

# **THEME: The Middle East, Israel & Jerusalem - Prophecies to Be Fulfilled**

## **LOOKING BACK**

NOTE: This session should follow Stage 2, Session 11: The Middle East, Israel, and Jerusalem: Prophetic History to the Present Day. Sessions 11 and 12 are linked.

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

## **CONNECT Let's Review**

### **Resources**

Bibles

### **Icebreaker Activity - Timeline Recap**

#### **Things to Prepare:**

- Gather materials kept from Session 11.
- If possible, a very long string or ribbon that reaches across the whole room.
- Six clips
- Five small papers with dates: 30 AD, 70 AD, 1948, 1967, and the current year
- Four maps of Israel from different periods (30 AD, 70 AD, 1948, 1967), color-coded as detailed in the lesson.
- Another string or ribbon (of a different color) around  $\frac{1}{4}$  the length of the long one.
- One more small paper with date: 592-570 BC.

#### **Activity – Putting It All Together!**

- Work together and try to assemble the string model from the Session 11 activity, with dates clipped to the string at appropriate places and the maps placed underneath.
- Ask one or two people to talk through and review what it all means. They should mention that the Jews were scattered from Israel in 70 AD (by the Romans), and the Jewish people were mostly out of Israel for nearly 2,000 years until God began gathering them again in 1948.
- Ask them what happened in 1967. There was a six-day war where all the surrounding nations attacked Israel, but miraculously, Israel won back all their land.
- Show the children the new piece of string. Add it to the beginning of the original string. Then, clip the paper with the date 592-570 BC to the beginning of the new string. The book of Ezekiel was written around this time.

Keep the timeline in place, as we will continue to work with it during the discussion.

### Discuss

- We've done a fantastic job of reconstructing and reviewing the timeline of the scattering and regathering that we learned about in Session 11. Now, let's have one person go to the timeline and stand in the place where Ezekiel's prophecy was given. And one more person goes and stands where the scattering happened. This was the first part of the prophecy. Now, one more person goes and stands where the gathering occurred. What do you notice about Ezekiel's prophecy of scattering and gathering in terms of the entire timeline? The prophecy was given a very long time before it even started unfolding. Sometimes, we must wait a long time for God's prophecies to come to pass. But they always do, and it's always in His perfect timing.
- As you might have seen from Session 11's Going Deeper, several other prophets (*Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Hosea* are a few) also wrote about the scattering and gathering of the Jews. Why do you think God had this prophecy given by several voices and written down many times in the Old Testament? It was so God's people wouldn't miss what He promised. This scattering and gathering is a big deal to God.
- In today's session, we will find out why this prophecy is so important to God and why it should be to us as well.

## TRUTH TO KNOW

### Faith Focus: Seeing God's Hand

#### Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Ezekiel 36**.

Did you know the Bible gives us some very significant prophecies about the people of Israel that will come true in the future in God's perfect timing?

#### Background to This Bible Passage

In Session 11, we saw that the prophet Ezekiel had prophesied to the land of Israel about a future time of scattering of the Jews and then a subsequent time of restoration to the land. God said that He would regather the Jewish people back to Israel. The scattering has already happened, and the regathering and restoration are happening now – in our generation. Ezekiel explains God's reasons for orchestrating this prophetic act later in chapter 36. This is what we are going to look at today.

## The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Ezekiel 36:22-28**.

God's prophecy through Ezekiel is coming to pass in our day. The Jews were scattered in 70 AD and began to be restored to their land in 1948, with the rebirth of Israel as a modern nation. The regathering of Jewish people to Israel continues, and the Bible says that all God's people will eventually be brought back. But why?

- Why does God say He will scatter and restore the Jewish people (verses 22-24)? God's reason for gathering and restoring the Jewish people to the mountains of Israel after 2,000 years was for His Name's sake. God wanted His Name and His reputation to be lifted high among the nations so that people everywhere, especially in this generation, will know that the God of Israel is powerful and faithful to keep His promises.
- This knowledge is for the good of all the nations, that they might come to God and put their faith in His Messiah, Jesus.
- What does God plan for His people once they are gathered back in the land of Israel (verses 25-28)? God plans to sprinkle clean water on them and give them new hearts. He plans to open their spiritual eyes to who their Messiah is and give them an infilling of His Holy Spirit.
- In our previous session, we saw that in the Six Day War (1967), Israel had gained back all of its promised land after a surprise attack by surrounding nations. This was a miraculous event that could have only happened by the hand of God. What resulted was that Jerusalem became united once again under the sovereignty of Israel. For the first time in 2,000 years, Jews now had full access to the Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, where their Temples once stood.
- **Ezekiel 36** says that once they return to the land, the Jews will be cleaned from their sin and filled with His Spirit. Amazingly, after the Six Day War, when Jerusalem was united with the rest of Israel, Jewish people began to understand that Jesus is their Jewish Messiah. This supernatural opening of eyes has continued until now and is accelerating, especially in Israel. Jewish people who believe that Jesus is their Messiah are sometimes called Messianic Jews or Jewish Believers.
- Overall, God's purpose for this prophetic movement of His people away and back to the land is for the salvation of *all* people, Gentiles (non-Jews) *and* Jews. Jesus is returning soon, and God wants everyone, Jews and Gentiles, to be ready and waiting expectantly for Him.

## Activity Suggestion - Identifying Future Prophecies

**Aim:** To identify some biblical prophecies that are either being fulfilled, have been fulfilled, or will be fulfilled before the return of Jesus.

**Things to Prepare:** Biblical prophecy cards with the following biblical end-time prophecies written on them (words in *italics* are the answers and shouldn't be included on the cards):

- Jews are back in their land. *In Progress*
- Jewish people in Israel have accepted Jesus as their Messiah. *In Progress*
- Desolate cities in Israel have become inhabited. *Fulfilled*
- All nations hate the Jewish people. *In Progress*
- The desert land has been revived. *Fulfilled*
- Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives to set up His Kingdom in Jerusalem. *Not Yet*
- There will be a Jewish Temple with a daily sacrifice. *In Progress (see discussion below)*
- The Gospel message of the Kingdom will reach all the people groups. *In Progress*
- Jerusalem will become a contested subject on the world stage. *Fulfilled*

Put up three signs in different areas of the room:

1. FULFILLED - Prophecy HAS already been fulfilled.
2. IN PROGRESS - Prophecy IS being fulfilled now.
3. NOT YET - Prophecy WILL be fulfilled Later.

### Activity – Things to Come!

Read each biblical prophecy card aloud, one at a time. As you do, have group members move to the area of the room based on whether they think the prophecy has been fulfilled, is in progress, or has not yet been fulfilled. Discuss each of the answers.

How different would your answers be if you had done this exercise 100 years ago?

### Discuss

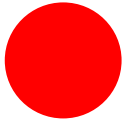
- Let's recap what we just learned from this activity. Out of the biblical end-time prophecies mentioned just now, we saw that most are in progress. Do you remember what they were? Jews are back in their land, Jewish people in Israel have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, all nations hate the Jewish people, there will be another Jewish Temple with a daily sacrifice, and the Gospel message of the Kingdom will reach all the people groups.
- We saw that three prophecies had already been fulfilled. Within the past 75 years of gathering Jews to the land, we have seen the Jews working to restore the land so that cities are no longer uninhabited and the deserts are revived and blooming once again. Since 1967, Jerusalem has come back under Jewish control, and many people now have opinions about Jerusalem and its status as Israel's capital city. As prophesied by the prophet Zechariah, Jerusalem has become a highly contested subject on the world stage.
- There are many more biblical end-time prophecies than these. However, we have seen from these specific prophecies that God's end-time agenda is moving along rapidly.
- The spiritual restoration of the Jewish people is a significant prophetic end-time sign, as prophesied by Ezekiel and others, and we can see evidence of this in the land of Israel today. Forty years ago, there was only a handful of Believing Jews in Israel, and today, we can count at least three hundred active and flourishing Messianic Jewish congregations in the land.
- Jesus has not yet returned to the Mount of Olives to set up His earthly throne in Jerusalem, but we know that this will happen one day and that this day is approaching. How do we know this? God is faithful to keep His promises. He said it, so He will do it. We also have evidence of many other prophecies that have either been fulfilled or are in the process of being fulfilled in our generation.

## READY TO GO

*Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.*

Think about what you will do to respond to God’s prophetic fulfillment in restoring both the land and the people of Israel in our generation, in addition to fulfilling so many other prophetic signs.

## TIME FOR ACTION



**1. “STOP & THINK” Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. God wants people to know that He is the God who scattered and regathered Israel for two reasons. Will you remember these two reasons so that you can tell others? *(1) As a sign to the nations of His power and faithfulness, and (2) to reveal to the Jewish people that Jesus is their Messiah so He can put His Spirit in them.*



**2. “PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point**

Have a conversation with God about today’s lesson. The fulfillment of biblical prophecies is all for God’s glory! Thank Him for being a powerful and faithful God who loves and cares for people so much that He wants everyone to know who He is and to see His glory!



**3. “GO & DO” Action Point**

Which biblical end-time prophecies mentioned today resonate most with you, and why? Go and find one other person today and share your thoughts.

## SPRINGBOARD

After this session, we recommend you use the following session to pull together the themes in the last two sessions on the Middle East, Israel, and Jerusalem:

- The End Times Puzzle

## DEEPER STUDY

*For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.*

### For Study

1. Read **Ezekiel 37:1-14**. How does the valley of dry bones coming to life link with today's lesson?
2. Read **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. What is the New Covenant? Look also at **Jeremiah 31:1-14**. How do both passages in **Jeremiah 31** connect with the prophecies in **Ezekiel 36**?

### For Memorizing

1. **Ezekiel 36:26-27** (NIV): "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
2. **Jeremiah 31:33** (NIV): "'This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,' declares the Lord. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"

### For Observation

1. More and more Jewish people in Israel receive Jesus (Yeshua) as their Messiah and become Messianic (or believing) Jews. Go to the [One For Israel website](https://www.oneforisrael.org/outreach/) (<https://www.oneforisrael.org/outreach/>). One For Israel is a Messianic Jewish organization that tells Jewish people in Israel about their Jewish Messiah, Yeshua. Israel is experiencing a Gospel revolution. You will see a chart of 50 million views in Israel through Hebrew Media Gospel exposure. This has escalated significantly over the past few years. Why do you think this has happened?

### For Action - Learn About Aliyah

1. What is the definition of Aliyah? (See <https://www.altarofprayer.com/post/the-great-gentile-aliyah>) Look at the following page of scriptures related to Aliyah. Use three scriptures from this list to pray for the return of the Jewish people to the land:
  - **Deuteronomy 7:7** - God chose the Jewish people and set His affections on them, not because of their great number, but because they were few!
  - **Ezekiel 9:9** - The sin of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great.
  - **Jeremiah 32:32** - The people of Israel and Judah provoked God by all their evil deeds.
  - **Isaiah 11:11** - God will reclaim His people a second time.
  - **Jeremiah 31:31** - God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
  - **Zechariah 10:10** - God will bring them back; He will gather them, and there will not be enough room for them.
  - **Hosea 11:11** - God is going to settle them in their homes.
  - **Zechariah 8:8** - God will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They will be His people, and He will be their faithful and righteous God.
  - **Ezekiel 36:36** - Nations will know that God has rebuilt and replanted what He had destroyed and made desolate.
  - **Romans 11:11** - Salvation has come to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

### Before the Next IN:Tribe

1. **Daniel 11:31** and **Daniel 12:11** are two end-time scriptures that speak of abolishing the daily (Temple) sacrifice. This means another Jewish Temple must be built and in operation before Jesus returns. Furthermore, another end-time passage, **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**, speaks of a man of lawlessness who will one day set himself up in God's Temple and proclaim himself to be God. Again, this means a Jewish Temple must be in place for this to happen.

2. At the moment, there is no Jewish Temple. However, there are people in Israel who are preparing to build one. Watch this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB8W0cLM9uA>) from the Temple Institute Museum in Jerusalem, and come ready to share your thoughts and questions at the next IN:Tribe meeting.