

The Jesus Trip, Moralism Rides Again

By: D. Karl Thomas

Ezra 1:1-8 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the **word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled**, the Lord **stirred up** the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, ... He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah ...”

“...with all those whose spirits God had **stirred up**, to go up to re build the house of the Lord...”

uwr :-- to move by force, to rouse, incite, to stir up.

This is a gracious act initiated by a loving God.

It is a work of God from beginning to the end.

Jeremiah 31:31,34 “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Ezekiel 36:25-27 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you ...”

Ezra 9:8-9 “...now, for a **brief moment**, grace has been shown us ...to give us some reviving to set up the house of our God...”

rega:-- Brief moment, specific time, limited time, with fixed boundaries. **Karois** Moment – Fullness of time.

Three returns led by three different leaders:

1. Zerubbabel 2. Ezra 3. Nehemiah

Same pattern and result: **Hopeful beginning - Opposition - Disappointing end.**

Nehemiah 13:25, 31 “So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, ... Remember me, O my God, for good!”

Genesis 3:4 “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”

Self govern with this new knowledge of good and evil.

Satan’s challenge to Adam and Eve was, don’t you want to be Godly, knowing right and wrong?

The fruit of self was introduced to mankind. INDEPENDENCE

We have the ability to now determine what is right and wrong. We will self govern! MORALISM

Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. President of SBT Seminary

Why Moralism Is Not the Gospel—And Why So Many Christians Think It Is (Article 03/09/09)

“The theological temptation of moralism is one many Christians and churches find it difficult to resist. The danger is that the church will communicate by both direct and indirect means that what God expects of fallen humanity is moral improvement. In so doing, the church subverts the Gospel and communicates a false gospel to a fallen world

The deadly danger of moralism has been a constant temptation to the church and an ever-convenient substitute for the Gospel. Clearly, millions of our neighbors believe that moralism is our message. Nothing less than the boldest preaching of the Gospel will suffice to correct this impression and to lead sinners to salvation in Christ.”

“Hell will be highly populated with those who were "raised right." The citizens of heaven will be those who, by the sheer grace and mercy of God, are there solely because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Moralism is not the Gospel.”

When you look beyond the moralisms, the apocalyptic visions and prophetic prediction, and you look to see Jesus in the book of Daniel, it's not about prophetic gifts and mantles and activations. It's not about good behaviour and courageous moral living. It's not even about prophetic predictions beyond this single fact! it points to Jesus.

(Zach Sloane)

Moralism:— the belief that the Gospel can be reduced to improvements in behaviour.

Galatians 2:21 “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Galatians 2:16 “...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

Matthew 5:20 “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Pharisees and Sadducees - group of men committed to never return to captivity, added rules!

Observations: **1. Rebuilt the Altar**

1 Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
The finished work of the cross is our priority!!!

2. Celebrate Foundations

Ezra 3:11 “Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.” **Acts 2:40-47** “continued steadfastly” **Doctrine, Communion, Prayer, Fellowship, Giving,**

3. Overcome Opposition

Ezra 4:4-5, 23 “Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose ... **and by force of arms made them cease.**”

4. Prophetic Encounter

Ezra 5:1 “Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.”

Zechariah 3:2, 8-9 “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire? ... For behold, I am bringing forth **My Servant the BRANCH** ... remove the iniquity of that land **in one day.**”

Zechariah 4:6-7 “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone **With shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”**

Speak GRACE!!! A. Obstacles Are Removed “mountain ... become a plain”

B. Victory Is Certain “Hands ... begun it will complete it.”

C. Celebrate Small Things “Who despises the day of small things?”

D. Holy Spirit Is Eager To Act “...these seven shall rejoice...” Spirit is ready to act on the Word!

E. Unlimited Ceaseless Supply Of The Anointing “[feeding it continuously with oil.]” vs.3 (AMP)

Ezra 3:12 “...old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.” **There was no Glory!!!**

Haggai 2:7-9 “...they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts ... ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

2 Corinthians 3:15-18 “But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart ... But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory (OT) to glory (NT), just as by the Spirit of the Lord.