels, as they clearly prophesy the era of the coming of the Christ, the later destruction of the temple and Judah in AD70 and then the defeating of the saints (the assembly of the Christ) in Constantine's reign.

Daniel worked out the exile of the Jews in Babylon as being of 70 years duration (see Daniel chapter 9). But he didn't just carry on making the best of things until the time was up.

He got down on his knees. He confessed the sin of the people of God and himself. He acknowledged the righteousness of God in His judgements. He pleaded for the restoration of the temple and the service.

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Dan 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Dan 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Dan 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Dan 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

Dan 9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

Dan 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

Dan 9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

Dan 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

Dan 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

Dan 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

Dan 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

Dan 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

Dan 9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Dan 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

Dan 9:16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Dan 9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

Dan 9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

Dan 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Dan 9:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

If we understand where we are in history, post Constantine, in the time of the destruction of the assembly of the saints, the Holy habitation, the body of the Christ, what is our reaction?

To moan about the state of things?

To make the best of a bad job?

To think it has nothing to do with us - what will be, will be?

To pretend that we can create our own version of Jerusalem, our own assembly of the Christ, by our efforts and determination?

To love the world?

Or do we get down on our knees?

On our faces?

Tears in our eyes?

Pain in our heart?

Like Daniel, knowing that the exile will come to an end, but hastening the day, pleading, asking in faith that the assembly may be built again, through the name of the Lord Jesus, the Christ of God, who will return for a spotless bride, very soon.

When Jesus brings back the captivity of His people, again we will be one flock, one body, one Holy nation, one Kingdom.

Not all the Jews in Babylon behaved like Daniel and his three friends. Many ate the food from the King's table, but not these four.

Many may have bowed to Nebuchadnezzar's image, but not the three friends - they refused and visited the lions.

Many may have ceased praying to the God of Heaven during the prohibition of Darius, but not Daniel, he chose to carry on praying to the God of Heaven come what may. Many probably just got on with life, going to the synagogue, keeping out of trouble. But then, not all were given to understand the times and the seasons.

To whom much is given, much shall be required.

We do have something very positive we can be doing at this time.

If we have the heart.

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