God Rules the Nations / Fulfill Your Purpose / The Fullness of Time
Overview of the Captivity and Restoration
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Intro:
- topical review of last quarter’s Sunday AM Bible class
- themes: God Rules the Nations / Fulfill Your Purpose / The Fullness of Time

God Rules the Nations
- Ps. 22:28 “For the kingdom is the Lord’s and He rules over the nations.”
  - Bible class: Neo-Babylonian Empire (606-535 B.C.), during which King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and the Jews went into captivity.
    - God gave rise to one nation, to bring down another, Judah, to punish them for their sins.
  - Bible class: God humbled Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4), he lived in the fields like an animal for seven years, till he
    - Dan. 4:14-15 till he recognized that God is ruler over the realm, and bestowed it on whomever He wishes.
  - God gives the rule over the kingdoms of the world to whom he pleases
    - Matt. 24 Jesus’ prophesy, fall of Jerusalem A.D. 70
    - Rev. Jesus’ prophesy, through John, fall of Rome
    - USA, future, fall?
    - God is in control – in democracy, we have our part to do – not worry

- Rom. 13:1, 2, 3-4, 5, 6-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14 responsibility, attitude, civil authorities, every human institution (school, work, HOA, etc.)

- What is your attitude toward our government, taxes, every human institution that’s over you?
  - Jude 1:8 sinful men reject authority, and revile angelic majesties
  - Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2 sinners are disobedient to parents

- Are you subject, or disobedient?
Fulfill Your Purpose as God’s Child – live by faith, do the work

- illus.: throughout history, today, God’s children have been challenged to live by faith and do God’s word
- illus.: message of Haggai and Zechariah, Israelites had returned to Jerusalem, their job was to rebuild the temple, they began the work but they’re enemies got a decree to stop it, after 16 years of Israel’s neglect, God sent Haggai and Zechariah to prophesy, Israel restarted the work and completed the temple
- today: we need elders, deacons, preachers and teachers, members spurring us on to do the work
  - sometimes dormant, like Israel
  - sometimes listen to people of the world, discouraged, rather than just doing the work
  - sometimes try to over think, instead of just working, and letting God give the growth

- illus.: Daniel fulfilled God’s purpose in his life – lived by faith, did the work – determined, proactive
- Dan. 1:8-16 Daniel not defile himself
  - vs. 8 “made up his mind”
  - make up mind in advance, not sin, obey God, do good
  - vs. 8 Daniel had to speak up, couldn’t remain silent, had to initiate conversation and voice his objection
  - we’re often afraid to do this, trust in God, He’s in control, speak up, right way
    - Thomasville, school began going on field trips on Sunday, talked with schools and got a commitment for them not to be gone on Sunday – speak up
    - high school band, raffle, spoke up and voiced objections, reasons, gained respect – speak up
  - vs. 9 God granted Daniel favor and compassion
    - God often gives us favor with others, so we are able to do things others can’t, and we given permission to exempt from things others aren’t, when make up our mind to obey, not compromise
    - Dawn, school activities that violated her conscious (against her religion) - e.g., dissect animals
  - vs. 12 Daniel formulated a win-win plan, whereby commander could get what he wanted, and Daniel could get what he wanted
    - often, we need to come up with a win-win plan whereby we can obey God, and fulfill the requirements put on us by authority
      - get someone to work a shift for us, so we can go to church
      - parent drive on school field trip to take child to church
      - almost always, where there’s a will there’s a way

- illus.: Daniel and friends willing to die, rather than sin – lived by faith, did the work – dedicated
- Daniel thrown into lion’s den because refused to stop praying to God, his friends thrown in furnace because refused to participate in idolatry – both resulted in glory to God
  - both occasions, sinful men conspired, hatred, set them up, trouble, death
  - today, Jesus, world hates his disciples
  - What would you have done?
- Dan. 6:10 Daniel not do anything differently, didn’t even try to hide
  - sometimes we change, sin, to satisfy others – if we don’t change, sometimes we hide
- Dan. 6:16 Daniel’s faith was so strong, the king believed in God and his deliverance of Daniel
  - 1 Pet. 3 wife’s faith can be so strong her husband believes, without her even saying a word
  - if our light shine’s bright enough, some people will see our faith, come to God – Russ
- Dan. 3:16-18 Daniel’s friends, attitude, confidence, faith
  - What would you have done? Do you do the same thing today?
- Esther saved Israel from annihilation – faith
  - Mordecai didn’t bow down to Haman, so Haman conspired against the Jews, and convinced the king to issue a degree resulting in the annihilation of the Jewish race
  - to save the Jews, Mordecai wanted Ezra to go to the king, and plead with him for the people
  - at first, Ezra didn’t want to go, because the king hadn’t called for her, and she would be killed, if he didn’t hold out his golden scepter

- Esth. 4:13-14 Mordecai’s words to Esther – he knew Jews would be saved, prophesy
  - not escape, she’ll die with all the other Jews if she doesn’t act to save them
  - she may have been elevated to power, for the purpose of doing God’s work, saving the Jews
    - God often elevates his children to give them an opportunity to do work they couldn’t do otherwise
    - material wealth, authority and influence over others, civil authority
  - if she didn’t do God’s work, God will accomplish it another way, and perish her
    - God’s word never returns void, He always accomplishes His will, with out without us
    - if we don’t do our part as God’s children, we’ll be punished
    - Are you doing God’s work in your life? What has God elevated you to accomplish?

- Esth. 4:15-16 Esther’s plan and attitude
  - pray, beseech God
    - Do you pray before doing the “hard” things, as God’s child?
  - do what she had to do, even though she could die
    - Are you doing what you have to do – no matter the personal cost?

- Are you fulfilling your purpose as God’s Child? – determined and proactive, dedicated, faith

- Summary / Inv. – fullness of time
  - end of last quarter’s Bible study, talked about the Greek and Roman Empires
    - shows God’s plan in action, to bring about the proper time, for His Son to come into the world – fullness of time
    - Gal. 4:4-7 fullness of time, Jesus sent into world, redeem us, so we could be adopted as sons
    - Gal. 3:26-29 baptized into Christ, sons of God, heirs according to the promise
  - inv.: become a son of God today