

## **The Biblical Prophecies of the Restoration of Israel**

By Steve Gregg

In May, 1948, Israel was declared a sovereign nation by the United Nations. For several decades previous to this, Jewish immigrants had been arriving and settling in the region, living among the mixed-racial population, which had been primarily Arab for over a millennium. The Jews themselves had been without a homeland for nearly 2,000 years at the time, and had been in diaspora, dwelling in virtually every part of the world, often in Jewish communities. The return of so many Jews to Palestine, and the political declaration of the nationhood of Israel was a remarkable phenomenon that many people regarded to be inexplicable apart from divine intervention. Many Christians have become accustomed to speak of this modern phenomenon as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy—perhaps the greatest since the time of Christ.

Forty years ago, when it was my task to teach verse-by-verse through all the prophets in the Bible in a small Bible college, I noticed how frequently the theme of a return and restoration of Israel and Judah to their land was mentioned. In the same passages, the exaltation of Jerusalem (or Zion) and the peaceful, righteous reign of Messiah over a repentant people featured prominently. These passages, at an earlier time in my life, had formed the elements of my eschatology. I had been taught that these passages speak of an end-times regathering of the Jews to their ancestral land just prior to the rise of an antichrist figure who would persecute them until the coming of Christ in glory to rescue and vindicate them. Jesus, having thus returned, would then establish a thousand-year reign on earth in which the primacy of Jerusalem, a restored Jewish temple and priesthood, and the submission of all Gentile nations would be the central elements.

As I was teaching through the prophets, beginning in the early 1980s, I was obliged to teach through the passages that contained these details. However, I was forced to acknowledge some facts that my own teachers had never pointed out to me in them:

- 1) That these passages were written prior to or during the Babylonian exile of Judah (which began in 605 BC and can be said to have officially ended in 536 BC.), or, in the case of Zechariah and Haggai, in the early stages of repatriation of diasporic Jews under Zerubbabel.
- 2) There was no unambiguous reference to any subsequent dispersion (such as occurred in AD 70), nor of any subsequent return of Jews to the land. That is, every passage describing God's taking them from "all the nations" and bringing them back to their land, most naturally, would apply to His restoring the nation from "all the nations" into which Babylon had dispersed them (Jer.29:14). There were no exceptions.
- 3) Though the prophecies, in many cases, seemed to indicate that the whole nation of the exiles would return (which did not happen in 536 BC), other passages made it clear that these promises would be fulfilled only in an oft-mentioned, repentant and faithful "remnant" (which did occur in 536 BC).
- 4) There is no prophecy anywhere in scripture that predicted a regathering of unrepentant, unbelieving Jews to their land. There are predictions of God pouring out His Spirit upon, and giving a new heart to, those who have returned—but no mention of any of these people being

unbelievers. In fact, numerous passages mention that repentance and returning to God were conditions required to be met before God would regather them to the land (e.g., the very first of these predictions: Deut.30:1-10).

- 5) Today, the nation of Israel contains approximately half of the Jewish individuals on the planet. The rest remain in the diaspora. There is a secular nation in the Middle East, established by a secular, European tribunal, and named Israel. This country has a few things in common with the nation Israel in scripture, including:
- a) an ethnically Jewish majority population,
  - b) a roughly similar geographical footprint, and
  - c) the same name, "Israel."

The modern nation is fundamentally different in nature from what Israel was in scripture. There its very existence was based upon a covenant made and honored with Yahweh, having the worship of Yahweh in a temple as its central national concern. By contrast, Israel today is a secular democracy, caring nothing about the covenantal laws of Yahweh, nor showing any official interest in Him. Less than a quarter if Israeli Jews observe even the Jewish religion, and less than 1% are Christians. None of the prophets described, nor ever imagined, such a phenomenon. This development obviously is not the fulfillment of any prophecy.

- 6) In my studies, I took special interest in the way that Jesus and the apostles (the New Testament writers) understood and applied these prophecies when quoting or alluding to them—which was very common for them to do. Since Jesus had "*opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures*" (Luke 24:45), it seemed reasonable to assume that the apostles' interpretation of such passages was to be trusted above whatever meanings were assigned to them by the rabbis, or even by Christians who ignore the New Testament usage of them. It was clear that the New Testament witnesses applied these passages in a spiritual manner, that they believed themselves (the Church) to be the "*remnant*" to whom the promises were made, and that the "*gathering*" so frequently mentioned in the prophets referred not to a geographical return to any particular place, but to God Himself (Isa.10:21). That is, they saw these predictions as spiritually fulfilled in the Church in their own times (2 Cor.1:20).
- 7) These observations seemed to warrant the conclusion that what was predicted in these prophecies was two-fold, speaking, *first*, of the return off the exiles from Babylon, from 536 BC onward, and, *second*, of the spiritual deliverance and salvation, of which the former was a type and shadow. Even before reaching this conclusion, I had regarded it as uncontroversial that the Exodus of Israel from Egypt was to be understood as a type and shadow of salvation from sin in Christ (e.g., Luke 9:31[Gr.]; 1 Cor.5:7; 10:1-11). Since the return of the exiles from Babylon is often likened to the Exodus (Isa.11:16; Jer.16:14-15; 23:7-8; Hos.2:15; Mic.7:15), and resembled it in its primary significance, it became clear that both the Exodus and the return from Babylon carried the same typological significance—and was so-regarded by the New Testament writers.

- 8) Since there are no predictions in the New Testament about any end-times gathering of the Jews to the land, all such expectations must be regarded as belonging to an Old Testament faith, chosen and followed by those who seem oblivious to the advent of a New Testament, which knows nothing of such an expectation.

The tables below include the text of virtually every Old and New Testament passage, forty in number, that sometimes may be cited by those who see the present nation of Israel as a fulfillment of end-time prophecy. In a companion document, I have done the same thing with seven New Testament passages sometimes used to prove the same point. I tried to include every known passage relevant to the inquiry. If I have accidentally left any out, I can assure you that there is none that says more on the subject than do those I have included. In the column to the right of each passage, I have put my observations and commentary.

It should be noted that every reference to the “regathering” of Israel or Judah in these passages is speaking of the same regathering. This should be uncontroversial. The regathering of the exiles, and their spiritual salvation under the Messiah can be said to be the primary theme of most Old Testament prophecies, and there are no cases of additional, lesser or greater restorations from exile distinguished from that single phenomenon. Anyone who would wish to say that this passage speaks of one physical return to the land, and that passage speaks of another physical return to the land, must bear a very onerous burden of proof—which simply cannot be borne.

Though each passage has its own set of features and details, it will be observed that most of the primary details are found in very many passages. There is much repetition in the prophets. No passage contains every detail, but, taken together, the prophets anticipated the following:

- 1) An end of the punishment for sin—exemplified in the exile.
- 2) A repentant remnant, who would return with mixed joy and weeping to Zion
- 3) The restoration of the theocratic nation, complete with temple and sacrifice
- 4) The Messiah (sometimes called “David”) reigning over them in righteousness
- 5) A making of a new Covenant to replace the Old Covenant with the remnant
- 6) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the remnant community
- 7) The inclusion in Israel of Gentiles from many nations
- 8) Transformation of relationships with God and others—end of war and oppression

Again, the first three of these were fulfilled in the return of the exiles from Babylon (see Ps.126), while the latter five are seen as fulfilled in the first century through Christ, the Spirit’s descent at Pentecost, and the establishment of the remnant Church.

## *Israel's claim to "the Land"*

### **An eternal promise:**

#### Genesis 13:15

...for all the land which you see **I give to you and your and your descendants [Heb. "Seed"] forever**

#### Josh.14:9

So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely **the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever**, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'

#### Ps.105:8-11

He **remembers His covenant forever**, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, <sup>9</sup>**The covenant which He made with Abraham**, and His oath to Isaac, <sup>10</sup>And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, <sup>11</sup>saying, **"To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance"**

#### Isa.60:21

Also your people shall all be righteous; **They shall inherit the land forever**, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.

#### Ezek. 37:25

Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, **their children, and their children's children, forever**; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

#### Deuteronomy 28:46

"[If you disobey, these curses] shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever."

#### 1 Samuel 2:30

Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father **would walk before Me forever**.' But now the Lord says: **'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.**

- Much of this argument hangs on the definition of the word "forever" (Heb. *olam*), which literally means "to a time beyond the horizon of sight." The things it is used to describe in scripture can be either endless, or simply enduring for an unforeseeably long time, either into the future or into the past (e.g., Isa.42:14). There are many examples of the latter meaning, one obvious case being Isaiah 32:14-15, where a condition lasts "forever...until" something else happens.
- Forever (*olam*) can also refer to being permanent within certain perimeters of time (e.g., a lifetime, Ex.21:6).
- This is, no doubt how the word is used many times when speaking of things that pertain to the Old Covenant Era as being "forever," such as
  - 1) The Aaronic priesthood (Ex.29:9/ Num.25:13/ Deut.18:5; 1 Sam2:30)
  - 2) Sabbath observance (Ex.31:13,16-17; Col.2:16-17)
  - 3) Circumcision duty (Gen.17:9, 13)
  - 4) Tabernacle rituals, like
    - a) Lampstand maintenance by priests (Ex.27:21)
    - b) Aaron's clothes (Ex.28:43)
    - c) Heave offering belongs to priests (Ex.29:28)
    - d) Priests must wash at the laver (Ex.30:21)
    - e) Priests may eat the grain offerings (Lev.6:18)
    - f) Fasting on Yom Kippur (Lev.16:29)
    - g) Observe feast of booths (Lev.23:41)
    - h) Levites attend to the tabernacle Num.18:23)
  - 5) God dwelling in Solomon's Temple (1 Kg.9:3)
- Though all of these things were said to last "forever" (*olam*), none of them are relevant today. They were "forever" in terms of the perimeters of the Old Covenant Era, until they were made "obsolete" by the coming of a New Covenant (Heb.8:13).
- There is another aspect to be considered with such things as the above, which served as temporary "types" of permanent spiritual realities that have replaced them (Heb.9:8-9). The New Testament speaks of spiritual circumcision, a spiritual temple with spiritual sacrifices offered by spiritual priests (e.g. Rom.2:28-29; 1 Pet.2:5). These things were temporary in their "type" mode, but are eternal in their spiritual mode.

<p><u>Jeremiah 18:7-10</u></p> <p>The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, <sup>8</sup>if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. <sup>9</sup>And <b>the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, <sup>10</sup>if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.</b></p> <p><u>Leviticus 18:24, 28</u></p> <p>‘Do not defile yourselves with any of these things... <b>lest the land vomit you out</b> also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.</p> <p><u>Luke 19:41-44</u></p> <p>Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, <b>“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.</b> <sup>43</sup>For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, <b>because you did not know the time of your visitation.”</b></p> <p><u>Matthew 21:19</u></p> <p>And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, <b>“Let no fruit grow on you ever again.”</b> Immediately the fig tree withered away.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is true, also, of the land promise. The land of Canaan was a type and token of a larger, eternal inheritance (see Rom.4:13; Heb.4:8-10; 11:14-16).</li> <li>• While the spiritual, New Covenant fulfillments are truly eternal to the faithful remnant, the Old Testament versions of these things were offered conditionally to the earthly nation (Ex.19:5-6; Lev.26:1-45; Deut.28:1-68). In particular, the land promise is explicitly said to be offered to Israel on a strictly conditional basis (Lev.18:24-28; Deut.28:63; 1 Kings 9:6-7; Jer.7:5-7; Jer.25:5).</li> <li>• The words of the promise to the faithful also include the threats of curses to the disloyal (Deut.28). Loyalty would result in perpetual peace and prosperity in the land, whereas disloyalty to the covenant would bring expulsion from the land, accompanied by curses that are also said to be “forever” (Deut.28:46).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promises of Return and Restoration of Israel to the Land after Exile</b></p>	
<p><u>Deut.30:1-3, 9-10</u></p> <p>“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and <b>you call them to mind</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is part of the Mosaic Covenant, as is made clear in v.10</li> </ul>

<p><b>among all the nations</b> where the Lord your God drives you,<sup>2</sup> and <b>you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today</b>, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,<sup>3</sup> that <b>the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity</b>, and have compassion on you, and <b>gather you again from all the nations</b> where the Lord your God has scattered you...For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers,<sup>10</sup> <b>if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The only exiles it applies to are those that took place during the Mosaic Covenant Age. This would mean the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.</li> <li>• The promise was conditioned upon their return to the Lord in terms of the Mosaic Covenant—keeping its commandment and statutes (v.10)</li> <li>• This covenant, with its laws and promises, has become obsolete, due to the coming of the New Covenant (Heb.8:13)</li> <li>• Any return to God in the present or the future must be in terms of the New Covenant—that is, to become part of Christ’s Kingdom, where there is nothing significant about race, gender or social distinctions (Gal.3;28)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa.2:2-4</u></p> <p>Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that <b>the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established</b> on the top of the mountains, and <b>shall be exalted</b> above the hills; and <b>all nations shall flow to it.</b> <sup>3</sup> Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; <b>He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.</b>” for <b>out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.</b> He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; <b>they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is predicted to occur in “the latter days” (v.2). The term is generic for “the future.” In the New Testament the writers referred to their own times as “the last days” (Acts 2:16-17; Heb.1:1-2; Jas.5:3), the “last times” (1 Pet.1:20), the “ends of the ages” (1 Cor. 10:11), and the “final hour” (1 John 2:18).</li> <li>• Christians are said to have already come to “<i>Mount Zion</i>” (Heb.12:22)—probably in reference to this prophecy and others like it.</li> <li>• Those who come to Christ are taught His ways and follow His path (Matt.28:20; Acts 2:42; Isa.54:13).</li> <li>• The nations have streamed into Christ’s Church, and those who have been taught His ways have exchanged the ways of war for the ways of peace.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa.11:1, 10-12, 16</u></p> <p>“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots....<sup>10</sup> And in that day <b>there shall be a Root of Jesse</b>, who shall stand as a banner <b>to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him</b>, and His resting place shall be glorious.”</p> <p><sup>11</sup> It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again <b>the second time to recover the remnant</b> of His people who are left...He will set up a banner for the nations, and will <b>assemble the outcasts of Israel</b>, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth...<sup>16</sup> There will be <b>a highway for the remnant</b> of His people who will be left from Assyria, <b>as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This refers to Christ’s first coming (v.1) He will not spring from Jesse’s roots a second time.</li> <li>• Christ as a banner gathering Gentiles to Himself is what has been happening for the past 2,000 years. Paul quotes this very passage to make that point (Rom.15:12).</li> <li>• There is to be a “second exodus (vv.11, 16). This refers to that “exodus” spoken of by Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:31, Gr.). This is a spiritual ingathering spoken of, also, in John 10:16; 11:51-52.</li> <li>• The “highway” motif (v.16) is common to Isaiah’s descriptions of the Messianic Age (e.g. 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10). This motif came to fulfillment in the first century, beginning with John (Jn.1:23).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Isa. 19:21-25</u></p> <p><sup>21</sup>Then the Lord will be known to Egypt, and <b>the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the Lord and perform it.</b> <sup>22</sup>And the Lord will strike Egypt, <b>He will strike and heal it; they will return to the Lord, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.</b></p> <p><sup>23</sup>In that day there will be <b>a highway from Egypt to Assyria</b>, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the <b>Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.</b></p> <p><sup>24</sup>In that day <b>Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria</b>—a blessing in the midst of the land, <sup>25</sup>whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, <b>“Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>“highway”</i> motif appears here, as we earlier in Isa.11:16 (see comment above). It is one of Isaiah’s frequent features in describing the Messianic Age. Christ is the highway (John 14:6).</li> <li>• In Isaiah’s time, the great enemies of Israel had been Egypt, who enslaved them, and Assyria, who abolished the Northern kingdom and nearly did the same to Judah. These enemies, representing Gentiles in general, are now reconciled with God and with the faithful Israel in the Church (Eph.2:11-19).</li> <li>• This comes at the end of an oracle against Egypt (ch.19), which falls within a section of oracles against many Gentile nations (Isa.13-23). Egypt, like other nations, will be judged, but then saved (v.22).</li> <li>• We find the same <i>“healing”</i> motif (v.22) used as we find in identical prophecies about Israel—suggesting salvation in Christ is the same for the Gentiles as for the Jews. In fact, vv.21-22 would sound familiar if we simply substituted the word “Israel” for “Egypt.”</li> <li>• Likewise, Israel’s former titles (v.25) are now shared by the Gentile believers in the Church (1 Pet.2:9). Ethnic Israel become a minority among those regarded as God’s <i>“people”</i> (1 Pet.2:10), <i>“the work of [His] hands”</i> (Eph.2:10) and His <i>“inheritance”</i> (Eph.1:18).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa.35:8, 10</u></p> <p>A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called <b>the Highway of Holiness</b>. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it <i>shall be</i> for others...And <b>the ransomed</b> of the Lord shall return, and <b>come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy</b> on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here we see the Highway motif again, which is identified with the present era by its association with John the Baptist (40:3).</li> <li>• Although God’s people are traveling to Zion, they are not unbelieving Zionist Jews. They are not unclean, and they travel the way of Holiness (v.8).</li> <li>• The “joy and gladness” they know is, no doubt, the joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet.1:8), which is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa.43:5-9</u></p> <p>Fear not, for I am with you; <b>I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west;</b> <sup>6</sup><b>I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’</b> Bring <b>My sons</b> from afar, and <b>My daughters</b> from the ends of the earth— <sup>7</sup>Everyone <b>who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory;</b> I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” <sup>8</sup>Bring out the blind people who have eyes and the deaf who have ears. <sup>9</sup><b>Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is another instance in which the language of the return of exiles blends with the Messianic salvation, of which the former is a type.</li> <li>• <i>“your descendants”</i> (v.5) is literally “your seed.” Paul identifies Christians as Abraham’s “seed” (Gal.3:29).</li> <li>• <i>“from the east...from the west...the north...the south”</i> (vv.5-6)—cf., Luke 13:29, speaking of Gentiles</li> <li>• <i>“My sons...and my daughters”</i> (v.6) is a term used on here and in 2 Cor.6:18, where Paul applies the phrase to the Church. In another passage about Gentile inclusion, a similar phrase is used (Isa.56:5).</li> <li>• The expression <i>“called by my name”</i> (v.7) is usually used only to speak of the temple (frequently in Jeremiah). It is used to speak of “My people” in 2 Chron.7:14, specifically of Gentiles in Isa.65:1 and Amos 9:12. In Acts 15:17 the latter verse is quoted as fulfilled in the Gentiles coming into the Church.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Isa. 51:3</u></p> <p>For the Lord <b>will comfort Zion</b>, He will comfort all her waste places; He will <b>make her wilderness like Eden</b>, and <b>her desert like the garden</b> of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “comfort” of Zion (God’s people) is the Gospel message that “her iniquity is pardoned” (Isa.40:1-2).</li> <li>• The Messianic Age is frequently described in terms of the fruitless spiritual desert (which Israel has become—Isa.5:6), which failed to produce the desired fruit of justice and righteousness (Isa.5:7)—becomes fruitful in these very fruits when the Spirit is poured out, like springs, upon them (Isa.32:15-16; 27:6; 41:18-19; 43:19-20; 61:11; cf., Ezek.36:34-35).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa.54:1-3, 7-10</u></p> <p>“Sing, <b>O barren, you who have not borne!</b> Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you <i>who</i> have not labored with child! <b>For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,</b>” says the Lord.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>“<b>Enlarge the place of your tent</b>, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. <sup>3</sup><b>For you shall expand</b> to the right and to the left, and <b>your descendants will inherit the nations</b> and make the desolate cities inhabited...</p> <p><sup>7</sup>“For a mere moment <b>I have forsaken you</b>, but with great mercies <b>I will gather you</b>. <sup>8</sup>With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” says the Lord, <b>your Redeemer</b>.</p> <p><sup>9</sup>“For this <i>is</i> like the waters of Noah to Me; for <b>as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth</b>, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. <sup>10</sup>For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, <b>nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,</b>” says the Lord, who has mercy on you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We know this describes the present age under Messiah for several reasons: 1) It follows immediately from Isaiah 53, as a consequence of Messiah’s death and glorification; 2) Paul cites v.1 as having its fulfillment in Gentiles filling the Church (Gal.4:27); and 3) reference is made to the “<i>covenant of peace</i>”(v.10), which is mentioned as a feature off the Messianic Age in Ezek.34:25 and 37:26.</li> <li>• The “<i>barren</i>” woman who had never borne children for God refers to the Gentiles, while the “<i>married woman</i>” is Israel, or the Jews. The prediction is that Gentiles will ultimately outnumber Jews in the Kingdom of Messiah (cf., Isa,19:24, above; Isa.49:19-23; Zech.8:23).</li> <li>• The remnant of Israel is told to “enlarge” (v.2) and “expand” (v.3) her tent to accommodate the increase in family size brought about by the influx of the Gentiles (v.3).</li> <li>• The remnant had suffered exile (<i>was “forsaken”-v.7</i>) with the rest of Israel, but, when “regathered (v.7), she would be redeemed by the Messiah (see Isa.59:20—which Paul applies to the Jew/Gentile olive tree, the Church, Rom.11:26-27).</li> <li>• Like Noah’s flood, this remnant will never again be alienated from God’s “<i>covenant of peace</i>” (v.10), which is also called the “<i>everlasting covenant</i>” (Ezek.37:26; Heb.13:20). This is also called “<i>the new covenant</i>” (Jer.31:31; 1 Cor.11:25; 2 Cor.3:6; Heb.8:6-8).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Isa. 61:4</u></p> <p>And they shall <b>rebuild the old ruins</b>, they shall <b>raise up the former desolations</b>, and they shall <b>repair the ruined cities</b>, the desolations of many generations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This passage must be taken spiritually of the building of the new temple of the new creation (Eph.2:22; 1 Pet.2:5). Jesus quotes the verses just prior to this as “fulfilled” in His ministry (Luke 4:18-21).</li> <li>• The passage uses many Messianic motifs, including: “comfort” (v.3), trees planted by God (v.3; Matt.15:13), “everlasting joy” (v.7) and the “<i>everlasting covenant</i>” (v.8), land causing fruit to grow (v.11; Mark 4:27-28).</li> </ul>



<p><u>Jer.3:15-17</u></p> <p>And <b>I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you</b> with knowledge and understanding.</p> <p><sup>16</sup>“Then it shall come to pass, <b>when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days,</b>” says the Lord, “that <b>they will say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’</b> It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.<sup>17</sup>“At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and <b>all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.</b> No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the Jews would be regathered from the Babylonian exile (v.16), God would make a new covenant with their remnant (more on this in Jer.31:31-34).</li> <li>• Both have happened. Israel returned from exile in 536 BC, with Zerubbabel (continuing in 458 and 445, under Ezra and Nehemiah, respectively), and Christ made the new covenant in approximately AD 30.</li> <li>• We know this is speaking of the new covenant, because it speaks of the obsolescence of “the ark of the [old] covenant” (v.16; Heb.8:13)</li> <li>• Good shepherds will teach the people, and feed them (v.15; e.g., Acts 2:42; 20:28; 2 Tim.2:2; 1 Pet.5:1-3)</li> <li>• As in Isa.2:2-4, Gentiles gathered into Zion/Jerusalem (v.17; Heb.12:22-23).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer.16:14-15 / 23:7-8</u></p> <p>“Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that <b>it shall no more be said, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’</b> <sup>15</sup>but, “The Lord lives <b>who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.</b>’ For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This speaks, at one level, of the physical regathering of the Jews from the Babylonian exile. No other exile is mentioned in the Old Testament.</li> <li>• However, like the exodus, the return of the exiles is a type of salvation through Christ. It is this salvation that eclipses that of the exodus in the hearts of the saved—because the first was the birth of Israel, a natural nation, while the second is the eternal salvation of a spiritual nation (1 Pet.2:9).</li> <li>• This prophecy probably stands behind Christ’s changing of the meaning of Passover from a remembrance of the exodus to a remembrance of Him (1 Cor.11:23-16).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer.23:3-6</u></p> <p>“But <b>I will gather the remnant of My flock</b> out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. <sup>4</sup><b>I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them;</b> and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the Lord.</p> <p><sup>5</sup>“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That <b>I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;</b> a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. <sup>6</sup><b>In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely;</b> Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is one of the passages that clarifies that the Israel to whom these promises pertain are “the remnant” of His flock (see also: Isa.10:21-22; 11:11, 16; 37:31-32; 46:3; Jer. 30:11; 31:7, 37; Ezek.14:22-23; Joel 2:32; Mic.2:12; 5:3; 7:18; Zeph.3:13).</li> <li>• Shepherds given to feed (v.4), as in Jer.3:15 (above)</li> <li>• Messiah arises out of David (v.5; as in Isa.11:1)</li> <li>• Messiah, our righteousness, saves “Judah and Israel” (v.6)—meaning “the remnant” (v.3).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Jer.24:4-7</u></p> <p>Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge <b>those who are carried away captive from Judah</b>, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into <b>the land of the Chaldeans</b>. <sup>6</sup>For I will set My eyes on them for good, and <b>I will bring them back to this land</b>; I will <b>build</b> them and not pull them down, and I will <b>plant</b> them and not pluck them up. <sup>7</sup><b>Then I will give them a heart to know Me</b>, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, <b>for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.</b>”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As always, the exiles who are brought back are those who had been carried away to Babylon (the Chaldeans) and no other exile is in view (v.5)</li> <li>• They were brought back to the land, as promised (v.6), but, as in other prophecies, the return of the exiles is a type of New Testament salvation (as was the exodus from Egypt). The exiles did come back from Babylon in a state of repentance, but the giving of a new heart (v.7) ultimately is fulfilled in the regeneration of New Testament (Ezek.36:26).</li> <li>• He says He will “build” and “plant” them (v.6), which are the exact promises that He earlier said are conditional, and that He will revoke if they are disloyal to Him (Jer.18:9-10).</li> <li>• Because the remnant will return to Him “<i>with their whole heart</i>” (v.7), He will “<i>give them a heart to know [Him]</i>” (v.7). This is the promise of the new covenant (Jer.31:31-34).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer.29:10-14</u></p> <p><sup>10</sup> For thus says the Lord: <b>After seventy years are completed at Babylon</b>, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and <b>cause you to return to this place</b>. <sup>11</sup>For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.<sup>12</sup><b>Then you will call upon Me</b> and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup>And <b>you will seek Me</b> and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup><b>I will be found by you</b>, says the Lord, <b>and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you</b>, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a promise to the exiles in Babylon, speaking of their return 70 years later (v.10)</li> <li>• This was fulfilled when some (i.e., Daniel—Dan.9) took it on themselves to call on God for deliverance (v.12)</li> <li>• As in Deut.30:1-3, 10, this return is the result of repentance, not prior to it (v.12-14)</li> <li>• This happened in 536 BC (see Ezra 1:5), and there is no prediction anywhere in scripture of another occurrence like it in the future.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer.30:3, 8-9</u></p> <p>For behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that <b>I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah</b>,’ says the Lord. ‘And <b>I will cause them to return to the land</b> that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it’ ...‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds. <b>Foreigners shall no more enslave</b> them. <sup>9</sup>But they shall <b>serve the Lord their God, and David their king</b>, whom I will raise up for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This continues on the theme of the previous chapter (i.e., the return of exiles from Babylon). The fact that they are said to be captives (v.3) and enslaved (v.8) proves that this was in Jeremiah’s day, not modern history. Most of those who have returned to Israel in modern times have never been enslaved.</li> <li>• As a result of returning, the remnant will serve the Messiah (v.9), which occurred 560 years later.</li> <li>• The expression “<i>shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king</i>” (v.9) earlier appeared in Hosea 3:5, and is echoed in Messianic passages in Ezekiel 34:23-24 and 37:24-25.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Jer.31:7-12</u></p> <p>“Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, <b>save Your people, the remnant of Israel!</b>’  <sup>8</sup>Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labors with child, together; a great throng shall return there. <sup>9</sup>They <b>shall come with weeping, and with supplications</b> I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim <i>is</i> My firstborn. <sup>10</sup>“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare <i>it</i> in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’ <sup>11</sup>For the Lord has <b>redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him</b> from the hand of one stronger than he. <sup>12</sup>Therefore they shall come and sing <b>in the height of Zion</b>, streaming to the goodness of the Lord—for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; <b>their souls shall be like a well-watered garden</b>, and they shall sorrow no more at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here, the return of the exiles is blended with the theme of salvation in Christ, of which it is a type. The remnant may be the few who returned from Babylon, but also the few out of the nation who are “saved” in Christ.</li> <li>• We know this because Matthew 2:18 tells us that just beyond this paragraph in Jeremiah, verse 15 is related to the coming of Jesus in the first century. A few more verses hence (vv.31-34), is where God says He will make the new covenant, which occurred in the upper room between Christ and His disciples (the remnant).</li> <li>• The people do not return to the land (nor to God) unrepentant, but with weeping and supplication to God (v.9)</li> <li>• The Messiah is Shepherd (c.f., Isa. 40:11; Ezek.34:23-24).</li> <li>• Jesus is also, as in v.11, the Redeemer (Rom.11:27) who ransoms Jacob and the whole world (1 Tim.2:6).</li> <li>• The saved have come to Zion (v.12), which is what the New Testament says about Christians (Heb.12:22-23)</li> <li>• The well-watered garden of the soul is related to the themes of Israel being a fruitless desert, but watered and fructified by the Holy Spirit (see under Isa.51:3, above).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer. 31:35-37</u></p> <p>Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The Lord of hosts <i>is</i> His name): <sup>36</sup>“If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.”  <sup>37</sup>Thus says the Lord: “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This passage states in emphatic terms that God will not:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) allow a time to come when the seed of Israel are no longer a nation (v.36)</li> <li>2) allow all the seed of Israel to be cast off (v.37).</li> </ol> </li> <li>• This guarantees that there will always be a remnant of ethnic Jews who are saved, as there are today, and have been for the past 2,000 years (Rom.11:5).</li> <li>• Paul asks the question of whether such a thing has happened, and declares, “God forbid!” (Rom.11:1). He says that God has not cast off the ones “he foreknew”—whom Paul calls “the remnant” (v.5). This is the point in this passage also. God has not “cast off all the seed of Israel” (v.37). That is, He has only cast off the apostate, and retained for Himself the remnant).</li> <li>• This passage follows immediately after the new covenant passage, meaning the remnant that are not cast off are those with whom He has entered this new covenant—i.e., the Church, or the remnant of Israel.</li> <li>• This passage does not affirm that Israel will always exist as a political nation (she ceased to be, twice, after this was written). Israel continues eternally as the spiritual nation comprised of the remnant (1 Pet.2:9).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Jer. 32:37</u></p> <p>Behold, <b>I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them</b> in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; <b>I will bring them back to this place</b>, and I will cause them to dwell safely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This, again, tells of the return of the exiles from Babylon, since the prophets speak of no other exile and no other return.</li> <li>• “All the nations where I have driven them” clearly refers to Nebuchadnezzar’s vassal nations throughout his empire. The term is unambiguously used this way throughout Jeremiah (e.g., 23:3, 8; 25:12-13; 29:18; 30:11; cf., Ezek.36:24; Zech.7:14)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Jer.33:6-8, 14-16, 20-21, 25-26</u></p> <p><sup>6</sup> Behold, I will bring it health and healing; <b>I will heal them</b> and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. <sup>7</sup> And <b>I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return</b>, and will rebuild those places as at the first. <sup>8</sup><b>I will cleanse them</b> from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and <b>I will pardon all their iniquities</b> by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me...</p> <p><sup>14</sup> ‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that <b>I will perform that good thing which I have promised</b> to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: <sup>15</sup> ‘In those days and at that time I will cause to <b>grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness</b> in the earth. <sup>16</sup> In those days <b>Judah will be saved</b>, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: <b>THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.</b>’ ...</p> <p><sup>17</sup> “For thus says the Lord: <b>‘David shall never lack a man</b> to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; <sup>18</sup> <b>nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man</b> to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.”</p> <p><sup>20</sup> “Thus says the Lord: <b>‘If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night</b>, so that there will not be day and night in their season, <sup>21</sup> <b>then My covenant may also be broken with David</b> My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, <b>and with the Levites</b>, the priests, My ministers.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> “Thus says the Lord: <b>‘If My covenant is not with day and night</b>, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup> then I will <b>cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers</b> over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For <b>I will cause their captives to return</b>, and will have mercy on them.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The motif of healing (v.6) is Messianic (Isa.53:4-5), suggesting a summary of all that follows: first the return to the land (v.7), then to the Messiah (vv.15f).</li> <li>• This “healing” refers to cleansing (comment “a” on Ezek.36:24-28, below), pardon, and full reconciliation (v.8; cf., 1 Pet.2:24-25).</li> <li>• The “<i>good thing which I have promised</i>” (v.14) is identified as the Messianic prophecy (vv.15-16), which is repeated here from Jer.23:5-6.</li> <li>• In the wording of this statement, beginning in v.20, God does not say, “<i>If I (God) can break...</i>” but “<i>If you (Israel) can break...</i>” It is true that man has no capacity to change the forces of nature or their patterns. But God actually does. He does not have an “unbreakable covenant” with the day and night, as if He could never interrupt their sequence. Revelation 21:25 seems to describe a time without night, so that God is describing something He actually can do.</li> <li>• This is pertinent to His covenant with the Levites (vv.18, 24). They will never lack a man in the priesthood to offer the sacrifices in the temple—that is, as long as such a system stands, which it no longer does.</li> <li>• God told Eli that the promise made to perpetuate the Levitical priesthood “forever” only applies to those who honor Him (1 Sam.2:30). Then Isaiah said God will take Gentile believers to replace priests and Levites (Isa.66:20-21). Finally, Hebrews 7 says the priesthood, along with the Law of which it was a part, has “changed” from Levites to the priesthood order of Melchizedek. So God can indeed alter the terms and even the continuation of the covenant with people, due to their bad behavior.</li> <li>• However, God will not fail to keep covenant with David, although the misbehavior of the last of the Davidic kings caused them to go into captivity, and never to have one of their sons reign again (Jer.22:28-30). There is, however, a Son of David ruling forever today, descended from David, but not by the corrupt family line (Luke 3:23, 31; Rom.1:3).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Ezek.34:11-16, 22-25</u></p> <p><sup>11</sup>For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed <b>I Myself will search for My sheep</b> and seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, <b>so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered</b> on a cloudy and dark day. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring them out from the peoples and <b>gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land</b>; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup><b>I will feed them in good pasture</b>, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. <sup>16</sup><b>“I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick...</b></p> <p><sup>22</sup>therefore <b>I will save My flock</b>, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>I will establish <b>one shepherd over them</b>, and he shall feed them—<b>My servant David</b>. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the Lord, will be their God, and <b>My servant David a prince among them</b>; I, the Lord, have spoken. <sup>25</sup><b>“I will make a covenant of peace</b> with them...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This section, like that at the end of Ezekiel 37 (see below) intermixes elements of the return from Babylon with elements of the Messianic salvation, of which the former is frequently a type.</li> <li>• The regathering of Israel from all countries (v.13) is seen as a type of gathering the Gentiles into the Kingdom (John 11:51-52), and is referred to as “saving” the people (v.22).</li> <li>• The shepherding motif which Yahweh adopts for His own activity (e.g., Ps.23), as it is also predicted of the Messiah’s (Isa.40:11). Such passages the opportunity for Jesus to say, “<i>I am the Good Shepherd</i>” (John 10:11, 14, 16), and to describe His own activities (e.g., Luke 15:4-7; 19:10; cf. Heb.13:20; 1 Pet.5:4; Rev.7;17).</li> <li>• Seeking what was lost (v.16) was described by Christ as His mission (Luke 19:10).</li> <li>• Likewise, the “binding up” and motif (v.16) is Messianic—e.g., Isa. 6:10; 19:22; 30:26; 53:4-5; 61:1; Jer.30:17; 33:6 (above); Hos.14:4; Luke 4:18)</li> <li>• The elements of vv.23-25 will recur in Ezekiel 37:24-26 (below). The features that point to the resurgent age are:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) “One shepherd” for all, Jew and Gentile (John 10:16);</li> <li>b) That shepherd is the Messiah, called “David” (vv.23-24) who was a type of Christ.</li> <li>c) “a covenant of peace” (v.25), is Jeremiah’s “new covenant” (Jer.31:31-34), and is Messianic (Isa.54:10). It is also called “the everlasting covenant” (Ezek.37:26). Heb.13:20 combines three elements from this passage: “peace,” “the great Shepherd,” and “the everlasting covenant.”</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><u>Ezek 36:8-12</u></p> <p>But you, <b>O mountains of Israel</b>, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for <b>they are about to come</b>. <sup>9</sup>For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.</p> <p><sup>10</sup><b>I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it</b>; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. <sup>11</sup>I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; <b>I will make you inhabited as in former times</b>, and do better for you than at your beginnings <b>Then you shall know that I am the Lord</b>. <sup>12</sup>Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; <b>they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance</b>; no more shall you bereave them of children.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, is only interested in the Babylonian exile and the return from that captivity. He never speaks of any other.</li> <li>• Therefore, we are not surprised by any of the information in this passage about the impending (v.8) repopulation of the mountains of Israel after their complete evacuation enforced by Nebuchadnezzar.</li> <li>• Perhaps the point of special interest in this passage is the fact that, as a result of the returned exiles, God says, “<i>Then you shall know that I am the Lord</i>” (v.11). This might be used by those who claim the Jews were predicted to return to the land “in unbelief” only to be converted later. Here, however, we hear of them coming to know the Lord after they have returned.</li> <li>• However, it is not the people who “<i>shall know that I am the Lord</i>,” but the mountains, who are addressed as if human, throughout the prophecy. It is not uncommon for prophets to address inanimate topography, earth, or sky, as if they can hear and have an opinion (see v.1; e.g., Isa.1:2; Ezek.6:3; Mic.6:1-2).</li> <li>• The expression, “Then they [or you] shall know that I am the Lord” is used 73x in Ezekiel, and those who will “know” are not always said to know in a salvific way. Sometimes it is just God rubbing it in their faces. They shall suddenly know, only to their chagrin (e.g., 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:9, 27; Cf., Ex.7:5; 14:18)</li> </ul>

<p>Ezek.36:24-28</p> <p><sup>24</sup> For I will <b>take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.</b> <sup>25</sup> Then I will <b>sprinkle clean water</b> on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will <b>give you a new heart and put a new spirit</b> within you; I will <b>take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.</b> <sup>27</sup> I will <b>put My Spirit within you</b> and cause you to walk in My statutes, and <b>you will keep My judgments and do them.</b> <sup>28</sup> Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; <b>you shall be My people, and I will be your God.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing from the thought of vv.8-12 (above), the return from Babylon is seen as the first step in the restoration of Israel (v.24). The second step is the spiritual transformation (vv.25ff).</li> <li>• The spiritual transformation came with Christ and includes:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The sprinkling of cleansing from sin (v.25; cf., Isa.52:15; Zech.13:1; Tit.3:5; Heb.9:13-14; 10:22; 1 Pet.1:2; 1 John 1:7, 9).</li> <li>b) Transformation of the heart (v.26; cf., Jer. 31:31-32; Rom.7:22; 2 Cor.4:16; Heb.8:10; 10:16, 22)</li> <li>c) Indwelling of Holy Spirit (v.27; cf., Rom.8:9, 15; 1 Jn.3:24; 4:13), a common feature of prophecies of the Messianic Age (see under Ezek.37:11-12, below).</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <i>“you shall be my people, I will be your God”</i> (v.28) is a very common conclusion to passages speaking of ultimate redemption of those in Christ (e.g., Jer.7:23; 24:27; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38; Ezek.11:20; 14:11; 34:30; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Hos.2:23; Zech.8:8; 13:9; 1 Pet.2:10).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Ezek. 37:4, 7-8, 10-14</u></p> <p>Again He said to me, <b>“Prophecy to these bones...<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.<sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.</b> Then He said to me, <b>“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.</b> They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: <b>“Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.</b> <sup>13</sup> Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. <sup>14</sup> <b>I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live,</b> and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the vision of the dry bones, the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian captivity is described symbolically in two phases: physical and spiritual. The first, by Ezekiel calling for the reassembly of the bones into complete bodies (vv.4-8), and the second by his calling on the “Spirit” (or breath) to come into them (vv.9-10).</li> <li>• These two phases occurred in history. The physical regathering occurred 536 BC, and the Spirit was given at Pentecost, perhaps AD 30. Nothing beyond this is predicted.</li> <li>• The bones are not some future generation of Israel, as Ezekiel is told they represent the exiles in his day (v.11). To apply this to the diaspora in modern times completely ignores the context and the stated meaning of the vision.</li> <li>• The resurrection of these bones is a metaphor of restoration, using the “bones” imagery from the people’s own words (v.11). They describe their own conditions as a nation as dead, and dried beyond any hope of restoration.</li> <li>• There is no evidence that the Spirit of God was put into the people (v.14) in Zerubbabel’s day (unless <i>“in you”</i> simply means “among you” (referring to the ministry of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, in their midst (Haggai 2:5; cf. Isa.63:11)).</li> <li>• The giving of the Spirit is a common feature off the promise of the Messianic Age (e.g., Isa.;32:15; 44:3; 59:21; Joel 2:28-29; Ezek.26:27; 37:14; 39:29; Zech.12:10), fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-18).</li> </ul>

Ezek.37:21-28

<sup>21</sup> “Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely **I will take the children of Israel from among the nations**, wherever they have gone, and **will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land**; <sup>22</sup> and **I will make them one nation in the land**, on the mountains of Israel; and **one king shall be king over them all**; they shall **no longer be two nations**, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. <sup>23</sup> They shall **not defile themselves anymore with their idols**, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and **will cleanse them**. Then **they shall be My people, and I will be their God**.

<sup>24</sup> “**David My servant shall be king over them**, and they shall all have **one shepherd**; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. <sup>25</sup> **Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt**; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, **forever**; and My servant **David shall be their prince** forever. <sup>26</sup> Moreover **I will make a covenant of peace** with them, and it shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and **I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore**. <sup>27</sup> My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed **I will be their God, and they shall be My people**. <sup>28</sup> The **nations also will know** that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” ’ ’

-----Comments-----

- This prophecy is illustrated by Ezekiel’s symbolic action of combining two sticks to become one in his hand (vv.15-20)—representing the combining of Israel and Judah into one nation. Paul borrows images from this passage in his description of Jews and Gentiles becoming “one new man” in Christ (Eph.2:11-22)—including:

- 1) Bringing those who were far off (Eph.2:13, 17)
- 2) The two becoming one (Eph.2:14-18)
- 3) The covenant (Eph.2:12)
- 4) The establishing of peace (Eph.2:14-17)
- 5) The habitation of God among men (Eph.2:19-22)

*Comments continued in right column*

- Israel’s addiction to idolatry was purged through the Babylonian exile, and never was embraced in Israel again (v.23).
- Again we see the “cleansing” motif (v.23) mentioned earlier (Ezek.36:25; cf., Jer.33:8).
- “*they shall be My people, and I will be their God*” (v.23) is frequently used in Ezekiel (11:20; 14:11; 34:30; 36:28; 37:23, 27), and elsewhere, to refer to that relationship established by the new covenant (Jer.31:33).
- Verses 24-28 are largely a repetition of the prophecy given in Ezekiel 34:22-25 (above, see comments there), but here a few additional details are provided.
- “David..my servant...their prince (vv.24, 25) is Christ (of whom David is a type) in the present age.
- The reference to “one shepherd” (v.24) is echoed by Jesus’ statement that, when He brings the Gentiles into His flock, then all sheep, Jews and Gentiles, will have “one shepherd” (John 10:16).
- “*the land...where your fathers dwelt*” (v.25) has taken on its “forever” (*Ibid.*) dimension—on one hand having expanded to include the whole world (Rom.4:13), and, beyond this, to refer to the spiritual “homeland” sought by the patriarchs (Heb.11:14-15). The spiritual rest is the real inheritance of which Canaan was a type (Heb.3:18-4:3, 8-11).
- The “covenant of peace” (v.26) here is also called an “everlasting covenant”—which the writer of Hebrews identifies with the covenant established by the blood of Christ (Heb.13:20). This is also the term for the new covenant found in Isa.55:3; 61:8; Jer.32:40; Ezek.16:60.
- The sanctuary of God is not the Jewish temple. The habitation of God is not “made with hands” (Acts 7:4), but is comprised of “living stones” (1 Pet.2:5), “*built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit*” (Eph.2:21-22). We are now “*the temple of God*” in whom He dwells (1 Cor.3:16; 2 Cor.6:16). We are His house (1 Tim.3:15; Heb.3:6). The “*tabernacle of God is with men*” (Rev.21:3), though the new Jerusalem has no Jewish temple in it (Rev.21:22).
- “*I will be their God...etc.*” (v.27) we have seen, is commonly found in prophecies of the New Testament Era (e.g., Jer.31:33).
- The “*nations also will know...*” (v.28) speaks of the international influence and testimony of the Church to the world.

<p><u>Ezek.39:25-29</u></p> <p><sup>25</sup> “Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Now <b>I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel</b>; and I will be jealous for My holy name— <sup>26</sup> after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their <i>own</i> land and no one made <i>them</i> afraid. <sup>27</sup> When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, <sup>28</sup> <b>then they shall know that I am the Lord their God</b>, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and <b>left none of them captive any longer</b>. <sup>29</sup> And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for <b>I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel</b>,’ says the Lord God.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This passage, like those in Ezek.36 and 37 (above), is another great example of the blending of the concepts of salvation from captivity and salvation in the Messiah—with the former (536 BC) being a type of the latter (AD 30ff).</li> <li>• This follows immediately after the description of God’s victory over Gog, the prince of Magog (chs.38-39), which some (without exegetical warrant) place at the end of the world. In fact, the war is placed chronologically after the return of exiles, in chs.36-37).</li> <li>• The reference to “<i>the whole house of Israel</i>” (v.25) may seem like a reference to the return of every last Jew on the globe, but the prophets have already made it clear, as Paul does (Rom.9:27), that only a remnant will receive the promises (Ps.50:16; Isa.10:22; 11:11; Jer.23:3; Joel 2:32; Mic.2:12; 5:3; 7:18; Zeph.3:13). In fact, the remnant is even called “all...Jacob” (Mic.2:12). Paul also uses “all Israel” in this way, identifying the term with the olive tree containing both faithful Jewish and faithful gentile branches (Rom.11:16-26).</li> <li>• Since the restoration of the exiles (536 BC), Jews have been persecuted, but not held in “captivity” as before (v.28).</li> <li>• As mentioned in comments on Ezekiel 37:14 (above), this occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2), in fulfillment of the many Messianic promises to that effect.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Hosea 2:14-20</u></p> <p><sup>14</sup> “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her <b>into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her</b>. <sup>15</sup> I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, <b>as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt</b>. <sup>16</sup> “And it shall be, in that day,” Says the Lord, “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer call Me My Master,’ <sup>17</sup> for I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more.</p> <p><sup>18</sup> In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. <b>Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth</b>, to make them lie down safely.</p> <p><sup>19</sup> “I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; <sup>20</sup> <b>I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God will call and restore them from the “wilderness” of the exile (v.14).</li> <li>• Hosea’s audience, Israel (the Northern Tribes), was destroyed and dispersed by the Assyrians, in 722 BC. They never were reestablished apart from as members of Judah, and as mixed-racial Samaritans.</li> <li>• However, the remnant of Israel became part of the Jewish people who did return from Babylon—and part of the remnant who were saved in Christ (Acts 26:7; James 1:1).</li> <li>• As in the exodus when they “came up from the land of Egypt” (v.15). The exodus is thus seen as a type of salvation from Babylon, and salvation in Messiah (cf., Isa.11:16; Luke 9:31; 1 Cor.5:7).</li> <li>• Destruction of <i>bow and sword</i> (v.18) is like the destruction of swords and spears in other Messianic Age prophecies (e.g., Isa.2:2-4; Mic.4:1-5).</li> <li>• Paul speaks of the Church being “betrothed” (vv.19-20) to Christ (2 Cor.11:2).</li> </ul>



<p><u>Hosea 3:4-5</u></p> <p><sup>4</sup>For the children of Israel shall abide <b>many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.</b></p> <p><sup>5</sup><b>Afterward</b> the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness <b>in the latter days.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The many days without king or prince (v.4) refers to the period from the beginning of the exile Messianic period of about 750 years from 722 BC to 30 AD.</li> <li>• When Israel and Judah returned from the exile (536 BC), they were finally weaned from their addiction to physical idolatry—spoken of as the “<i>sacred pillar</i>,” “<i>ephod</i>,” and “<i>teraphim</i>” (v.4).</li> <li>• The end of these many days is marked by the arrival of Messiah (<i>David</i>), whom the remnant embraced (v.5).</li> <li>• “<i>In the latter days</i>” (v.5) is the present Messianic Age, as noted in the comments on Isaiah 2:2-4 (above).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Hosea 11:10-11</u></p> <p><sup>10</sup>“<b>They shall walk after the Lord.</b> He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then <b>His sons shall come trembling from the west;</b> <sup>11</sup>They shall come trembling like a bird <b>from Egypt</b>, like a dove <b>from the land of Assyria.</b> And I will let them dwell in their houses,” says the Lord.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people of God have earlier been identified as the faithful, but the unfaithful were “<i>not my people</i>” (1:10). So it is not surprising to read that the remnant are distinguished by their “<i>walk after the Lord.</i>”</li> <li>• The fact that they “<i>come trembling from the west</i>” (v.10—which is not a direction to which the Babylonians carried them—suggests this is talking about the Church with its members coming from all directions (Matt.8:11; Luke 13:29). The mention of Egypt and Assyria (v.11) calls to mind Isaiah’s prophecy about these nations coming to God in the Messianic Era (Isa.19:22-25).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Hosea 14:1-4</u></p> <p>O Israel, <b>return to the Lord your God</b>, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; <sup>2</sup>Take words with you, and return to the Lord. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips. <sup>3</sup>Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride on horses, nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘You are our gods.’ for in You the fatherless finds mercy.” <sup>4</sup><b>I will heal their backsliding</b>, I will love them freely...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once again, the <i>healing</i> (restoration) of the nation from its alienation from God (v.4) appears to be conditioned upon their <i>returning to the Lord</i> in repentance (vv.1ff). This is also the condition for restoration given in Deut.30:1-2, 10; Jer.29:12-14; 31:7-12, 23; 33:10-11). No prophecy predicts a return to the land by people in a state of unbelief.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Joel 2:28-32</u></p> <p>“And it shall come to pass <b>afterward</b> that I will <b>pour out My Spirit on all flesh</b>; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. <sup>29</sup>And also on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.<sup>30</sup> “And I will show <b>wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke.</b> <sup>31</sup><b>The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood</b>, before the coming of <b>the great and awesome day of the Lord.</b> <sup>32</sup>And it shall come to pass that <b>whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.</b> For <b>in Mount Zion</b> and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only those addicted to transforming fulfilled prophecy into futuristic prophecy could mistake the meaning of this prediction, which was unambiguously seen by Peter as fulfilled at Pentecost, AD 30 (Acts 2:16-21).</li> <li>• It is probably because Peter substitutes the phrase “<i>in the last days</i>” for Joel’s “<i>afterward</i>” (v.28). However, the terms “the last days,” “the last times,” and the last hour” are frequently used by New Testament writers to indicate their own times (see note at Isa.2:2, above)—probably thinking of the last days of the second-temple and the Jewish state, which ended in AD 70.</li> <li>• The cosmic phenomena of vv.30-31 are those associated with the destruction of Jerusalem, using typical prophetic imagery (e.g. Isa.13:10; 34:3-5).</li> <li>• <i>Mount Zion</i> (v.32), here, is the spiritual Zion mentioned in Heb.12:22-23, and there identified as the Church.</li> </ul>

Joel 3:1-21

“For behold, **in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives** of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> I will also **gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people**, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land...<sup>4</sup> “Indeed, what have you to do with Me, **O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?**...<sup>6</sup> Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders. <sup>7</sup> “**Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them**, and will return your retaliation upon your own head...<sup>9</sup> Proclaim this among the nations: “**Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up.** <sup>10</sup> **Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’**” <sup>11</sup> **Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around.** Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. <sup>12</sup> “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to **the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge** all the surrounding nations. <sup>13</sup> **Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow**—for their wickedness *is* great.” <sup>14</sup> **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near** in the valley of decision. <sup>15</sup> **The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.** <sup>16</sup> The Lord also will **roar from Zion**, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; **the heavens and earth will shake**; but **the Lord will be a shelter for His people**, and the strength of the children of Israel. <sup>17</sup> “So you shall know that *I am* the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. **Then Jerusalem shall be holy**, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.” <sup>18</sup> And it will come to pass in that day that **the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk**, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; **a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias.** <sup>19</sup> “**Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah**, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. <sup>20</sup> But **Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem** from generation to generation. <sup>21</sup> For **I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed**, whom I had not acquitted; for the Lord dwells in Zion.”

- Two observations must be made about this chapter:
  - 1) It is related to the timeframe of Pentecost and beyond (“*in those days and at that time*” (v.1)
  - 2) It is highly symbolic (e.g., vv.13, 15, 18), raising questions about how much is to be taken literally.
- The phrase “*bring back the captives*” (v.1) is a common phrase in scripture, meaning, broadly, to “reverse the fortunes” (e.g., Job 42:10; Ps.14:7; 85:1; Hos.6:11; Zeph.3:20). Israel has never been “in captivity” after returning from Babylon (536 BC). This may imply liberation from spiritual bondage (John 8:32-36).
- The gathering of “*all nations...to the Valley of Jehoshaphat*” (v.2) seems symbolic, since there is not an actual valley by that name (nor is there one called “*the valley of decision*” -v.14). The name means “Yahweh judges” so it seems to speak generically of the place of judgment, as God said, “*I will enter into judgment with them*” (v.2)
- “*Tyre...Sidon...coasts of Philistia*” (v.4) The pagan enemies each have their turn to be judged, and were.
- A call to “*Prepare for war*” (vv.9-12), and to “*Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears*” (v.10) contrasts the opposite policy practiced in the Kingdom of God (Isa.2:4; Mic.4:3; John 18:36)
- “*Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.... the winepress is full, the vats overflow*” (v.13). These images are employed in Revelation 14:15-20, speaking of AD 70.
- The “*valley of decision*” (v.14) may refer the state of all men since the coming of Christ. One must decide between the Kingdom of God and that of Satan.
- The impending “*day of the Lord*” (v.14) referred to AD 70, in the previous chapter (2:31) and in Mal.4:5.
- “*The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness*” (v.15, cf., Matt.24:29).
- The prediction that “*the heavens and the earth will shake*” (v.16) is elsewhere connected to AD 70 (Joel 3:16; Amos 9:9; Hag.2:6-7, 21; Heb.12:26).
- When “*the Lord will be a shelter for His people...Then Jerusalem shall be holy*” (vv.16-17). When the shaking is past, the remnant alone will remain as part of Zion.
- The “*fountain*” that flows “*from the house of the Lord*” (v.18) is also seen in Ezek.47:1 and Zech.14:8, and is explained as the Holy Spirit, in John 7:37-39).
- “*Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness*” (v.19). True, but (spiritual) “*Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem...*” (v.20).
- “*I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed*” (v.21). The salvation of the remnant includes atonement in Christ.
- This chapter seems to speak of the AD 70 judgment upon Jerusalem, followed by that of the pagan nations, progressively, throughout the Messianic Era.

<p><u>Amos 9:9, 11-12</u></p> <p><sup>9</sup>“For surely I will command, and will <b>sift the house of Israel among all nations</b>, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet <b>not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground...</b> <sup>11</sup>“On that day <b>I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down</b>, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old <sup>12</sup>that <b>they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,</b>” says the Lord who does this thing...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>sifting</i> (or “shaking”) refers to the process of separating wheat from chaff (see Luke 22:31). See Prov.20:26. Even <i>the smallest grain</i> (the faithful) will not fall through the cracks.</li> <li>• David’s <i>tabernacle</i> (v.11; or “booth”—<i>succhoth</i>) is a contemptible reference to the “house” (or dynasty) of David which has become so utterly corrupt as to not warrant the name “house,” but is merely a mere “hut.”</li> <li>• The apostles quoted this verse as a prediction of the conversion and inclusion of the Gentiles in Christ’s (David’s) Kingdom. “<i>Edom</i>” (v.12) stands for all Gentiles.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Amos 9:14-15</u></p> <p><sup>14</sup><b>I will bring back the captives</b> of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. <sup>15</sup><b>I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,</b>” says the Lord your God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The phrase “<i>bring back the captives</i>” (v.14), as mentioned previously (see comment at Joel 3:1, above) is idiomatic, meaning, simply, to “restore the fortunes.”</li> <li>• “<i>plant them in their land...no longer be pulled up from the land...</i>” (v.15) did not occur to the northern tribes, except for the individuals who had joined themselves to Judah prior to the exile. This is probably to be understood as the spiritual inheritance (or “land”) that Abraham sought (Heb.11:13-16)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Micah 2:12-13</u></p> <p>“I will surely <b>assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold</b>, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of <b>so many people</b>. <sup>13</sup>The <b>one who breaks open</b> will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it; <b>their king will pass before them, with the Lord at their head.</b>”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice “<i>all of you, O Jacob</i>” is equivalent to “<i>the remnant of Israel</i>” (v.12).</li> <li>• Jerusalem, tended to resist God’s attempts at “<i>gathering</i>” them (Matt.23:37)</li> <li>• God’s intention to “<i>put them together as sheep of the fold</i>” is fulfilled by Christ (John 10:16), who gathers Israel’s remnant with believing Gentiles into one fold.</li> <li>• The inclusion of Gentiles creates:” <i>so many people</i>” (v.12; cf., Isa.49:19-20; 54:1-3; Zech.2:4)</li> <li>• The sheep follow “<i>their king</i>” (v.13), Christ (John 10:27)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Micah 4:6-8</u></p> <p>“In that day,” says the Lord, “<b>I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast</b> and those whom I have afflicted; <sup>7</sup>I will make the lame a <b>remnant</b>, and the outcast a <b>strong nation</b>; so <b>the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever</b>. <sup>8</sup>And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even <b>the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.</b>”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “<i>lame...outcast</i>” (v.6)—the disabled and formerly rejected (Matt.11:4-5; John 9:35)—are gathered (Ezek.34:13-16) into Christ’s eternal Kingdom, the spiritual Mount Zion (vv.7-8; Heb.12:22-23).</li> <li>• These terms refer to as the “<i>remnant</i>” who then become “<i>a strong nation</i>” (v.7; cf., 1 Pet.2:9; Isa.26:1-2; 66:8).</li> <li>• This gathering and shepherding of the sheep is not with reference merely to the return of the exiles from Babylon. Micah’s vision is ultimately Messianic, referring to the age following the birth of Messiah (cf., 5:2-5, below).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Micah 5:2-5</u></p> <p><sup>2</sup>“But you, <b>Bethlehem</b> Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet <b>out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel</b>, whose <b>goings forth are from of old</b>, from everlasting.”</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Therefore <b>He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth</b>; then the <b>remnant of His brethren shall return</b> to the children of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And <b>He shall stand and feed His flock</b> in the strength of the Lord, <b>in the majesty</b> of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now <b>He shall be great to the ends of the earth</b>; <sup>5</sup>And <b>this One shall be peace</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an example of a clearly Messianic prophecy that does not depend upon Christian prejudice to recognize it as such. That Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (based upon this very passage) was acknowledged by the Jewish rabbis prior to Christian times (Matt.2:6).</li> <li>• As the Messiah is often referred to as “David” (e.g., Ezek.34:23; 37:24, 25; Hos.3:5), who is His type, as the shepherd/king of the united Israel, so, in keeping with the type, Messiah is born in David’s home town.</li> <li>• “<i>His goings forth</i> [lit. “exoduses” LXX] <i>are from... everlasting</i>” (v.2) eliminates the possibility of this referring to any simply human descendent of David, since no man living in the present, or in the future, has been proceeding from the ancient past.</li> <li>• The coming of Christ effected the prophesied “return” of “<i>the remnant</i>” (v.3), whom He shall feed as “<i>His flock</i>” (v.4; cf., Isa.40:11; Ezek.34:23)</li> <li>• His kingdom is to be global, “<i>to the ends of the earth</i>” (v.4; cf., Ps.2:8; 72:8; Acts 1:8).</li> <li>• Jesus is His people’s “peace” (Eph.2:14; John 16:33).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Micah 7:11-20</u></p> <p>In the day when <b>your walls are to be built</b>, in that day <b>the decree shall go far and wide</b>. <sup>12</sup>In that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, from the fortress to the River, from sea to sea, and mountain to mountain. <sup>13</sup><b>Yet the land shall be desolate</b> because of those who dwell in it, and for the fruit of their deeds. <sup>14</sup><b>Shepherd Your people</b> with Your staff, the flock of Your heritage, who dwell solitarily in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in days of old. <sup>15</sup>“<b>As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt</b>, I will show them wonders.” <sup>16</sup><b>The nations shall see and be ashamed</b> of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. <sup>17</sup>They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You. <sup>18</sup>Who is a God like You, <b>pardoning iniquity</b> and passing over the transgression of the <b>remnant</b> of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. <sup>19</sup>He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will <b>cast all our sins into the depths of the sea</b>. <sup>20</sup>You will give truth to Jacob and <b>mercy to Abraham</b>, which You have <b>sworn to our fathers</b> from days of old.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is interesting that this speaks of the building of Zion’s “walls” (v.11) even when “<i>the land shall be desolate</i>” (v.13). These walls seem to be the “walls” of the spiritual Zion (Heb.12:22-23), which are symbolic of divine “salvation” (Isa.60:18).</li> <li>• This building of the spiritual Jerusalem is done by Gentiles who respond to “<i>the decree</i>” (the Gospel) which “<i>shall go far and wide</i>” (v.11; cf., Isa.60:10; Matt.22:9-10).</li> <li>• The Messiah’s “shepherding” His people (v.14) has been a repeated theme in Micah’s previous Messianic passages (2:12-13; 5:2-4), as in Isaiah and Ezekiel.</li> <li>• “<i>As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt</i>” (v.15). It is common to compare the exodus to the Messianic salvation, of which it is a type (cf., v.19; Isa.11:16; Hag.2:5; Luke 9:31).</li> <li>• What God does through Christ will cause “<i>nations</i>” (Gentiles) to “<i>be ashamed</i>” (repent) (v.16). This is a prediction of Gentile inclusion, like Isa.11:10; 19:23; 49:22; 54:3; Amos 9:12; Zech.2:11; Mal.1:11).</li> <li>• It is, again, “<i>the remnant</i>” whose iniquity is pardoned (v.18). The casting of “<i>sins into the depth of the sea</i>” (v.19) is another comparison with the Exodus, where this was what happened to the Egyptians there.</li> <li>• The “<i>mercy to Abraham...sworn to our fathers</i>” (v.20) is recognized as being fulfilled at Christ’s first coming by Mary (Luke 1:54-55) and Zacharias (Luke 1:72-73).</li> </ul>

<p><u>Zeph.3:14-20</u></p> <p><b>14 Sing, O daughter of Zion!</b> Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! <b>15 The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;</b> you shall see disaster no more. <b>16</b> In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. <b>17 The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save;</b> He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” <b>18 “I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, to whom its reproach is a burden.</b> <b>19</b> Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will <b>save the lame, and gather those who were driven out;</b> I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame. <b>20</b> At that time <b>I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you;</b> for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, <b>when I return your captives</b> before your eyes,” says the Lord.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>Sing, O daughter of Zion</i>” (v.14) is the response to salvation, as the Israelites sang when delivered from Egypt (Ex.15). This is the “Zion” who has been forgiven and her judgments canceled (v.15). This pardoned people were identified as “the remnant” in Micah 7:18 (above).</li> <li>• The enemy that has been “<i>cast out</i>” (v.15) is, like the Egyptian captors of Israel, our sins, cast into the depths of the sea, as in Mic.7:19 (above).</li> <li>• The Lord dwelling “<i>in your midst</i>” (vv.15, 17) is a frequent feature of prophecies about the present age (Isa.12:6; Ezek.37:26-28; Hos.11:9; Zech.2:11; 2 Cor.6:16).</li> <li>• “<i>I will gather...at the time I gather you</i>” (vv.18, 19, 20) applies to the gathered remnant who “sorrow” and find the sin of the nation “a burden” (v.18)—not the whole nation.</li> <li>• The gathering of the “<i>lame</i>” and “<i>those...driven out</i>” (v.19) is a repetition of the same information in Micah 4:6 (above), applied to the Messianic Shepherd.</li> <li>• This refers to the time when God brings His people back from the bondage of sin (John 8:31-34). As in earlier cases (see comment at Joel 3:1, above), the phrase “<i>return your captives</i>” (v.20) means “restore your fortunes.” Israel has not been in literal captivity since 536 BC.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Zech.2:6-12</u></p> <p><b>6</b> “Up, up! <b>Flee from the land of the north,</b>” says the Lord; “for I have <b>spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,</b>” says the Lord. <b>7</b> “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of <b>Babylon.</b>” <b>8</b> For thus says the Lord of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; <b>for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.</b> <b>9</b> For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me. <b>10</b> “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, <b>I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,</b>” says the Lord. <b>11</b> “<b>Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst.</b> Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. <b>12</b> And the Lord will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In keeping with the relevance to Zechariah’s times, flight “<i>from the land of the north</i>” (v.6) is a call to the Jews still in “<i>Babylon</i>” (v.7), who did not return earlier with Zerubbabel.</li> <li>• As is not uncommon in the prophets, the restoration of exiles from Babylon morphs into the salvation of the remnant in Christ.</li> <li>• The faithful to God are “<i>the apple of [His] eye</i>” (v.8), an idiom referring to the pupil of the eye, which is jealously protected from harm, and painful to be poked.</li> <li>• “<i>I will dwell in your midst</i>” (vv.10, 11) is a repeated motif for the Messianic Age (see note at Zeph.3:17, above).</li> <li>• “<i>Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people</i>” (v.11), resembles numerous other predictions, in similar passages, which speak about Gentile ingathering after the exiles have returned (see comment at Micah 7:16, above).</li> </ul>

Zech.8:3-8, 20-23

<sup>3</sup>“Thus says the Lord: **‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.** Jerusalem shall be called **the City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain.**’ <sup>4</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts: **‘Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age.** <sup>5</sup>**The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.** <sup>6</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If it is **marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people** in these days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes?’ says the Lord of hosts. <sup>7</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Behold, **I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west;** <sup>8</sup>**I will bring them back,** and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. **They shall be My people and I will be their God,** in truth and righteousness’...

<sup>20</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts: **‘Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities;** <sup>21</sup>The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Let us **continue to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord** of hosts. I myself will go also.” <sup>22</sup>Yes, **many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord** of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.’

<sup>23</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts: **‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man,** saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that **God is with you.**””

- “*I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem*” (v.3). See comment on Zep.3:15, 17, above.
- “*City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain*” (v.3). Explained in Heb.12:22-23.
- “*Old men and old women...boys and girls playing in its streets*” (vv.4-5). These are images of tranquility and peace in good times—somewhat similar to every man reclining under his own vine and fig tree (Mic.4:4).
- “*If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people...*” (v.6) mimics the language of Ps.118:22-23—“*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes*” (Ps.118:22-23)—which Jesus quoted as fulfilled in Him.
- “*I will bring them back*” (v.8), being typical language of restoration of exiles from Babylon, seems to morph into Messianic salvation: “*I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west*” (v.7). The specific mention of “*the land of the west*” seems to speak of a geographical range broader than that exile.
- “*They shall be My people and I will be their God*” (v.19) is another common phrase in Messianic passages (see comment at Ezek.36:28, above).
- “*Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities... many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord*” (vv.20, 22). Again, the inclusion of many Gentiles in the Kingdom was mentioned in 2:11, where see comment, above).
- The “*ten men from every language of the nations*” being contrasted with “*a Jewish man*” (v.23) is emphasizing that Gentiles will greatly outnumber Jews in the Kingdom.