

END TIMES: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Lesson 2 w/Answers

Ezekiel's Prophecies

In our last lesson, we studied New Testament prophecy concerning the time just prior to the Tribulation Period from the Church's perspective. Paul instructed us that the "Man of Lawlessness" will not be revealed until "He who restrains" is taken away. Further, we learned that during those days a rebellion from truth, an apostasy, will spread throughout the Church; as it adopts false doctrines for truth and follows after the teachings of demons and false Christs. However, Paul also had words of reassurance for those who follow Christ and put their faith in Him. They will be caught up to be with Him when He returns for us, his Church.

In this lesson, we will explore God's plans for the nation of Israel and His chosen people, the Jews. Following that, we will briefly review what Christ and his Apostles taught regarding Christ's return and the end times. With these two pictures, namely, (1) God's plans for Israel and (2) Christ's plans for His Bride (the Church), as the backdrop for our study; we will be better prepared to more fully understand the book of Revelation. As we will shortly discover, Revelation is the culmination of all Old and New Testament prophecy; and, more importantly, it is the culmination of God's plan for all mankind and the revealing of Jesus as the true Messiah.

Let's begin our study by examining some select passages from the book written by the Prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel's messages of coming judgment and hope, written during the Babylonian exile, continue to ring true today. As will be evident from our study of the scripture references in this lesson, much of this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled; and much of it will be found in similar form within the book of Revelation.

God has a plan for Israel, yet to be fulfilled, that includes fully restoring Israel to spiritual wholeness (with respect to its relationship with God) and physical wholeness (with respect to God's promises of a land, a king and a lasting nation).

Ezekiel 37:11-14 reads

Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them; 'this is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'" [NIV]

Let's continue our study by reading the scriptures below and responding to the related questions.

1. Ezekiel 11:16-21. What do these verses tell us about God's plan for His chosen people?
 - a. ANSWER 1: They tell us that while God dispersed His people to far away nations, He will gather them back to the land of Israel again.
 - b. ANSWER 2: They also indicate that when He does return His people, the land will be full of idols and vile images, which they will remove. Since we know that when Christ returns, the Anti-Christ will have misled many into worshipping him, perhaps many of the idols and vile images relate to that period just prior to Christ's return.

2. Ezekiel 36:8-12. What do these verses tell us about God's plan to restore His chosen people?
 - a. ANSWER 1: They tells us that God will gather all of Israel back to the land that He promised them.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Furthermore, all of the nation will be rebuilt. It will become prosperous and the Jews who live there will flourish.
3. Ezekiel 36:22-32. What does God tell us about His chosen people in those days?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God will restore His people not for their sakes, but for His Holy Name, to show the world that He is God.
 - b. ANSWER 2: He will restore them physically and spiritually; He will make them clean and put His spirit in them.
 - c. ANSWER 3: The people of Israel will repent and will see themselves as they really were before God intervened for them, and they will be ashamed.
4. What does Ezekiel 36:33-36 tell us will also be restored?
 - a. ANSWER: The land. Land that was desolate will now be fertile, and no longer will famine visit the land. Note that it refers to land that had been laid to waste, but now looks like the Garden of Eden. No doubt that before Christ returns, Jerusalem and the surrounding country will be overrun with war, famine, and disease; truly the land will have been laid to waste before Christ's return.
5. When God says that He will restore the land and the people He is emphatic in how restored they will be. Read Ezekiel 36:37-38. What does it say about the people and their cities in those days?
 - a. ANSWER: It says they will be as numerous as the their sheep and as numerous as "the flocks of offerings at Jerusalem", and it says that the "ruined cities" will be filled with flocks of people. Israel will not only be restored, but will flourish and become a symbol of God's great grace and sovereign power to the rest of the world.
6. See Jeremiah 31:33-37. What does Jeremiah say about the restoration of Israel as a people and as a nation?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Jeremiah iterates a commitment by God to restore His people and to put His spirit in them. His laws will be written on their hearts and minds, and He will forgive their wickedness.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Furthermore, in verse 38, Jeremiah pronounces that "The days are coming" when God will rebuild the city, and it will never again be uprooted or demolished.
7. What will God do with regard to the neighbors of Israel when he restores the nation?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Israel will no longer have "malicious" neighbors.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Israel will live in safety, because God will inflict punishment on all their neighbors who have "maligned" them. In addition, if we observe how Israel's neighbors are behaving today, it is not hard to envision how extremely difficult it will be on the people of Israel during the Tribulation Period, particularly the period of Great Tribulation. In the end, God will punish those neighboring countries for that behavior.
8. As we look at the end time chronology, we know that the people of Israel, the Jews, God's chosen people, will be especially targeted for punishment and even death by the Anti-Christ; particularly during the second half, referred to as the period of Great Tribulation. We learned from the reference above that God will punish Israel's neighbors for this injustice. Is it possible that the judgment mentioned by Christ in Matthew 25:31-46 coincides with this? What do you think? Do you agree or disagree?

9. Ezekiel 29:8-16. What does God tell us about His plan for Egypt?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God will cause something to happen in Egypt that has never happened in all of Egyptian history: the entire land will be desolate and completely uninhabited by man or animal for 40 years.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Furthermore, God will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them throughout the countries.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Finally, God will restore Egypt after the 40 years and gather them back to their land, and they will once again be kingdom. However, it will then be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again rule over other nations.
10. God is not only going to restore the people and the land of Israel; He is also going to restore their kingdom. What does Ezekiel 37:15-23 tell us about this, and how God will do it?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God will take both (1) the tribes of Judah, symbolized by the staff in Judah's hand, and (2) the northern tribes, symbolized by Ephraim's staff, and then combine them into a single and united kingdom.
 - b. ANSWER 2: God will gather the Israelites from all over the world, from wherever they have gone, and bring them all back to Israel.
 - c. ANSWER 3: They will have one King and will never again be divided.
11. Ezekiel 37:24-28. When God restores the nation of Israel and brings them back to their land, who will be their King? He is given two titles. What are they?
 - a. ANSWER: David will be their King, and God says that David "will be their prince forever".
12. What will the final days be like before God restores Israel? Read Ezekiel Chapter 39 and note some of the specific things, and specific times that God calls out. These events will end the period of the Great Tribulation.
 - a. ANSWER 1: God will cause the armies of the far north to come against Israel, but once they arrive, God will defeat them.
 - b. ANSWER 2: All of the nations and armies who war against Israel will fall on the mountains of Israel.
 - c. ANSWER 3: The loss of these hostile armies will be so great that the people of Israel will have enough fuel from the spoils of the defeated armies to last them seven years.
 - d. ANSWER 4: Furthermore, the amount of the dead will be so great that it will clog and block "the valley" so that valley is renamed the "Valley of Hamon Gog" (literally the "multitude of Gog"). Many scholars believe this valley to be east of the Dead Sea, in what is currently Jordanian territory.
 - e. ANSWER 5: It will take seven months to bury the dead. The job will be so large that people will be employed to do just this task. Many will remain employed as gravediggers past the seven months, as the clean up continues and bodies are taken back to the Valley of Hamon Gog to be buried.
 - f. ANSWER 6: God will pour out His Spirit on the people of Israel following this great battle.
13. Ezekiel Chapters 40-42. In addition to restoring the people, the land, and the nation of Israel; God plans to restore something else. What is it?
 - a. ANSWER: God will restore the Temple; the Temple that was rebuilt during the first half of the Tribulation Period, and then abused by the Anti-Christ and desecrated by the Gentiles. However, God will have it restored to His exact specifications.
14. Ezekiel Chapters 43-44. In addition to restoring the Temple, what else will God restore in those days?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God Himself will dwell there, as His Glory returns to the Temple.
 - b. ANSWER 2: He will also restore the altar and the priesthood.
15. Ezekiel 47:1-12. In addition to restoring the Temple itself, the land is also restored. What is new about the Temple, as it relates to restoring the land around it?
 - a. ANSWER: A river will flow out from under the Temple and flow east. It will feed "a great number of trees" on each side and cause great amounts of fish to gather at its mouth. Specifically, it will feed fruit trees of all kinds whose leaves do not wither and whose fruit never fails, because they are being watered from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be food, and the leaves will be for healing.

16. Ezekiel Chapter 48 closes with a descriptive map of the new land, and how the chosen people of God will distribute the land that will be the new nation of Israel. It also tells us that Jerusalem will get a new name. What will be Jerusalem's new name?
- a. ANSWER: "THE LORD IS THERE".
-

As we see from this study, there will be a lot of activity, and a lot to do, in the days following Christ's return and the defeat of the Anti-Christ. Following this great battle and Christ's triumphant entry in Jerusalem, the judgment of the sheep and goat nations will occur. God will call home all of His chosen people, and a resurrected David will become King over the restored nation of Israel.

Following the Tribulation Period, there will be widespread desolation and death. Egypt will be completely evacuated, the land surrounding Jerusalem will be full of dead bodies and bones, and it will take seven months just to bury the dead. The Bible tells us that people will be employed to look for and bury remains, and to cleanse the land for seven months. Even after that period, people will still find remains and will use a special flag, or marker, beside it until the gravediggers take the remains and bury them in the Valley of Hamon Gog. In addition, the landscape will be littered with the debris of war, weapons, tanks, bombed-out fortifications, etc. From the clean-up of the war zone, Israel will find enough materiel provide fuel to the nation for seven years.

The Temple will be restored, as will the altar and the priesthood; and God will dwell in the Temple. A river will flow from the temple to the sea, it will have lots of trees on each side of it. It will feed fruit trees that will provide fruit for food; and leaves of these trees will not wither, and they will be used for healing.

The time leading up to Christ's return and God's restoration of Israel will be horrific beyond description; but Christ's return will put an end to the war, famine and disease, and will usher in the beginning of a thousand-year reign. Imagine, one thousand years to reign with Christ; as He restores Israel and saves the world from destruction, bringing a peace like none the world has ever known.

Have a great week everyone and thanks for studying with us.

In Christ,

Wes