



The
Church
in Prophecy

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Mauriceville Church of Christ
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Fulfilled Prophecy

“And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water, and a spring will go out from the house of the Lord to water the valley of Shittim.” (Joel 3:18)

The Old Testament is replete with prophecy about the coming Messiah, covenant, and church. Some of these prophecies are given in clear terms where timelines and locations are provided while others are figurative and difficult to understand. In this lesson book we will be considering a few of the texts that speak of the church and come to understand the beauty and meaning of these now fulfilled prophecies. While these passages exist in different contexts and were uttered under differing circumstances, they all are meant to cause the hearer of the day to anxiously look forward to the coming advent and the appearance of the body which would be “the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.” (Ephesians 1:10)

May we approach the inspired Word with sincerity of heart and studious determination in order to see the church in its perfect beauty, just as the Lord does.



Table of Contents

Lesson 1: All Nations Blessed (Genesis 22).....	Page 5
Lesson 2: Blessings Outpoured (Joel 2-3).....	Page 9
Lesson 3: Without Hands (Daniel 2).....	Page 13
Lesson 4: Praise in the Assembly (Psalm 22)....	Page 17
Lesson 5: Not Like the Old (Jeremiah 31).....	Page 21
Lesson 6: Let Us Go Up (Micah 4).....	Page 25
Lesson 7: From Jerusalem (Isaiah 2).....	Page 29
Lesson 8: The Wolf and the Lamb (Isaiah 11)...	Page 33
Lesson 9: Called by Another Name (Isaiah 65)..	Page 37
Lesson 10: Gathering Nations (Isaiah 66).....	Page 41
Lesson 11: Having One Shepherd (Ezekiel 37)...	Page 45
Lesson 12: The Coming of Shiloh (Genesis 49)..	Page 49



This work has been made with the hope that together we can search the scripture and develop a greater understanding of it. Hopefully, it will make your study of this topic more edifying, more profitable, and more enjoyable. It is not intended to take the place of your responsibility to prepare for the studies. Please devote adequate time to the material before our study, so we can all be edified by one another (Hebrews 10:24-25).

All verse references are taken from the New American Standard Bible 1995 unless otherwise noted.

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ALL NATIONS BLESSED

Genesis 22

IN PREPARATION

Read Genesis 22.

Where was Abraham commanded to take his son?

How long did the journey take Abraham?

What was the name of that place called?

Why would Abraham's seed be chosen for this?

“In your seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:18)

Genesis 22 contains one of the most famous tests of faith found in the Scripture. Abraham was commanded to take Isaac, his son of promise, to a place chosen by God and sacrifice him on an altar. Abraham obeyed the word of the Lord but was stopped from carrying out the sacrifice by God. Because of his willingness to obey the voice of God Abraham is told, “now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” (Genesis 22:12) While the command given to Abraham is often used to slander God as cruel and vindictive, there are interesting parallels to the heavenly plan for our redemption that God is communicating.

Abraham and God

Abraham was promised to become the physical father of a nation that would be special to God. This nation would come through Isaac. This earthly father was then commanded to kill his son. Note that the heavenly Father was seeking to bring out the salvation of man through the line of Abraham but He had to send His own Son to die for this to take place. God did what he stopped Abraham from doing.

We should also note that the land of Moriah in the days of Abraham corresponds to the area of Jerusalem in Jesus' day. It is very likely that the mountain chosen by God for Isaac to be sacrificed is the same mountain that Jesus would later be sacrificed on.

ALL NATIONS BLESSED

Genesis 22

It is also interesting to note that the journey was three days travel for Abraham and Isaac which may or may not be an allusion to the three days that Jesus was to spend in the grave before His resurrection.

Abraham believed that his son of promise would not be fully taken from his side. “He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.” (Hebrews 11:19) Thus, Abraham believed that Isaac would be resurrected while Jesus was actually resurrected.

These parallels serve to show the plan of God for the redemption of mankind through the seed of Abraham, and for our benefit these things were done that we may look back and see the fulfillment of the plan in Christ.

The Church in Genesis 22

Abraham was bringing forth the line that would lead to the nation of Israel, but the Lord had much more in mind for his seed than that. Abraham is told that “in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 22:18) This prophecy had reference to and was fulfilled in the coming of the church which is made up of those cleansed through the blood of Christ. Paul makes reference to this fulfillment in Galatians 3:7-8 saying, “Therefore, but sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, All the nations shall be blessed in you.” Paul teaches that the Gentile Christians were the fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 22.

All nations of the earth have been blessed through the work of the Seed, Jesus Christ. This blessing primarily holds reference to their ability to be forgiven in His blood and their invitation into the church. The apostle Paul is particularly called to champion the gospel among the Gentiles. Jesus tells him on the road to Damascus, “for this purpose I have appeared to you, to

ALL NATIONS BLESSED

Genesis 22

appoint you a minister and a witness... rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:16-18) Attempting to explain these things to the Jews in Acts 22 caused them to reject Paul outright. They had no understanding of the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 22:18 and no desire to be such a blessing to the nations.

The church, on the other hand, is constantly seeking to bless all mankind with the truth of the gospel and sanctification in Christ. She is shown in this inviting image in Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride [the church] say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Blessing our Community

As we labor for the Lord in the Orange area let us remember the promise made to Abraham and do our part to fulfill the plan of God here. Encourage questioning and honest examination of the faith. Invite outsiders to services and special events of the church. Live a godly example that you may bear the image of Christ to the world.

May we find the boldness, love, and opportunities to speak the message of peace to those around us and may they be blessed by God through the gospel!

ALL NATIONS BLESSED

Genesis 22

What three promises were made to Abraham in Genesis 22?

How is the church the fulfillment of the promised blessing of all the nations?

Compare the mindset of God in the promise of Genesis 22:18 to the mindset of the Jews in Acts 22:21-24. Why do you think the Jews to became this way?

How can this church, and you as a part of it, help to fulfill the promise of God to Abraham in this community?

Blessings Outpoured

Joel 2-3

IN PREPARATION

Read Joel 2 and 3

What will "come about after this"?

What should all do with their plowshares?

Where will all be gathered to?

How long will Judah be inhabited?

“And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the Lord to water the valley of Shittim.” (Joel 3:18)

The message of the prophet Joel was delivered during a time of suffering for the nation. The exact date is not know, but locusts had demolished the crops and the people found themselves without enough food. The prophet announces this as a plague from God to bring the people back to Him and promises that more judgment is on the way if rebellion continues.

However, the book ends with the announcement of a coming day in which great things will be accomplished by God for His people. Figurative language describes to these worried people about the beauty of the coming Kingdom and the blessings God is preparing to pour out.

Something is Coming After This

The divide of the book contrasting their current situation and the future glory from God is found in Joel 2:28 where the prophet writes, “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind...” The Bible student will recognize the statements that follow in verses 28-32 as those quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost. As the Spirit was poured out and the gospel work began on that day, Peter says, “this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel...” (Acts 2:16) While this reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit may be familiar

Blessings Outpoured

Joel 2-3

to us, the prophecies that follow in Joel 3 are often overlooked. Note that the prophet continues to speak of other things that would take place in the same time period as those things from the end of Joel 2. Joel 3 says, "For behold, in those days and at that time..." (3:1) as well as "in that day..." (3:18). These statements reveal to us that the prophecy of the beginning of the gospel period does not end with Joel 2:32; the message continues! The statements of Joel 3 are often overlooked because of their figurative nature which is meant to contrast the condition of the people during the locust plague with the spiritual condition that will be enjoyed during the church age.

A Gathering, Judgment, and a Blessed Nation

Three things are figuratively described in Joel 3 that are also spoken of in the New Testament with reference to the church. The first is a spiritual gathering to the Lord. Joel says, "I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat [literally, Yahweh Judges]... Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there... Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" (Joel 3:2, 11, 14) This gathering is done in order for God to render judgment upon all of the nations. This may refer to God avenging the wrongs done to Israel by these nations, but the timeline given by Joel places this time as being related to the occurrences of Joel 2:28 which took place during the days of the apostles. A reasonable explanation may be that this gathering has reference to the spreading of the gospel and the spiritual judgment of men that is accomplished through their acceptance or rejection of the message. Multiple times the New Testament speaks of such a gathering without referring to the literal gathering to take place at the end of time. The apostle John says, "Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." (John 11:51-52) Jesus also speaks of His coming against Jerusalem and the final ending of the old covenant in Matthew 24:31 when He says, "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." There is nothing in the context

Blessings Outpoured

Joel 2-3

to suggest that Jesus speaks of the end of time in these words. Rather, He speaks of the spiritual gathering of the Kingdom before God. The church is held up to be the only nation of God upon the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Joel seems to be alluding to the same time period when speaking of this gathering.

The judgment of Joel 3 is against the enemies of God. God says, “I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel... swiftly and speedily I will return recompense upon your head... Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great... I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged...” (Joel 3:2, 4, 13, 21) When the nation of God was the physical people of Israel He defended them. Now that the nation is the spiritual nation of Christians, He will defend them still. As the church was attacked after its beginning in Acts 2 (see Acts 4-8) so the Lord has risen to its defense. When persecutors rose against His people the judgment is described thus: “So the angel swung his sickle to the earth... and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden... and blood came out from the wine press up to the horses bridles.” (Revelation 14:19-20) God defends His nation.

Lastly, Joel prophecies of blessings on the nation of God (Christians): “So Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more... And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine... But Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem for all generations.” (Joel 3:18, 20) Christians are called “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:10) are said to “have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...” (Hebrews 12:22) In the day Joel looks to the spiritual nations has spiritual blessings that are comparable to the physical blessings the physical nation should have been enjoying.

The blessings granted to the church in Christ are comparable to water on a dry land, milk to a thirsty child, and sweet juice to a thirsting man. Christ has fulfilled our spiritual needs all in all. Praise be to Him who grants us all things in the spiritual places in Christ Jesus.

Blessings Outpoured

Joel 2-3

When was Joel 2:28-32 fulfilled? How do you know? How does chapter 3 relate (time-wise) to this prophecy?

What three types of events are described in Joel 3?

Does a “gathering” of the kingdom of God always refer to the final judgment? Give some examples to support your answer.

What is the figurative language describing in Joel 3:18? When will those blessings be enjoyed?

Without Hands

Daniel 2

IN PREPARATION

Read Daniel 2.

How many kingdoms are pictured in his dream?

What happened to the stone that struck the statue?

What is the significance of the stone being cut without hands?

How did the king respond?

“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” (Daniel 2:44)

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a vision from God about things to come that would change the world. A statue made of four distinct parts is crushed by a stone cut from a mountain without hands. That stone grows and fills all of the earth. None of his wise men could explain the image, but the prophet Daniel provides the explanation that still has great impact on the world today.

The Fifth Kingdom

Daniel explains that the statue has reference to four kingdoms of men. The first section, the head of gold, refers to the Babylonian kingdom. (Daniel 2:37-38) After this kingdom is overthrown another will take its place. The breast and arms of silver have reference to the Medo-Persians. (Daniel 2:39a) After those days the next kingdom is pictured as the belly and thighs of bronze and has reference to the Macedonian kingdom. (Daniel 2:39b) Fourthly, a mighty kingdom would arise that is represented by legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay. The strength of the Roman empire is seen in this image. (Daniel 2:40-43) Each of these images has a corresponding image as an animal in another vision given to Daniel later in the book. (Daniel 7:4-7) While the prophecy of the coming nations is incredible and a great evidence of biblical inspiration, the emphasis of the vision is placed on the fifth kingdom that is not like the others.

Without Hands

Daniel 2

The dream reveals a stone which was not made with the hands of man which destroys the statue and then grows to fill the entire earth. Daniel says that this kingdom is set up by “the God of heaven” and that it will “endure forever.” (Daniel 2:44)

Made in Heaven, Growing on Earth

The prophecy of Daniel 2 is very important because it provided a timeline for the Jews concerning the kingdom of God. It was to come during the days of the fourth kingdom, the Roman empire. The apostle Paul claims that God viewed this time as “the fullness of the time.” (Galatians 4:4)

This prophecy also discusses how the kingdom of God would be built; by God, not man. It was the Father who sent the Son. (John 3:16) It was Jesus’ blood that purchased the church. (Matthew 20:28) It was the Spirit who delivered the knowledge to the apostles and prophets. (John 14:26) The growth of the kingdom on earth, the church of Jesus Christ, cannot be accredited to the efforts of men. Even the great labors of the apostles would have been fruitless had it not been for the miraculous abilities bestowed upon them as one author says, “God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” (Hebrews 2:4) Just as Daniel prophesied, this stone of this kingdom was cut without hands and grew to fill the whole earth!

Where are the boundaries of the kingdom of God? While the church exists across all borders throughout the world, we also must recognize the spiritual nature of the kingdom. Jesus describes the nature of the kingdom by saying, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.” (Luke 17:20-21) The kingdom is made up of every purified soul that has trusted in God through the gospel and submitted to the rule of the Messiah. Our King presides as a glorious ruler over the hearts of men who have come to know and rejoice in the truth!

Without Hands

Daniel 2

The kingdoms of men are temporary by their nature. One rises and after it another will take its place. This has been the case for all of time and will continue to be until time ends. Daniel says, though, that the kingdom of God “will not be left for another people.” (Daniel 2:44) God has chosen one people to hold up in honor: Christians. Peter describes this spiritual nation as, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession... for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10) Jesus comments on this truth as well when telling Peter, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades will not overpower it.” (Matthew 16:18) Whether the forces of wickedness or the grave itself, nothing can conquer what God has built!

Respect His Kingdom

Since we Christians are members of and laborers in His kingdom we should consider carefully whether our behavior is fitting to the Lord. Paul tells Timothy, “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15) There is a right and wrong way to behave in this kingdom He has built. Let us continually improve ourselves and increase in our love for one another and our Creator who has given us a spiritual nation far greater than any kingdom ever built by man.

Without Hands

Daniel 2

What four earthly kingdoms were in Nebuchadnezzar's vision and how were they represented?

How can it be said that God built this kingdom? How do the efforts of the apostles fit into your answer?

Describe the nature of the kingdom of God and its boundaries.

What are some ways that Peter describes nation of God? What were they "once not" but now "are" ?

Praise in the Assembly

Psalm 22

IN PREPARATION

Read Psalm 22.

Where in the NT did Jesus quote Psalm 22:1?

What types of injuries are described?

Did God hear Jesus' cries for help?

Who will worship before God after these things?

“I will tell of Your name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.” (Psalm 22:22)

Psalm 22 prophetically describes the crucifixion of Jesus from a first person perspective. Events like these never happened to David, but David was able to behold the things coming against the Messiah as though he were the one bearing them. There is more to this chapter even than that, though. David provides us with beautiful imagery of the victory to come after the murder and resurrection of Jesus. Great things will be accomplished through Jesus' death that will affect the entire world!

A People Born

Psalm 22:22-31 provide the reason for the suffering of the earlier verses in the chapter. God did not leave Jesus on the cross without cause. After conquering the grave Jesus would “tell of Your name to my brethren.” (22:22) The Lord has no problem calling His people brothers. This passage is applied to Jesus in Hebrews 2:11-12: “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying; I will proclaim Your name to My brethren...” The author of Hebrews clearly teaches that this passage had reference to Jesus' relationship to Christians, His church. We are His brethren because we share and serve the same Father as Jesus. His death on the cross has made it possible! He describes the number of sanctified as “the great assembly” and their character as “those who fear Him.” (Psalm 22:25) What an honor to be considered the brethren of the Son of God and to stand with Him in praise of the Father!

Praise in the Assembly

Psalm 22

Familiar themes from previous lessons reappear in this Psalm as well. We read of the spiritual bounty found in Christ with reference to food in the phrase, “The afflicted will eat and be satisfied... All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship...” (22:26, 29) A previous lesson on Joel 3 has seen similar imagery concerning the bounty of God’s people. Just as the physical body is satisfied with a full stomach, so the soul of man will be filled and satisfied by fellowship with the Messiah.

The extent of His people is also revealed again in grand terms saying, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship.” (22:27) The Messiah is not limited to the Jews alone! The promise to Abraham concerning his Seed blessing all of the nations is brought to mind again by the Lord!

The authority of the Messiah is another recurring thought in the prophecy. We read, “He rules over the nations.” (22:28) In the last lesson we studied the imagery of Daniel 2 and the manner in which the kingdom destroys the authority of the empires of men. No nation can stand against the authority of the Messiah, but rather He raises them up and casts them down at His leisure. Another psalm of David speaks of the Messiah saying, “The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” (Psalm 110:2) We serve the only King of kings!

“All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive.” (Psalm 22:29) The rule of the Christ is over every person, although many spend their days rebelling against this truth. The day will come, however, when the truth of Jesus’ authority will be thrust upon them. These words of Psalm 22 remind us that everyone who dies will bow before Jesus. This thought is reminiscent of the exhortation given by Paul, “at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11)

Praise in the Assembly

Psalm 22

Lastly, we are reminded of the people that Jesus will call His brethren; the church and His spiritual kingdom. We are told, “The kingdom is the Lords” (22:28) Just as John the Baptist preached that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand during his days (Matthew 3:2), so we are reminded that this kingdom was not physical in nature, nor were his people only from among the Jews. Rather, “They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.” (22:31) A new people. A people that are drawn from every nation under heaven but who are united in faith through the blood of Jesus.

The Great Assembly

As members of the body of Christ, the church, we are foreseen as the brethren of Jesus standing with Him in praise of the Father. Hebrews 12:22-24 offers the same image of “the general assembly and church of the firstborn” alongside the heavenly host, God, and Jesus, assembled together on the spiritual Mount Zion. Do we live our lives as though we are standing alongside the Son of God? Are we walking in a way that is worthy of Jesus’ company and name?

Let us boldly walk in truth and love during this life knowing that we are never alone. Just as Jesus cried out on the cross and, “when He cried to Hime for help, He heard,” so will our petitions be heard by God and our journey be observed by Him!

Praise in the Assembly

Psalm 22

What is the main subject matter of Psalm 22? How does the church relate to the discussion?

How is the physical body figuratively compared to our spiritual selves in this psalm?

Who will bow before Jesus? Who is the one “who cannot keep his soul alive” ?

How are the people of Jesus described in this psalm?

Not Like the Old

Jeremiah 31

IN PREPARATION

Read Jeremiah 31.

What is the primary message of Jeremiah 31?

Why was Jeremiah's sleep pleasant to him?

What will God do for those under His new covenant?

How sure is the Lord's redemption?

“Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...” (Jeremiah 31:31-32)

The book of Jeremiah and the work of this prophet are primarily regarding the judgment of God against Judah through the Babylonians. Most of the book is filled with warnings and explanations about why the Lord would bring this foreign army to defeat the people of Judah and carry them into captivity. However, Jeremiah 31 speaks of future days in which the people would be brought back to their homeland and the judgment would be finished. Much of this chapter speaks of the physical return of bondage that was accomplished during the later years of the prophet Daniel, some 70 years after the fall of Jerusalem. Within these words of encouragement, though, another future day is foreseen in which the Lord put into place a new covenant altogether. This event did not take place when the people returned from bondage immediately. Hundreds of years would pass before this word of the Lord would be fulfilled in the church!

Better Days to Come

God had a new covenant in mind. His purpose was not a useless one. God laments the struggle of man under the Law of Moses saying, “My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them.” (Jeremiah 31:32) But the blame is not to be placed on God. Paul explains that the fault is not on God but on man who sins. (Romans 7:13-14) Nevertheless, righteousness could not come

Not Like the Old

Jeremiah 31

through the Old Law. Hebrews tells us, “For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.” (Hebrews 8:7) God had in mind a new covenant in order to benefit His people. Judah and Israel would be invited to enter into this covenant and they ought to have been the most anxious to do so. Yet, as we have seen in former lessons, this covenant would also be offered to all of every nation. So, what are some of the better things God mentions concerning this new covenant in Jeremiah 31?

A Better Covenant

Three great blessings of the new covenant are mentioned in this chapter. The first reads, “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it...” (Jeremiah 31:33) The new law of God will be focused on conversion of the inner man. Was that not the focus of Jesus’ preaching? In the sermon on the mount Jesus repeatedly brings the focus of law to the inward man. He says, “You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28) Many such teachings are given by the Lord. Jesus is not content with mere outward keeping of commands, but rather He requires our innermost desires to be brought into submission.

Secondly, we read, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord...” (Jeremiah 31:33-34) Since the new covenant will be of a spiritual nature there will be no fraudulent people of God. Among the Jews of Jeremiah’s day the prophet had to plead with the supposed children of God to do God’s will. In the spiritual covenant doing God’s will is a requirement for entry! If we are not doing His will then we are not a part of His people.



Not Like the Old

Jeremiah 31

Lastly, the Lord says, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34) Forgiveness of sins has been offered through Jesus Christ. Without this sacrifice there could be no forgiveness. Paul says, “if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed be based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” (Galatians 3:21-22) Through Christ, our sins are completely forgiven and forgotten by God! This could not have been accomplished through the old, so the new covenant is certainly greater than the old!

A Church Under Covenant

Jeremiah 31 is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. The author goes on to reveal that this passage speaks of our covenant in Christ saying, “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.” (Hebrews 8:13) We are enjoying the benefits of the this new covenant today!

As the church, Jesus’ covenant people, may we seek to be the people described by God having His law in our hearts, being His spiritual servants, and living holy lives as His forgiven people. The old covenant was looking forward to the new. Let us live worthy of the calling!

Not Like the Old

Jeremiah 31

What does God lament about the people under the old covenant in Jeremiah 31?

How is the new covenant written on our hearts?

Contrast the Jews of Jeremiah's day with God's people under the new covenant.

Why couldn't the law give life? (Use Galatians 3 to aid your study.)

Let Us Go Up

Micah 4

IN PREPARATION

Read Micah 4.

Who will stream to Jerusalem in the last days?

What will the nations do with their swords?

How will will God's people walk?

Who will God assemble?

“Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:2)

Micah was a younger contemporary with the prophet Isaiah who prophesied towards both Judah and Israel. (Micah 1:1) While his book delivers messages of judgment to disobedient and sinful peoples, chapters 4 and 5 contain some of the more clear Messianic imagery found among the prophets. Micah 5:2 is one of the most well known prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament: “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” While this prophecy is incredible and gives the birthplace of Jesus, chapter 4 is often overlooked despite its Messianic message.

The Coming Church Age

The future hope for Israel is delivered in powerful terms: “And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains.” (Micah 4:1) The phrase “last days” most often has Messianic purpose among the writings of the prophets. In those days, the house of the Lord will be exalted above all. The chapter goes on to speak of some of the reasons that this is the case. Familiar church-age references appear quickly.

Let Us Go Up

Micah 4

While the physical nation may be in disrepute among the Gentiles during Micah's day, but the day is coming when "the peoples will stream to [the Lord's mountain]. Many nations will come... And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations." (Micah 4:1-2, 3) Not only are foreigners approaching God, but they are humbling submitting to His judgments! Is that not what takes place for each soul who humbles his/herself before the Lord? We give up our pride to allow Him to render decisions for us. The people who approach the Lord are given a motto by the Lord. They say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." (Micah 4:2) Gentile nations throughout most of the Old Testament are seen rebelling against the wisdom of God whereas the prophecy of Micah sees a time coming when Gentiles will be streaming to God. The mountain of the Lord's house is exalted among them! This imagery is, once again, the same as that seen in Hebrews 12:22-24.

One of the reasons for the continued figurative exaltation of Mount Zion is due to the beginning of the gospel work at that place. Jesus was crucified there, resurrected there, and the apostles began their work of preaching there in Acts 2. Micah writes, "For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) Lesson 7 will discuss this same prophecy as given by Isaiah. The word would issue forth first from Jerusalem and would reach throughout the world!

Who would be welcomed by the Lord to His mighty mountain? We read, "In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts, even those whom I have afflicted. I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation. And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever." (Micah 4:6-7) The figurative language may be a reference to the spiritual lameness found among the Gentiles in the days of Micah or it may be a hyperbolic way of showing that the Lord accepts all, even the outcasts of society. Either way, our God is anxious to welcome souls



Let Us Go Up

Micah 4

to Him and make them His people, to be guarded by His strength. 1 Timothy 2:4 tells us that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4) It is a great blessing to know that God can make a strong people even out of outcasts!

A Determined Church

The strength of God is found throughout this prophecy even when the people are pictured as disarming. It says, “Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation and never again will they train for war.” (Micah 4:3) Peace is seen among those who stream to the mountain of God. We come from many nations and backgrounds, but we have no need to war with one another as we now share one Father. While peace is found within, there is still conflict without.

“Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.” (Micah 4:5) Those of the world still follow the lies that they had followed before. Despite their actions, the church is shown to be determined and walk in the authority of the Lord forever. Is this church striving to walk in His name? Are you?

Let Us Go Up

Micah 4

What well known prophecy is found in Micah 5? What important facts does it reveal about the Messiah?

What will happen in the “last days” ?

What is the mindset the nations will have when they come up to the mountain? Relate this mindset to an individual who is obeying the gospel.

What types of people will the Lord make this nation out of? What do you think this figurative language represents?

From Jerusalem

Isaiah 2

IN PREPARATION

Read Isaiah 2.

Who will stream into the house of the Lord?

Why will desire to go up to the mountain?

Where will the law go forth from?

What will the people do with their swords?

“And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3)

Jerusalem and the entire nation of Judah were being handed over into the hands of their enemies, the Babylonians, because of their unwillingness to repent. (Isaiah 3:1) The rebellion of the Jews was unacceptable to the Lord, but as word begins to come from Isaiah about their fate God delivers the vision of a time coming when Jerusalem will become the center of world attention. A glorious time is coming “in the last days” for the people again-- if they would receive it.

Isaiah 2 contains imagery very similar to Micah 4, which was studied in the last lesson. Although a bit repetitive, it reinforces in our mind the plain discussion from God about His desire for the Gentiles to seek and walk in His paths as well as His plan to accomplish His desire in sending the gospel forth.

The Law Will Go Forth

Isaiah 2 contains several statements that have become familiar to the Bible student by this point in the study book. It says, “The mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief mountains, and will be raised above the hills.” (2:2) The exaltation of the house of God over all mountains is intended to show the

From Jerusalem

Isaiah 2

splendor and strength that which God is building. The text continues, “all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come...” (2:3) Considering the outrage of the Jews at Paul’s efforts to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21-22) one would expect Old Testament statements to that effect to be difficult to find, but by this point in our study of The Church in Prophecy such statements are more than common!

The people say similarly to Micah 4:2 in Isaiah, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” (2:3) Isaiah will have more to say about the Gentiles who come to the truth in Isaiah 65. For now, we again reflect upon the humility of the Gentile seeks who approach God’s throne. Oh that all would have such a desire!

“For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (2:3) Daniel 2 tells when the kingdom was coming-- during the days of the fourth empire. Joel 2 tells how it is coming-- with the pouring out of the Spirit. Micah 4 and Isaiah 2 tells where it is beginning: Jerusalem. These things were not unknown to the Lord or His apostles. Jesus tells His apostles after His resurrection, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled... Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44-47) These things took place just as the prophets and Jesus spoke.

In Acts 1:4, Jesus gathers the apostles together and instructs them “not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised.” They obeyed His words and on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 2:1-5) Due to the great stir what was caused by this sound thousands came together and the apostles preached the gospel for the first time. At the

From Jerusalem

Isaiah 2

conclusion of the message about three thousand people were baptized into Christ. (Acts 2:41) The church began in Jerusalem when the Spirit was poured out, just as was prophesied.

The church flourished in Jerusalem for a time and the apostles labored among them. Persecution arose from the Jews, though, and after the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7) “a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:1, 4) These terrible events worked out for good since the gospel issued forth from Jerusalem and went to every place!

Wrongfully Attacked

Christians are not troublemakers. We seek to live in peace and teach others the truth of Christ. Isaiah 2 describes our nature as peaceful when it says, “they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.” (2:4) The Christians of Jerusalem were not causing harm to anyone. Yet, many in the world hate the truth and will attack the innocent in order to feel that their evils are justified.

Despite the anger of the world we should strive to be the peacemakers that God has desired us to be. Paul instructs, “If possible, as far as depends on you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18) May the Lord grant us peace today so that the gospel can issue forth from this place in a way that brings great glory to Him!

From Jerusalem

Isaiah 2

What other passage has an extremely similar message to Isaiah 2? List the similarities.

What does it mean that “the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief mountains” ?

Where can we read about the law going forth from Jerusalem? What happened to the Christians of Jerusalem in Acts 2-8?

How does Isaiah describe the temperament of the people who come to God’s house? How can we show ourselves to be of this nature?

The Wolf and the Lamb

Isaiah 11

IN PREPARATION

Read Isaiah 11.

What will rest on the stem of Jesse?

What is the reason given for the animals being at peace?

What will the root of Jesse be for the peoples?

What will His resting place be like?

“And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them.” (Isaiah 11:6)

Isaiah begins this chapter by discussing a shoot that will “spring from the root of Jesse.” (11:1) Jesse was the father of David, Thus, the idea is that one is coming who is of the line of David. Some other details are given about the promised one: “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him... He will delight in the fear of the Lord... with righteousness He will judge the poor... And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth... The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples, and His resting place will be glorious.” (11:2-4, 10) Jesus, the Messiah, is the beautifully described in these verses. Not only are these Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Him, but the prophet continues by speaking of the age that Jesus would usher in. The time of the church is figuratively described in a great image of peace.

An Unknown Peace

A day is coming, says the Lord through Isaiah, that “the wolf will dwell with the lamb... leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze... and the lion will eat straw like an ox.” (11:6-7) Some have mistakenly taken these verses literally and look for some future time in which these things will take place. However, the idea that is being presented is intended to represent peace between the

The Wolf and the Lamb

Isaiah 11

peoples who come into God's nation. It further reads, "The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den." (11:8) This radical concept of safety is not meant to encourage parents to needlessly put their children into dangerous situations! Rather, a hyperbolic image is used to represent the spiritual security that one will have in their relationship with God. Fellowship with the Holy One will not be a thing to be grasped for, but a thing fully enjoyed!

Again, these images should not be taken any more literally than the image of a rod proceeding from Jesus' mouth in verse 4. The prophet looks forward to a time in which people will undergo a spiritual and more change such as the one spoken in Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed through the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Like animals who no longer behave in their natural way, so we who are in Christ no longer live as we lived in the past.

"For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (11:9) One can imagine how the world looked to the Jew of Isaiah's day. They were the only people seeking the true Lord, and as Isaiah reveals, they were not doing so as devotedly as they ought. Yet, the day will come when the knowledge of the Lord is found in every corner of the earth! If Christians feel outnumbered and marginalized by the world today, how much more did the Jew feel that way under the old covenant? But, "in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples." (11:10) A "signal" or "ensign" refers to a banner which serves as a rallying place for people. Why are do so many come together to the knowledge of God? Because they see Christ and rally around Him! Paul references the septuagint version of this passage in Romans 15:12 when he writes, "Isaiah says, There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope." The apostle clearly sees this verse and, therefore, this entire passage as being fulfilled in Christ

The Wolf and the Lamb

Isaiah 11

and His church!

“And His resting place will be glorious.” (11:10) This portion of the prophecy could be interpreted in various ways, but it seems that the “resting place” referred to is the “holy mountain” where the “signal” of the Messiah rests: in His church. “Upon this rock I will build My church, and gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) What a blessing to be in the glorious resting place where wolves and lambs lie down together and our security is guaranteed by the Lord!

A Beautiful Church

Let us strive together to make this church a beautiful church where all can come and find peace in the knowledge of the Lord. We must be the holy mountain of God to this community and fill every corner of our area with the knowledge of God. Only by working together in peaceful harmony with love for the the Lord and one another can we accomplish this goal and make our congregation a small portion of peace where the wolf and the lamb can be found together!

The Wolf and the Lamb

Isaiah 11

Who is the root of Jesse? Give evidence for your answer.

What unnatural behaviors are described in Isaiah 11?

What is the meaning of the unnatural behaviors?

What is a likely meaning of the 'glorious resting place' mentioned in 11:10?

Called by Another Name

Isaiah 65

IN PREPARATION

Read Isaiah 65.

Who will have
"sought" and
"found" God?

Who is 'smoke in
God's nostrils'?

What will God
create?

What will the wolf
and the lamb do?

“Behold, My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, but you will cry out with a heavy heart, and you will wait with a broken spirit. You will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, and the Lord God will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name.” (Isaiah 65:14-15)

Isaiah 64 contains a prayer from the nation of Israel towards God on the basis that, “all of us are Your people.” (64:9) Chapter 65 contains the response from God: “I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people.” (65:2) God will reject Israel from being His nation any longer and instead will “be found by those who did not seek Me.” (65:1) As the chapter continues the Lord speaks of the remnant from Israel and the people He will gather into His new nation; the church of His Son!

Rejecting the Faithless

The nation of Israel repeatedly turns against God in the pages of our Old Testament. God suffered patiently with the people and brought about the Messiah through their line. When the Messiah has come, however, He promises that He will suffer their disobedience no more. “Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their bosom, both their own iniquities and the iniquities of their fathers together, says the Lord... I will measure their former work into their bosom.” (65:6-7) This chapter sees God move against the nation who “continually provoke Me to My face.” (65:3) The time of tolerance has ended and God now commands repentance.

Called by Another Name

Isaiah 65

Preserving the Remnant

Although most of the Jews rejected Jesus we must also note that not all were disobedient. A small remnant, of which the apostle Paul was one, would be preserved and placed among God's new nation due to their faith. We read, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it, for there is benefit in it,' So I will act on behalf of My servants in order not to destroy all of them." (65:9) A Jew was not rejected from God for being a Jew under the new system. Rather, they were called to faith in the One that was prophesied in the old law; Jesus Christ. If they would not hear Him then who would they hear? (Matthew 21:37-40)

A New People

The need for the physical nation of Israel being completed in Christ, the Lord says, "I said, Here am I, here am I, to a nation which did not call on My name... My servants will be called by another name." (65:1, 15) Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter are quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 10:20-21 and are said to speak of the Messianic dispensation. The gospel has gone forth and Gentiles have been welcomed in while the Jews have been "broken off" due to their unbelief. (Romans 11:19) Indeed, we are called by a new name: Christians! From all nations we have been welcomed into the church of the Firstborn. Contrasting the new nation of God with the old in figurative terms the Lord says, "Behold, My servants will eat, but you will be hungry. Behold, My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty. Behold, My servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. Behold, My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, but you will cry out with a heavy heart and you will wail with a broken spirit." (65:13-14) As has been seen in many lessons already, physical situations are often figuratively used to present spiritual truths. Israel as a nation would be in want without God, while God's new nation, Christians, would be filled. The situation described in this chapter can be seen on a smaller level numerous times such as in Acts 13:46.

Called by Another Name

Isaiah 65

A New Order

In association with all that we have seen in Isaiah 65 already, the Lord continues and says, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.” (65:17-18) Is a future heavenly hope being alluded to? It is not likely in this context. Rather, this is just another representation of the changed order that will take place under the reign of the Messiah. His reign is described similarly earlier in this book: “I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, You are My people!” (51:16) The apostle Paul does not use less powerful language when He speaks of what has been accomplished in Christ saying, “[God] made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.” (Ephesians 1:9-10) We should marvel at what has been accomplished in Christ, not at the language of Isaiah! We are living in a new heavens and a new earth now that all things have been placed under the feet of Jesus Christ!

Be Worthy of This Name

All that remains for us is to be worthy of the name that we are now called as God’ s children. May we bring glory and honor to Him who has called us as we labor in this community to bring souls to the truth!

Called by Another Name

Isaiah 65

In your own words describe how God responds to the prayer of Isaiah 64.

Did God reject all of the Jews from being His children any longer? Give proof in Isaiah 65 and from the New Testament for your answer.

Give some of the contrasting statements of this chapter comparing the nation of Israel with the new people God would call. What is the main idea?

When will we receive the new heavens and earth of Isaiah 65? Do you know of any New Testament passages where this term may be used in a different way?

Gathering Nations

Isaiah 66

IN PREPARATION

Read Isaiah 66.

On whom will God look?

Who brought forth sons quickly?

What time is coming?

Who will bow down before God?

“For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come to see My glory.” (Isaiah 66:18)

There is no break in the context from Isaiah 65 (last lesson) and 66. These chapters flow together and even use some of the same key terms. God continues to speak of His displeasure with the faithlessness of Israel and to look forward to the nation of a new name that He will build.

The Desire of God

The Lord announces a great problem with Israel; they did not understand or honor what He desired from them. He says, “Heaven is My throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?” (66:1) The people often trusted in the temple of God since it is often associated with His presence. Yet, even at the dedication of Solomon’s temple similar comments were made to those of this chapter. Solomon says, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27) The temple was necessary under the Mosaic law, but an overemphasis on the place and things instead of the people lead to spiritual problems. God continues, “For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being, declares the Lord. But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.” (66:2) Last chapter saw God’s plan for a new nation. People of this new nation need the proper understanding, and God says they will have it.

Gathering Nations

Isaiah 66

Zion in Labor

This chapter presents an interesting scene to us of a very fast child birth. “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy.” (66:7) Who is in labor? Zion, the mountain that Jerusalem sits upon, is said to be the woman. While verse 7 speaks of a “boy” being born, verse 8 speaks “sons” : “Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.” (66:8) The reader will note the similarity of language between this image and that of Revelation 12, where a male is born in verse 5 but she is shown to have “children” in verse 17. The images likely represent the same thing; the Messiah and His people coming forth from the faithful vestiges of Israel. These sons are called a “land” and a “nation” as well. (66:8) This new people did not have to develop in a slow, natural, rate of generations as other nations. It was very quickly brought forth by Jesus and the work of His apostles! All are told, “Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her.” (66:10) Those who love God love what has happened! Those who have mourned for the spiritual condition of Jerusalem now have reason to rejoice!

An Enduring Nation

“The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come to see My glory.” (66:18) The Gentiles were to be gathered together in Christ just as the prophet foretold. Will these people be treated as second class citizens to the Jews in this new kingdom? No! God says, “I will also take some of them for priests and Levites.” (66:21) How can a Gentile be a Levite having not been of the line of Levi? That’s the point! This is an entirely new order! “For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me, declares the Lord, So your offspring and your name will endure.” (66:22) These words tie back to last chapter (65:17) and the new

Gathering Nations

Isaiah 66

order presented in this figurative language, with Jesus as ruler. Jesus gave a similar promise that His people would endure to the apostles. (Matthew 16:18) By His blood He will gather peoples from all nations: “And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me, says the Lord.” (66:23) We are blessed to live in the time when all are invited to bow down before the Lord!

Being Easily Gathered

Just as God desires to gather all men in Christ, so Christ desired to gather all Israel to Himself. He laments in Matthew 23:37, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling!” Let us not make the same mistake that nation made. We must be those who are easily gathered to the Lord by being those who are “humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.” (66:2) Do these words describe you?

Gathering Nations

Isaiah 66

What were the Israelites placing too much hope in? What was God's desire?

What is the powerful image of Zion in this chapter? What other bible passage is very similar to it?

Were the Gentiles to be second to the Jews under the new dispensation? What were some of them to become?

Why didn't Jesus gather the children of Jerusalem to Himself? How can we make sure that we are gathered to Him?

Having One Shepherd

Ezekiel 37

IN PREPARATION

Read Ezekiel 37.

What are the two visions of the chapter?

What do the bones represent?

What does the connecting of the sticks represent?

Who will be the prince forever?

“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.” (Ezekiel 37:24)

Ezekiel prophesies these words during the exile of Judah under the hand of the Babylonians. It has been well attested that the people were put into this predicament due to their sin. Although the people had been spiritually dead, Ezekiel is given two visions in this chapter that reveal the future good things concerning the people and their exile. While a physical return was coming for the people, these visions look to a time even farther out in which a new king will be installed on the throne of David.

Resurrected Bones

In the first vision of the chapter Ezekiel was set in a valley full of dry bones. There was no life remaining in the bones. (37:1-2) God asks Ezekiel if it were possible for the bones to live, but Ezekiel does not doubt the power of God. As Ezekiel prophesies over them, he says, “And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them... the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.” (37:8, 10) In this powerful manner the Lord demonstrates both His power to resurrect and His desire to show compassion to those who have departed from Him, as He explains, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.” (37:11) Even Israel recognizes its spiritual

Having One Shepherd

Ezekiel 37

destitution! But they doubt the ability for revival to take place. They should not have doubted the ability or desire of God! The Lord says, “I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it.” (37:14)

The reference seems, when reading this image by itself, to show that the Lord will return the physical nation to its land and bring them back from exile among the Babylonians. This may be a part of the meaning, but reading the rest of the chapter gives more information to consider.

Joined Sticks

In the next vision Ezekiel is shown an image of two sticks. He is commanded, “And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions; then take another stick and write on it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions. Then join them... that they may become one in your hand.” (37:16-17) While the image of the dry bones shows spiritual revival, this image reveals a greater uniting among the nation. The two nations had been separated for so long by this point and taken into exile into foreign lands that such a uniting of peoples would seem virtually impossible to the original readers. However, the Lord continues and says, “I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.” (37:22) A united nation in a sovereign land with a single king? How could such a thing be?

King David

The king that is described in the following verses dramatically changes the interpretation of this chapter. While one could have viewed the promises of God in a literal way (although, then, these promises were never fulfilled, other

Having One Shepherd

Ezekiel 37

than the return from exile and spiritual revival under Nehemiah and others) the statements about the king lead us to the conclusion that God was looking to the time of the Messiah and the land and security are figurative references to the church that He would establish. He says, “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them... David My servant will be their prince forever.” (37:24-25) David is said to be their king and shepherd, he leads the people to follow God, and His reign is eternal... this is no normal man!

A new covenant is also described: “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them... My dwelling place will also be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.” (37:26-27) The Bible student at this point of the book will recognize several recurring themes from other Messianic statements: spiritual revival, David’ s line, an eternal king, a new covenant!

Being Good Sheep

Jesus as a shepherd is a recurring illustration in the teaching of our Lord. He says “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.” (John 10:14) As our King and Shepherd He has all authority and deserves that we be faithful followers. Are we following where He leads us?

Having One Shepherd

Ezekiel 37

How does Ezekiel reveal his trust in the power of God during the first vision?

Describe the king that this chapter reveals.

What is said about the covenant God will make with the people? What are the benefits of the covenant?

Why does a literal interpretation of this passage with a physical return to the land in view seem unlikely?

The Coming of Shiloh

Genesis 49

IN PREPARATION

Read Genesis 49.

What did Jacob say he was announcing?

How would Judah's brothers view him?

What animal is said to represent Judah?

What would not depart from Judah?

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” (Genesis 49:10)

Jacob assembles his sons in order to deliver the blessings to them. This important ritual in the life of the patriarchs was prophetic and gave insight into the mindset of the speaker as well as the heart of the receiver. The blessings delivered to these twelve sons was of the utmost importance as they were to be the beginnings of the tribes that would make up the future nation of Israel. Each son is singled out but one is blessed above the others. The tribe of Judah is given a message that would have a lasting impact on the nation to come and all nations thereafter, even down to us today.

A Blessed Tribe

The tribe of Judah would be blessed in several ways as prophesied by Jacob.

First of all, it is said, “Judah, your brothers shall praise you.” (49:8) This tribe would be honored by the rest of the tribes consistently during their history. Judah was a leader. What a honor to know that you have the respect of your brothers!

Jacob says, “Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies.” (49:8) This image of strength is coupled with the image of a fierce predator: “He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?” (49:9) This is not a tribe to be reckoned with.

The Coming of Shiloh

Genesis 49

“Your father’ s sons shall bow down to you.” (49:8) Not only did Judah have the praise of his brothers, but he would also have rule over them. The thought is continued by saying, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’ s staff from between his feet.” (49:10) Kings would come from the line of Judah in the same way that priests came from the tribe of Levi.

Besides those things, an abundance of material things would come to this tribe. We read, “He ties his foal to the vine... He washes his garments in wine... His eyes are dull from wine, and his teeth white from milk.” (49:11-12) These thoughts show the plenty given to his livestock, the abundance of wine (so that he, hyperbolically, can wash his clothes in it), and the abundance of milk his livestock will produce. This tribe would not typically be in want of the necessities of life!

But all of these things pale in comparison to the One who is coming through this tribe’ s line.

Shiloh

Shiloh simply means, “He whose it is.” (Strong’ s Greek) This Messianic title looks to One with the authority of an owner. It is not a reference to multiple individuals who would rule as kings, but to a sole individual that was above all others. This description can apply to no one other than Jesus Christ Himself. As Paul says, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16)

The lion was given as a symbol of the strength of Judah. This image was brought back to mind again in John’ s vision of heaven where Jesus is announced as, “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.” (Revelation 5:5) From a strong tribe comes the strongest of all.

The Coming of Shiloh

Genesis 49

Obedient Peoples

Of Shiloh it is said, “to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” (49:10) Since He owns all does it not stand to reason that all should obey Him? Of course, not all do obey Him. This statement is looking, rather, to what is deserved. To Him all obedience should be given. Instead, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11) Despite their rejection of His authority, “God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:36)

The gospel has gone forth into all nations and “God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man who He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)

The obedient peoples are the people who make up the church. Jesus sent His disciples forth with simple instructions: “All authority has been given Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20) Have you become His disciple in the waters of baptism? If so, are you observing all that He has commanded? To Him is due the obedience of all peoples. Let us be His church in truth and show the world what life in Christ is truly like!

The Coming of Shiloh

Genesis 49

In what ways would the tribe of Judah be blessed?

What does “Shiloh” mean? Explain the importance of this title.

Explain the connection between Genesis 49 and Revelation 5, as well as the meaning behind the image.

What is due to Shiloh? How can this congregation give Him what is due?

This book belongs to:
