

## **How the world learns of God**

by Douglas E. Cox

The prophet Ezekiel outlined several events that would cause the heathen to learn about God. These events are connected with prophecies about the restoration of Israel. The New Testament identifies the Christian Church with Israel, and with Abraham's seed. Those who believe in Christ inherit the promises of God. [Eph 2:11-13, Phil.3:3] In Acts 3:23, the apostle Peter, quoting from the law of Moses, said that those of Israel who reject Jesus as their promised Messiah will be destroyed from among the people. [Acts 3:23] Thus, unbelieving Jews have been cut off from Israel, while Christians of all nations are "grafted in," and are included in the Israel of God.

In this article some of Ezekiel's prophecies are applied to the Church, which has become scattered, and made desolate. Jesus Christ leads his people out of captivity, into the knowledge of the truth.

### **When God gathers His saints who are scattered, He is sanctified in them**

In Ezekiel God says:

Ezekiel 20:41

I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

This prophecy is not fulfilled by unbelieving ethnic Jews settling in Palestine.

Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."  
[John 13:35]

John wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." [1 John 3:14]

He also said: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." [1 John 3:16]

## **When God is sanctified in His people, Israel will dwell in the promised land**

Ezekiel wrote:

Ezekiel 28:25

Thus saith the Lord God; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.

The gathering of Israel from out of all the nations where they have been scattered depicts Christians of diverse beliefs returning to "the faith which was once delivered" to the saints, and to the truth. In prophecy, the saints are depicted as scattered. [Ezek. 20:34; 34:5-6; Dan. 12:7; Joel 3:2; Zech. 13:7; James 1:1]

Although unbelieving Jews have settled in the Jewish state in the Middle East, they do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ; those events are not the fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy. Israel dwelling in their land is a figure and a shadow of the saints dwelling in a "better country," which is heavenly. [Heb. 11:16]

Ezekiel's prophecy does not apply to ethnic Jews and the literal earthly Canaan. The apostle Peter said the prophets ministered not unto themselves, but "unto us," that is, the Church. [1 Peter 1:12] Dwelling in the land represents possessing spiritual blessings promised to those who believe in Christ. Jacob understood that the land signified spiritual blessings and revelations of God. [Genesis 49:26] Israel dwelling in their land depicts the Church believing and understanding the message of the prophets and apostles in the true spiritual sense.

## **When Christians depart from the truth, they profane God's holy name**

Ezekiel 36:20

And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land.

God's land represents the truth of the gospel; other lands represent other beliefs, and other religions.

## **When God restores His Church, the heathen will know that God has done it**

Ezekiel 36:36

Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the

ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.

In the 70th week of Daniel 9:24-27, the Church becomes desolate. The first two sections of the 70 weeks and a portion of the third section apply to the earthly Jerusalem. When Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection, he was “made Christ” and became king of Israel, reigning on the perpetual throne of David in Jerusalem. This implies that Jerusalem was raised up, as Isaiah foretold. [Isaiah 2:1-3] The 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy began with the ministry of Jesus, which lasted three and a half natural years. The remaining part of the 70th week applies to the heavenly Jerusalem. The units of time in the last half-week are no longer natural years, but symbolic. It is the “time, times, and a half,” a symbol representing the age of the Church. Daniel 7 shows that in this period, a “little horn” makes war with the saints and overcomes them. This is a figure depicting the antichrist spirit which causes desolation of the Church. Daniel 9:24 shows that within the 70 weeks, the holy Spirit will be poured out, and there is an anointing of the most Holy, that is, the holy Spirit is poured out upon the Church. This is referred to in verse 27: “. . . and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” I suggest, “that determined” in verse 27 refers to the “anointing” mentioned in verse 24. The Church which is desolate receives the anointing of God’s Spirit.

### **When Christ is worshiped by his people, the heathen will know that He is the Lord**

Ezekiel 36:23

And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

Christ’s name will no longer be profaned by his people. God will be sanctified in them, and the heathen will know that He is the Lord.

Ezekiel 39:7

So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

### **When God’s sanctuary is established in the midst of His people, the heathen will know that God has sanctified them**

Ezekiel 37:28

And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

The heathen have not come to know God because of the efforts of Zionists to encourage Jews to settle in Palestine. On the contrary, that is the major cause of strife and contention in the area.

Ezekiel's prophecy applies to the Church, the true temple, not to unbelieving Jews. [Eph 2:19-22]  
The heathen will see God's judgment on the enemies of the saints.

Ezekiel 39:21

And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

### **When Gog and Magog are judged, and God is sanctified in them, the heathen will know Him**

Ezekiel 38:16

And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

In Revelation 20, people who are deceived, who come against the camp of the saints and the beloved city, are identified with Gog and Magog.

Revelation 20:7-9

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

God's sheep will dwell safely, and will no longer be a prey to the heathen.

Ezekiel 34:28

And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.

The heathen will bear their shame.

Ezekiel 36:7

Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

### **When God gathers His people, none will remain in the lands where they were captive**

Ezekiel 39:28

. . . then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led

into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

This prophecy of Ezekiel is not fulfilled by ethnic Jews; literally it means that every ethnic Jew must live in the earthly Canaan, and none elsewhere. Of course that has not happened.

Israel being gathered into their own land depicts the saints understanding and believing the truth, and forsaking false doctrines and flawed interpretations in which they were captive.

God promises to pour out his holy Spirit upon the house of Israel, that is, the Church.

Ezekiel 39:29

Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.