

KNOW GOD THROUGH ISRAEL AND PROPHECY

LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

Read Ezekiel 39

God is the first and the last; He is in control of all the events in this world. His identity and the reliability of the Bible as His Word is validated by prophecy, which allows our faith to grow and prepare us for eternity.

Israel is also part of biblical prophecy as it is the centerpiece of God's timetable. In Zechariah 12:2-3, Jerusalem (representing Israel) was prophesied to always be in the news headlines — and today, we see that when God says something, it will surely happen. Let us look at some prophecies about Israel and what they reveal about the character of God.

GOD'S GRACE (Israel becoming a nation)

In Genesis 12:1-3, God promised Abram (Abraham) a unilateral covenant where He blesses those who bless them (Israel) and curses those who curse them, thus creating Israel out of grace. His purpose is to bless the world through Israel and promised that the Messiah would come through Abraham's seed. At present, Jews are less than .03% of the entire world population — yet over 22% of Nobel Prize winners are Jewish! Some of their inventions and innovations include Google, Waze, pacemakers, polio/cholera vaccines, and USB drives, all of which blessed the world!

God also graciously promised land to Abraham (Genesis 15), but many nations still lived there and committed sins such as idolatry, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, bestiality, and witchcraft. God gave these nations time to repent (like the Amorites) while the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt, and after 400 years, His promise was fulfilled when He freed Israel and they took possession of the Promised Land.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (Israel scattered & regathered)

Faithful means that God keeps His word — even in disciplining us. God told the Israelites that He would scatter them if they copied other nations and disobeyed Him. They ended up doing so, and God kept His word so that the world would come to know Him as they are scattered (Ezekiel 12:15-16). Eventually, the world will

again come to know Him as He gathers them back to their land (Ezekiel 36:22-24)!

Various empires throughout history took over the promised land, yet the Lord was faithful to preserve and restore Israel. This can be seen historically:

- 2000 BC: God calls Abraham to enter the land
- 1240 BC: Joshua led the Israelites to the promised land
- 1040 BC: Israel under kingship of Saul, David, Solomon
- 990 BC: The Kingdom is divided
- 722 BC: Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria; scattered
- 586 BC: Southern Kingdom falls to Babylon; scattered
- 70 AD: Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans after Jewish rebellion
- 135 AD: Romans renamed Judea "Palestina" after the remaining Jews revolted and were banned from living in Jerusalem

What God says, He will do. On May 14, 1948, Israel was recognized as a nation. Ezekiel 36:34-35 prophesied that this desolate land will eventually be cultivated and bear fruit, and now Israel is an exporter of fruits and vegetables to Europe and other parts of the world despite the land not being ideal for farming.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (Israel attacked and saved)

In God's sovereignty, His ultimate control will prevail. God gave a warning to neighboring countries and against those who will attack Israel (Ezekiel 38:1-6), declaring that in His anger, He shall step in to defend Israel against its enemies who would want to "capture, spoil, and seize plunder" (vv. 12, 18, 22-23) in a coming great war. He also identified countries who will not attack (Iraq and Egypt, as prophesied in Isaiah 19:24-25). Historically, the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel was Egypt!

Zechariah 12:8-10 prophesies that Israel will look to Jesus on that fateful day, and He will defend them. As we wait for this war/destruction of Israel's enemies, Peter reminds us to be holy and godly in the end times (2 Peter 3:9-13). He tells us God does not wish for anyone to perish, but **FOR ALL TO COME TO REPENTANCE**. May we receive His love and grace and have the willingness to obey what He says!

last week's memory verse

"My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

EZEKIEL 39:7

discuss this message

What can you learn about God when you study about prophecy?

In what ways have you experienced God's grace, faithfulness, and sovereignty?

What should you change in light of the truth that we are living in the end times?

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ONSITE: December 1, Sunday
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God brought you here
for His purpose.

God loves you.

He desires for you to have a meaningful life with Him in the present and gain eternal life with Him in the future.

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who **keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness** to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments – Deuteronomy 7:9

God is holy.

We are sinful, and our sin separates us from Him.

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. – Romans 3:23

God is merciful.

In His love, He made the only way for us to be reconciled to Him: through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins and be raised to life for eternity.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. – Romans 5:8

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. – John 14:6

God is gracious.

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven of our sins and saved from eternal death.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. – John 3:16

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

Would you like to place your faith in Jesus Christ today?

Lord Jesus, I need You. I confess that I am a sinner. I believe that You died on the cross to pay for all my sins. With Your help, I will turn away from my sins. Please come into my life and be my Savior and my Master. I accept Your gift of eternal life. Make me the kind of new person You want me to be. Thank You for giving me eternal life. Amen.

God keeps His promises.

You can be sure that you have eternal life when you trust in Jesus.

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. — 1 John 5:11-13



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