

## **National Disgrace for Christ's Sake**

‘A noted Washington monsignor was to be the guest of honor at a Washington banquet. A prominent politician was to serve as chairman but had been unavoidably detained. The toastmaster proceeded without him. Honor after honor was heaped upon the deserving churchman, and then he arose to accept their tributes. “The seal of the confessional”, he said, “can never be broken, and therefore I can only hint of my impressions when I came to Washington some twenty-five years ago. Oh, I thought I had wandered into a terrible place. The first man who entered the confessional told me a hair-raising tale of his graft and corruption, but as the days went on I knew I’d entered a fine community of lovely people and it has indeed been an honor to have been among you for all these fine years”. As he spoke, the chairman arrived and rushed to the front. The politician spoke next: “I’ll never forget the first day our honored guest arrived at this parish. In fact, I have the honor being the first to go to his confessional”.’

That joke is from a book published back in 1992. In light of the unbelievable corruption that has been exposed in just the last few years, we now have the disheartening realization that Washington, District of Columbia, has been descending into an ever more vile cesspool of depravity, debauchery, degeneracy and dis-

grace going on for an entire century. Indeed, our Savior has declared in Luke 12:2 that “everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all”. Of course, many American politicians have had a stinking reputation as a class of people for most of our young country’s history. But we never dreamed that the majority of them would be so compromised and corrupted that they cared not if they destroy the very country in which they live high on the hog. In fact, the current administration is not just corrupt. The ruling party with others, too, have given themselves over to straight up treason. The whole lot of them should be arrested and permanently locked up, as if they were carrying an incurable, deadly disease needing to be quarantined to protect the health of the country. Many of us may still want to give them the benefit of the doubt and think they are simply incompetent and making honest mistakes. Sorry to burst your bubble. The human sex trafficking resulting from our open border, the supposed debacle in Afghanistan, the trampling of our civil rights, the decimation of our economy, the breaks in our supply chains, rising inflation, currency devaluation, scarcity of energy and looming scarcity of daily items, all of it is all on purpose. Roll it all up together and you have one huge, putrid mass of sin. God’s heart is breaking!

Yet, we are not as bad as Judah was in Jeremiah’s day. He prophesied to the politicians, priests and professionals. No one listened. All rejected God’s word. They refused to repent and

turn from their wicked ways. Despite the warning they would be driven out from their Promised Land, suffering hundreds of thousands dead, and exiled to Babylon to live in slavery to their new masters, the middle and upper classes traded luxurious lifestyles for the abject poverty of servitude. The lower classes were largely allowed to remain, though living in grinding poverty under the Babylonian boot.

But even in this, God could not forget His agape love for His Chosen People. The exile would only be temporary. And this time it lasted only 70 years. Turns out, as God does everything perfectly, this 70-year period was exactly calculated based on the number of years that the people had disobeyed God's command to allow their land to rest, to lie fallow every seventh year. The 70 years allowed the land to recover from all the 490 years it had been "abused" by the willful, sinful, disobedience of the people.

Here in chapter 9, Daniel has been studying his Bible, as we all must every day. Reading Jeremiah, he realized that the 70 years foretold by Jeremiah were nearing an end. Soon the exile was to end, when the people could return to their land. He could only imagine how it might come about, for it seemed completely impossible. But Babylon had been overthrown and new rulers taken power, the Medes and the Persians, as Daniel himself both predicted and then recorded the actual event in chapter 5. In a single day, the great, glorious, impregnable capital city of Babylon had fallen and changed hands. God likes to do things suddenly

so that everyone has to sit up and notice that there is indeed a God in heaven Who rules over all things on earth and beyond.

Seeing that the 70 years were soon to end, Daniel was moved to start praying about this. Chapter 9 records his marvelous prayer for himself and his people. Indeed, it is a model prayer for the situation we in America find ourselves in this very day. I encourage you to take your Bibles when you get home and pray Daniel's prayer for yourself and your country, if you love America and want to see her saved. Follow along with Daniel's words and where he says "Judah", change it to "Missouri", or whatever state you feel led to mention. Where Daniel says "Jerusalem", say our capital, "Washington, D.C.", and where he says, "Israel", change it to "the United States of America". I do ask you to pray a lot for various concerns, but there are more things needing prayer these days than when we were all younger. Furthermore, as most of us are older, there are fewer physically-demanding things that we can do, and the most important thing that is needed is prayer, and that we can do. In spades. Give all your personal concerns over to the Lord. Mention them to Him, but don't obsess over them. He will do what is best, and He is always with you regardless of how things look or what is said or not said by those around you. Put your faith in Him. Always.

With Daniel still praying, notice what then happens. The angel Gabriel appears. The same angel that announced to Mary that she would bear the Lord Jesus. Here, Gabriel explains to

Daniel the astounding future events that he had earlier seen in a vision. Daniel is shown that the Jews would return to the Land and begin rebuilding Jerusalem. It took them seven sevens, that is seven weeks of years, thus 49 years, to complete it, in the face of armed opposition the whole time. Then began the “sixty-two sets of seven”, 434 years, which ended when the “Anointed One will be killed”, meaning when Christ Jesus was crucified.

After that, there is a long period of wars and desolations that is followed by a final single week, or one set of seven, which is said to be the end of this age. The “ruler” mentioned in verse 27 is defined as the antichrist by the references in Revelation. It’s the period of 3½ years of a false peace, followed by the second 3½ years in which “he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him”. The Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes that took over the Promised Land sacrificed a fat pig on the Jerusalem Temple’s altar on December 16, 167 B.C., is a foreshadow of the final desecration of the soon-to-be built Third Temple in Jerusalem. Whatever Antiochus Epiphanes did will be far surpassed by the actions of the soon-coming antichrist. For Antiochus Epiphanes’ trouble in attempting to abolish the Jewish religion, God punished him just three years later when he “contracted a most painful wasting disease while on a military campaign in the east, and died in agony” (Bill Potter). His actions

led to the Maccabean revolt which for a short time reestablished Jerusalem's independence, at the beginning of which the miracle of Hanukkah occurred which our Lord Jesus celebrated, and which we will commemorate again this November and December.

As we know, when Lord Jesus actually came, the majority of the movers and shakers, upper class Jews, rejected Him, and even went so far as to reintroduce a "refined" Hebrew Bible to be used in place of the commonly-used Greek translation that our Lord Jesus and the apostles read from. This "revised" version toned down the most explicit and vivid references to the coming Messiah that could too easily be interpreted only to refer to Christ Jesus. Despite those efforts, the Scriptural references, most particularly Isaiah 53, still clearly refer to Lord Jesus. For this rejection, in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and nearly all the Jews were again exiled from the Land. Later, those who failed to heed the warnings to flee the Nazis, lost their lives in hot ovens and poison gas showers. But the result of the Holocaust was the return of the Land to the Jews in 1948, and Jerusalem itself in 1967. And with that, the final decades of this Gentile age before Christ returns began. As we'll see, what we're going through now is all predicted. Our response to our current national disgrace is to all the more seek Christ's sake, His honor, until the end of this age finally comes. To show the mocking nations that Lord Jesus is, and is coming soon, and our grand eternity begins as we live in the very light of His glorious presence.

