

How to re-Build a Legacy

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 26th

Reflection: This week we “celebrate” the somber holiday of Memorial Day in which we honor those who have paid such a high price to win or defend our freedoms. The importance of looking back in gratitude for those who were willing to fight for such freedoms is not isolated to America.

“Those who fail to learn the lessons of history, Are destined to repeat them” (see 1 Cor. 10:11)
In 970 BC, Solomon dedicated the Temple of God! (2 Chron. 6,7) In His dedication prayer (2 Chr. 6) he prophetically lists the future of Israel in relation to their disobedience to God and the ensuing consequences. There are 7 “if...then” references to their sin, God’s judgment and deliverance in this prayer. (Vs 22-39) 38 *“If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, ...and pray toward the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear from the heavens, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.”*

God answers this prayer in 2 Chr. 7:14 with a final “If...then” of His own.

“If my people, which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

This prophetic prayer came true 400 years later. After turning from God and a series of neglected “wake up calls”, God removed Israel from the “promised land”.

- It was to this group that the promises of Jer. 29:11,-14 were written!
- This is what Daniel and the Lion’s den is really all about! (Dan. 6)

Just as Solomon, Jeremiah and Isaiah prophesied; 70 years later God moved King Cyrus to free the Jews and enable them to return and rebuild the Temple.

Ezra 1:1-3 *“The LORD God of heaven hath ...charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem... Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, and build the house of the LORD”*

- **Only 43,260 obeyed and returned.** (Ezra 2:65) *It appears that most had become too comfortable to leave their captivity!* (See Micah 2:10)

Those that returned faced the difficult task of rebuilding the Temple and the city.

1. Notice their priorities upon their return. (Ezra 3,4)

A. Peace with God Ez. 3:1,2 *“built the altar of God to offer burnt offerings, as it is written in the Law... for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries:”*

- 1) This was about remembering God’s holiness and His provision for forgiveness! (Lev. 17:11)

B. Acknowledging God’s Provision. Ezra 3:4 *“They kept also the feast of tabernacles...”*

- 1) This was about remembering their heritage! Dt 8:11-12 *“Beware that thou forget not the LORD”*

C. Desiring God’s Presence: Vs 10 they *“laid the foundation of the temple”*

- 1) This was about Recognizing God’s Presence and Restoring His worship!
Ex 29:42 *“where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.”*

D. Praising God: Vs 10 *“they set the priests ...and the Levites with cymbals to praise the LORD”*
Ps. 22:3 God *“inhabits the praises of His people.”*

2. Notice the problems they Faced.

A. Discouragement: Not like the “good old days”. Ez. 3:12 *“But many ...who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice”*

- 1) After 70 years of hope and wonder, their new reality didn’t meet up with the standards of their memory, Or fantasy! (Expectations can destroy appreciation!)

- 2) **God understood and addressed this.** Haggai 2:3,4 “*Yet now be strong, ...saith the LORD, and work; for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: ...*” vs 7 -9 “*I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts...*” **Jesus would minister in this Temple!**

B. Deception/Infiltration Ezra 4:1-2 *Now when the adversaries of Judah heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple ...; Then they came to Zerubbabel..and said, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon...*”

- 1) **These were known as “Samaritans” who were mixed in race and religion.**
2 Kings 17:33 “*They feared the LORD, and served their own gods*”

C. Frustration. Ezra 4

1) When the leaders declined their help, their true natures were revealed. Ezra 4:3-5 “*Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*”

This resulted in 15 years of delays!

Conclusion: The parallels between America and ancient Israel are astounding!

- 1) **We began with a desire to honor & Worship God. (Mayflower Compact 1620)**
- 2) **When we began to drift from God, trouble came and he raised up ministers to call us back to him.** (Jonathan Edwards, George Whitfield, Charles Finney, etc)
- 3) **The impasse of the Continental Congress was solved after daily prayer.**
- 4) **At Washington’s Inauguration (April 30, 1789) After taking his oath, Washington kissed the Bible, closed his eyes and in an attitude of devotion said "So help me God!"**
 - a) **In his inaugural address he repeatedly mentioned God’s Providential care.**
“...No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to ...an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.”
 - b) **Afterwards, he led the government in a procession to St. Paul’s chapel for worship!**
- 5) **We drifted from God again and the Civil war threatened to destroy America.**
 - a) **Lincoln acknowledged God’s hand in this during his 2nd inaugural address.**

Application: The Cycle of sin and suffering continues today!

In our hearts, homes, communities, & world!

God’s “If...Then” promises are still true and He’s looking for people who will:

- 1) **Recognize the real problem (sin).**
- 2) **Repent (of our Part in it).**
- 3) **Receive His Pardon (and peace)**
- 4) **Rely on His Power and partner with Him to:**
- 5) **Rebuild His Principles in our lives so we can...**

Do the hard and holy work of rebuilding a godly legacy! Is. 58:10-14

“if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity... And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul ... and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

13 *If thou turn away ..., from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:*

14 *Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”*