

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 62.4%

Weekly Readings will cover:

Sunday: 2 Kings 25:23 – 26, Jeremiah 40:7 – 16 & Jeremiah 41

Monday: Jeremiah 42 & Jeremiah 43

Tuesday: Jeremiah 44

Wednesday: Ezekiel 33:21 – 33 & Ezekiel 34

Thursday: Ezekiel 35

Friday: Ezekiel 36

Saturday: Ezekiel 37

Current # of email addresses in the group: 627

I hope your study week went well. If my calculation is correct, you have now finished 25 books of the Bible in our Deep Dive study!

I hope you both have a great week and learn a lot from this week's study.

Current and archive of this reading program is available at:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/announcements/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep>

The audio archive information is also available on our UCG Bay Area YouTube page here:

https://youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792?si=EA_tacLBfv1XR3jH

You may actually prefer accessing it directly from this Playlist tab:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792/playlists>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 96

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 645 – SUNDAY: May 18th

2 Kings 25:23 – 26, Jeremiah 40:7 – 16 & Jeremiah 41

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “Not all Judean soldiers were exiled to Babylon. Some would have escaped with King Zedekiah while others manned fortresses throughout Judah. These army commanders had formed a resistance movement against the Babylonians and now came to Mizpah to meet the new Babylon-appointed Jewish governor, Gedaliah. With reference to one of the commanders, Jaazaniah or

Jezaniah ([2 Kings 25:23](#); [Jeremiah 40:8](#)), biblical historian Walter Kaiser makes this observation: "In the ruins of Mizpah, if *Tell en Nasbeh* is ancient Mizpah, a seal was found with this inscription: 'Belonging to Jaazaniah, servant of the king'" (*A History of Israel*, 1988, pp. 406).

The Harper Study Bible notes on [Jeremiah 40:11-14](#): "There was rest in Judah under Gedaliah, who was capable and prudent. Jews who had been dispersed all over Palestine returned to Judah and came under the care and control of Gedaliah. Some degree of prosperity came, inasmuch as they gathered a goodly supply of wine and summer fruits. [But] a dark cloud hung over the infant state under Gedaliah. Baalis king of the Ammonites wanted to destroy Gedaliah. He employed Ishmael, a Jew of royal stock, to settle in Gedaliah's territory in order to slay the governor. Johanan, a friend of Gedaliah, tried to warn him about the plot, offering to kill Ishmael. But Gedaliah, a peaceful and honorable man, refused the offer and maintained his friend was speaking lies about Ishmael. Johanan's warning, however, eventually proved to be well-founded."

Author R.K. Harrison offers further explanation: "After the Chaldeans had devastated Judah, Gedaliah, who had befriended Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 39:14](#)), was appointed governor over the 'poor of the land.' Remnants of the old royal house who had managed to escape to Egypt regarded him as a collaborationist, however, and Ishmael, a descendant of the royal Hebrew line, slew Gedaliah at Mizpah while he was endeavoring to resettle the scattered populace" (*Old Testament Times*, 1970, p. 253).

"The 'ten men' [involved in the plot] (v. 2) should not be thought of as being alone, for they may have brought a retinue of attendants with them" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on 41:2-3).

"The year of the assassination of Gedaliah," it should be pointed out, "is not given, only the month—the seventh month of Tishri—September-

October. The murder of the governor could have taken place as soon as three months after the fall of Jerusalem [in 586 B.C.] Others associate the third deportation of 582 B.C. [of 745 Judeans (see [Jeremiah 52:30](#))] with this rebellion. Ishmael's act was especially despicable since it took place during a banquet" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 41:1-2).

Moreover, it is a sad reflection on Ishmael (and his collaborators) that in a time of utter devastation of his homeland and people, he would not only assassinate a decent leader but would also try to destroy the tiny remnant of poor people living there. He even kills a group of 80 men on a pilgrimage to the temple from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria. These were probably Jews who, during the Babylonian invasion, had taken refuge in what was now Samaritan territory. It may be that they did not know that the temple was destroyed—although, as they were in mourning, it is also possible that they did know but considered the temple ruins as holy, just as Jews now consider the Western Wall of the temple to be. "These eighty men were mourning for the destroyed temple as well as for the ruined city (cf. 16:6; 47:5; 48:37). They had even gashed themselves—a relapse into heathen custom forbidden in [Deuteronomy 14:1](#)" (*Expositor's*, note on verses 4-5)—demonstrating the corruption of Jewish religious practice at this time.

Ishmael then tries to take a group of captives into Ammon. Notice that among them are the "king's daughters" (verse 10)—showing that all of Zedekiah's children were not killed. He still had at least two surviving daughters (the number is not specified).

With Johanan's forces in pursuit, Ishmael gives up his captives and manages to escape into Ammon. Johanan and those who are left worry that Babylon will come down hard on everyone, even those who weren't involved. "Fearing imminent reprisal from the Babylonians on account of the rebellion, Johanan gathered the inhabitants of Mizpah, including Jeremiah, together with those he had rescued and began a trek toward Egypt, seeking a place of safety. Egypt was the only country

in the region that was free from Babylonian control" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on [Jeremiah 41:16-18](#)).

We see how vulnerable people become when the government that structured their lives is torn from them—first their king and his government, then the governor put over them by Babylon. They are fearful, anxious for security and therefore vulnerable to self-seeking ambitious men who are eager to seize the leadership. It was a true test of whether they would trust God and His true servant or the men who seemed to offer security in a frightful time.

They camp near Bethlehem. We'll see more about what they decide to do in our next reading." [END]

Day 646 – MONDAY: May 19th

Jeremiah 42 & Jeremiah 43

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Fearing a new Babylonian rampage through the land, the Jewish remnant deems it important to have God on their side. So they ask Jeremiah to pray for God's will to be revealed (verses 1-2). Yet it becomes apparent that what they really want is confirmation of what they have already made up their minds to do—flee to Egypt (see [Jeremiah 43:2](#)). "It is an insult to God to ask for his will, when a decision has already been made before his answer comes. Whoever prays with a closed mind might just as well not pray at all" (*Harper Study Bible*, note on [Jeremiah 42:10](#)). The people hadn't fooled God or Jeremiah. God knew they were hypocritical and essentially deceitful when they asked Jeremiah to pray for them (verse 20).

The response from God didn't come immediately. God doesn't always answer us when we want answers, but when He chooses. They didn't get the response they wanted. Even today, many pray for God to bless something that they want, rather than seek His will and accept what He gives. Some go to God's ministers as if seeking counsel, yet having

already made up their minds, expecting the minister to support their stand and vindicate their planned actions. When the advice doesn't agree, they sometimes then become angry with the minister, perhaps even disparaging him. So it was with the Jews and Jeremiah at this time. They did not recognize that their stubbornness was the problem, not an "uncooperative" or "insensitive" servant of God.

[Jeremiah 42:10](#) recalls the prophet's original commission: "to root out and pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant" ([Jeremiah 1:10](#)). If the Jewish remnant would obey God, He would relent of the judgment of bringing the group down but would rebuild them as a people in the Promised Land. This was always God's will—to bless and give an inheritance. Human rebellion impeded that.

Verse 11 of chapter 42 recalls another statement God made at the beginning of Jeremiah's call. There God told him not to fear any who would seek to harm him for God would be with him to deliver him ([Jeremiah 1:8](#)). Now God through Jeremiah says the same will be true for the Jewish remnant if the people will do what He says and remain in the Promised Land. *Mastering the Old Testament* says: "Think of the memories that would have rushed into Jeremiah's thoughts as he delivered these words, the same words delivered to him at the time of his call ([Jeremiah 1:8](#)). Truly he had experienced deliverance: from Pashhur's stocks, from Hananiah's accusations, from prison, from the mire of the cistern, and from Babylonian anger, but most of all he had been delivered from the temptation to compromise. No wonder there was such a resonance of faith in the words themselves as they flow on" (Vol. 17: *Jeremiah, Lamentations* by John Guest, 1993, note on verse 11).

Sadly, Jeremiah's obedient and steadfast character was not shared by the Jewish leaders who were left. Faith in God cannot be given to others; all must learn and chose it over time and in their own life experiences. In rebellion they left Judah and went to Egypt, taking with

them Jeremiah and Baruch—presumably against their will as God had forbidden going there. Once again, the "king's daughters" are listed in the company. The group travels to Tahpanhes in Egypt. "The location of Tahpanhes is known, for the later Hellenized form of the name, Daphne, survives to this day in *Tell Deffeneh*, west of el Kantara. A prominent mound among the ruins was called by the natives 'Palace of the daughter of the Jew.' Some excavations were conducted there by Sir Flinders Petrie, which showed this 'palace' to have been a strong fort. However, there must also have been a palace of the Pharaoh here, for Jeremiah performed a symbolic action at its entrance...Ezekiel speaks of the pride of Tahpanhes ([Ezekiel 30:18](#)), but like Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 43:9](#) f.) foresees the disaster for the city" (Emil Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, 1956, p. 318).

Biblical historian Walter Kaiser gives further information on the location and what happened there: "The migrants came to Tahpanhes (*Tell Dafanneh*) in the northeastern delta of Egypt ([Jeremiah 43:1-7](#)). There Jeremiah took stones, at Yahweh's instruction, and hid them at the entry of the royal palace, predicting that God would one day bring Nebuchadnezzar to conquer this place and set his pavilion on that very spot ([Jeremiah 43:8-13](#))... This site is twenty-seven miles southwest of Port Said. Sir Flinders Petrie excavated this site in 1883-94 and discovered the foundations of the castle there—perhaps the one mentioned in Jeremiah's symbolic action" (*A History of Israel*, 1988, pp. 411).

After burying the rocks, Jeremiah gives the Jews another warning from God. In referring to Nebuchadnezzar as "My servant" (verse 10; see also 25:9; 27:6), God is not, as noted in regard to the earlier references, stating that the Babylonian king is a godly king or that he gets his orders by direct revelation from God. All rulers, whether good or evil, have their power through God's ultimate oversight and direction of human affairs ([Romans 13:1-6](#)). God uses such rulers to deal with His people

and to teach them lessons just as He used the Babylonians and Assyrians in dealing with Judah and Israel.

God will eventually deal with all nations who refuse to follow Him, and Egypt was no exception. Nebuchadnezzar would invade and lay waste to that country, too—incorporating it then into the Babylonian Empire. (Recall other prophecies of Egypt's destruction in Jeremiah 46 and Ezekiel 29-32). "A fragmentary [Babylonian] text in the British Museum indicates that Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt occurred in the thirty-seventh year of his reign (568-567 B.C.)" (*Expositor's*, note on 43:10-11).

Verse 13 of chapter 43 refers to the sacred pillars of Beth Shemesh ("House [or temple] of the Sun"). There were a number of pre-Israelite settlements in Canaan known by this name, the most well known being on the northern border of Judah. But the one referred to here is in Egypt, known as Heliopolis in Greek and called On by the Egyptians.

"Heliopolis was perhaps most splendid in the Middle and New Kingdoms...when many pharaohs adorned its temples with obelisks. These were tall shafts, capped with miniature pyramids that caught the first and last rays of the sun" ("Heliopolis," *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, 1983, p. 233).

Many nations have their symbols of pride—their monuments, palaces and grand edifices that they perceive as symbols of strength—and Egypt was no exception. The sacred pillars or obelisks were symbols of Egypt's pride, and God would hit the nation right at its heart. "Jeremiah likens the ease with which Nebuchadnezzar would do these things to the casual way in which a shepherd wraps himself in his garment... The king of Egypt at this time was Pharaoh Hophra (cf. 44:30) [who is also known by the Greek form of his name, Apries]. The Babylonian historian Berossus confirms the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar" (*Expositor's*, note on 43:12).

"Since Heliopolis was indeed the city of obelisks ('sacred pillars'), it is clear why Jeremiah predicts their demolition. Some obelisks originally at On have been carried off to Alexandria, Rome, Istanbul, London and New York. Only one has been left at On" (footnote on verse 13).

Rather than be a place of refuge for the fleeing Judeans, Egypt will prove eventually to be a place for them of judgment and death—just as Jeremiah warned in chapter 42. As the book of Proverbs says, "Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right, but in the end it is the way to death" (16:25, NRSV).

In the next chapter we'll see more of what Jeremiah had to say to these immigrants." [END]

Day 647 – TUESDAY: May 20th

Jeremiah 44

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Jeremiah 44 is the last chapter the prophet wrote in his book. The chapters that follow were written earlier—except for the final chapter, 52, which appears to have been added by someone else in later years.

Jeremiah delivers his final warning to the Jewish remnant that had refused to heed God's warnings. It is evident that some time has passed since the previous chapter—given that many of the Jews have returned to idolatry and have moved throughout the land of Egypt. It should also be mentioned that there were also colonies of Jews living in Egypt that had moved there previously, as mentioned in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on [Jeremiah 24:8-10](#) (a passage that stated that the Jews in Egypt would be among those delivered to trouble and destruction). Some of the Jews in Egypt may have descended from those who had migrated in the days of Judah's King Manasseh a century earlier.

As [Jeremiah 44:1](#) shows, the Jews were spread out over a vast area in Egypt. *Migdol* is a Canaanite name meaning "watchtower" or "fortress" and is most likely a city on the northeastern border of Egypt. There are a number of references to Migdol in the Old Testament. The earliest was on the route of the Exodus ([Exodus 14:2](#), [Numbers 33:7](#)) just before the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. There is a further reference to Migdol in Ezekiel's prophecy concerning the destruction of Egypt ([Ezekiel 29:10](#)). We can't be certain whether these all refer to the place, but Ezekiel's reference as a key location in describing the extent of Egyptian destruction makes it a prominent city in the north.

Tahpanhes was also a prominent northern city and the location of the pharaoh's northern palace. It was to be the place where Nebuchadnezzar would set up his throne when he invaded Egypt. The Egyptians were proud of this city, which Ezekiel also prophesied would be doomed ([Ezekiel 30:18](#)). Tahpanhes and Migdol were close to the northern end of what is now the Suez Canal, on the edge of Lake Manzala.

Noph is the city of Memphis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt (northern Egypt). Memphis sits just outside modern Cairo, about five miles south of the pyramids.

"Pathros is Upper Egypt [southern Egypt], or the Nile Valley between Cairo and Aswan. The name appears in Assyrian inscriptions of the seventh century B.C... The Elephantine Papyri from the fifth century B.C. tell us that a Jewish colony settled there [in the area of Aswan]" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on [Jeremiah 44:1](#)).

Historian Walter Kaiser sums up the chapter as "a message prepared for the Jewish diaspora living in Egypt, who had by now adopted the Egyptian lifestyle and syncretistically adopted many features of Egyptian religious life, Jeremiah reminded them that they would be the same ones who would suffer the judgment of God. Pharaoh

Hophra...would be handed over to his enemies and the shelter the Judeans had sought would no longer exist" (*A History of Israel*, 1988, pp. 411).

Syncretism or mixing religious customs—in this case blending the traditions and superstitions of other nations in with the ways God revealed He wanted His people to worship Him—was a historical weakness of Israel. And, it was directly contrary to God's warning in [Deuteronomy 12:29-32](#). Remarkably, Israelites make the same mistake today!

Jeremiah reminds them that the reason for the calamity on Jerusalem and all the other Jewish cities is their rebellion against Him in serving false gods (verses 2-14). The response of the men says a great deal about their spiritual condition. And it was evidently the women who were now leading the push to incorporate pagan customs as part of their own religious practices, worshiping the so-called "queen of heaven" and dragging the whole population down. But while the women may have been the driving force in this apostasy, the men were in full agreement. Then the women reaffirmed their embracing of what was actually spiritual adultery—unfaithfulness to the true God who "was a husband to them" (31:32). They basically "reasoned that when they stopped worshiping the queen of heaven in the days of Josiah's reform, their king was killed and their land was overrun and destroyed" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 44:18). They looked back at the time of pagan worship as a time of blessing and prosperity. Because of their rebellious natures, they chose the simplistic and false reasoning that any rewards or punishments from God would come immediately. Amazingly, then, after all they had seen and experienced, they had learned nothing. Their reasoning seems utterly bizarre. Yet people today still reject biblical religion with similar arguments: "I haven't noticed any problems for not worshiping God; in fact, things have been better for me since I stopped." Or, "I think that trying to follow the

Bible and its laws is what hurts people and that being free from all those restrictions is much better."

"The Jews maintained that when they had offered incense to other gods and had poured out libations to the queen of heaven, all went well. When they ceased to do these things, circumstances worked against them. Somehow they refused to realize that it was the doing of these things which had first occasioned the invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. Wicked people will always find excuses to evade guilt and justify illicit actions" (*Harper Study Bible*, note on verse 18).

Their shallow approach to religion is almost on the level of superstition or of those who follow horoscopes today—who read generically written "prophecies" that are so ambiguous that they can be interpreted any number of ways. Of course, that's the idea. For then people can still direct their own lives rather than submit to the authority of a Supreme Being.

Walter Kaiser provides some insight into the Queen of Heaven cult that has a lot of significance for today. "Jeremiah, like several of the other prophets (e.g. [Ezekiel 8:14-15](#)) indicted Judah for her adoption and practice of the cultic rituals of the pagans around them. One apostasy that was particularly repugnant was the ancient cult of 'the Queen of Heaven.' In two separate passages, [Jeremiah 7:16-18](#) and [Jeremiah 44:15-19, 25](#), the prophet lamented the fact that the women were 'making cakes' [Hebrew *kawwanim*] for her, 'like her image' [Hebrew *leha'asibah*], and 'pouring out drink offerings to her.'

"Now the interesting fact is that the Hebrew word for 'cakes,' which occurs in Hebrew only in these two passages, is a loan-word from Akkadian, an East Semitic Language, spoken in Mesopotamia from 2000 to 500 B.C. *Kawwanim* were sweetened cakes used in the Mesopotamian cult of the mother goddess Ishtar. Archaeologists discovered in the palace kitchen at the site of Mari, an ancient city

located in the Middle Euphrates region, as many as forty-seven clay molds that may have been used for very similar purposes to those opposed by the prophet. Mold number 1044 seems to represent the nude goddess Ishtar, seen seated with her hands supporting her breasts, thus possessing the image of the goddess that Jeremiah had warned against.

"The exact identity of the Queen of Heaven has not been finally solved, with candidates ranging from the West Semitic Astarte [Hebrew *Ashtaroth* or *Ashtoreth*], Anat and Asherah to the East Semitic Ishtar. However, the title 'Queen of Heaven' was found at Hermopolis in 1945 (and published in 1966). Since the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar is identified with the planet Venus, and has as her symbol an eight-pointed star, it would seem Ishtar, and perhaps one or more of the West Semitic deities could be associated with her as this so-called Queen of Heaven" (*The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?*, 2001, pp. 163-164). It may be that the Jews in Egypt worshiped her as the Egyptian mother goddess Isis or perhaps Hathor.

God said that we are not to incorporate pagan worship practices into our worship of Him ([Deuteronomy 12:29-32](#), [Jeremiah 10:2-5](#)). Yet popular Christianity continues elements of the worship of Ishtar (from which we get the word "Easter"), such as baking "cakes" (or buns) emblazoned with ancient pagan symbols and using fertility symbols such as rabbits and eggs in its major springtime religious celebration. "God wants us to worship Him 'in spirit and truth' ([John 4:23-24](#))—not in corrupted, vile practices rooted in worship of other gods" ([Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?](#)). (Download or request a free copy of this informative booklet that explains how nominal Christianity has adopted many such pagan practices.)

Jeremiah then tells them of their final punishment. It may seem harsh, but they couldn't say they weren't warned. At the end of God's punishment, there will be no Jews left alive in Egypt. A few will escape

to act as witnesses to the truth—witnesses to whose word stands, theirs or God's (verse 28).

Jeremiah's final warning ends with a prophecy against Pharaoh Hophra (also known as Apries). Even he wouldn't be able to save the Jewish remnant in Egypt. "In 569 b.c. Pharaoh Hophra went to aid the Libyans against the Greeks, who had established themselves on the African coast at Cyrene. He was defeated and a rebellion broke out in his army, a part of which elevated Amasis as Pharaoh. In a battle fought between the opposing groups in 569 b.c. Amasis prevailed over Hophra. The latter was able to co-exist with his rival for some time but then was put to death" (Emil Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, p. 318). And, of course, Nebuchadnezzar's invasion followed soon after Hophra's overthrow.

What, then, of Jeremiah? This is not the end of his story. We leave him and his secretary Baruch in Egypt with more yet to do. Jeremiah still has his commission "to build and to plant" (1:10). Recall that Ezekiel had prophesied the transfer of the throne of David from Judah to Israel ([Ezekiel 17:22-24](#)). How interesting, then, that possible heirs to the Davidic throne, King Zedekiah's daughters, are with Jeremiah in Egypt at this time.

For the rest of the story, be sure to read the supplementary material.

Supplementary Reading: "[The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future](#)" [END]

Day 648 – WEDNESDAY: May 21st

Ezekiel 33:21 – 33 & Ezekiel 34

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "[Ezekiel 33:21](#) is a significant turning point in this book. Remember that in [Ezekiel 24:26-27](#), God had

foretold the fall of Jerusalem and said to Ezekiel: "On that day one who escapes will come to you to let you hear it with your ears; on that day [of his arrival] your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute." God, we recall, had forbidden Ezekiel from any spoken communication with the exiles except for the particular things God commanded him to say. Yet now the messenger has at last arrived—in January 585 B.C., seven months after Jerusalem's fall—and Ezekiel is finally able to communicate as normal. Also, whereas everything up to this point was mainly a warning message to Israel and Judah and other nations, the remainder of the book focuses mainly on the hope of Israel's future deliverance.

Many biblical scholars maintain that since Ezekiel was among the Jewish exiles in Babylon, the last chapters are about the liberation of the Jews from ancient Babylon, allowing them to return to Palestine after their 70 years of captivity. But Ezekiel's calling was to prophesy concerning the *whole* house of Israel, not just Judah. And his prophecies of the end time mostly refer to all of Israel—reunited. The restoration Ezekiel describes involves great miracles and is much grander than the return of a fraction of the Jewish exiles to their homeland after the fall of ancient Babylon. Far from being a mere technical difference in how to explain Ezekiel's writings, this fact is crucial to understanding end time prophecy.

As hopeful and positive as this section of the book is, however, it does begin with a few rebukes and pronouncements of divine judgment. God informs Ezekiel that the remaining survivors in the ruins of the land of Israel have reasoned that, since they are still alive and have escaped deportation, they must be the righteous ones—the faithful remnant. Since Abraham was just one faithful man and God decreed the land his, they think that they, being many faithful and his rightful heirs, will surely be given the land back (33:23-24). Yet they fail to properly assess their own mindset and conduct. They rely on themselves rather than

God. Even worse, they are idolaters, murderers and adulterers who persist in abominations (verses 25-26)—no way will they inherit the land of Israel! Instead, they will die as so much of the nation already has.

They fell into the typical trap of looking at circumstances for "signs" of divine favor, something people often do today. If one wants to know if his ways please God, he needs to take a more mature approach. That is, he needs to learn God's will through His Word and come to regard that Word as the highest authority in his life. It's not who you are or what you have that "proves" God's blessing. He plainly says, "I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2, NLT](#)).

It may well be that the description and warning of [Ezekiel 33:23-29](#) also apply to those who will be left among the national homelands of modern Israel in the end time.

Ezekiel may have been an eloquent speaker because people talked about how much they enjoyed listening to him (verses 30-32). But God said, "They hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain" (verse 31; compare [Isaiah 58:2](#); [Psalm 78:36-37](#); [James 1:21-24](#)). Not much has changed in the last 2,500 years with most religious people. *The Bible Reader's Companion* states: "The exiles of Ezekiel's day were 'churchgoers.' They made it a regular practice to come to the prophet, sit down, and listen to his words. But to them the prophet's eloquent speech was only entertainment! They did not come to hear, and then put into practice, the word of their God. What a reminder for us today. Do we go to church to see friends, listen to the choir, and enjoy the preacher's jokes? Or do we go to hear God's Word and take it to heart?" (note on [Ezekiel 33:30-32](#)).

God's prophets and preachers are to warn the people about the prophesied consequences of failing to obey Him. When the prophecies come to pass, "then they will know that a prophet has been among them" (verse 33). Woe then to those who haven't been obeying God. Indeed, this is quite interesting since, at this point in Ezekiel's book, the ancient destruction of Judah and Jerusalem had come to pass—the news of Jerusalem's fall just now arriving. And yet the wording of verse 33 seems to indicate that there was more to come to prove Ezekiel a true prophet. This may imply that, at least in part, the end-time fall of all Israel is in view here—and that the people gathering to listen to Ezekiel's words may mean people in the modern nations of Israel assembling in church services shortly before that time to hear Ezekiel's words preached in sermons. There are many who go to church services today clamoring to hear sermons on prophecy—but who fail to take personally any exhortations to repentance and spiritual growth.

"Woe to the Shepherds of Israel...!"

Jerusalem had been conquered and burned—the climax of God's punishment on Judah. God now makes it clear that a large measure of the blame for the sinfulness of Judah and Israel and their resulting captivities (both ancient and future) lay at the feet of the rulers, "the shepherds of Israel" (34:2). The metaphor of "shepherds" in this context refers more to kings and civil rulers than priests or prophets, but in God's nation, civil rulers were expected to be spiritual leaders as well—to teach His laws and to set a godly example of submission to His laws (compare [Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)). And, of course, the principles here would apply to religious leaders of the nation as well.

(It should be noted that some have tried to use Ezekiel 34 as a castigation of the ministry of *spiritual* Israel, the true Church of God, in the end time. However, the "flock" of God in this chapter is, according to verse 30, "the house of Israel," a phrase repeatedly used in Ezekiel and the rest of Scripture to refer to the *physical nation* of Israel. Of

course, the *principles* in this chapter could certainly refer to some leaders among the Church in the last days. Jesus Christ warned in [Matthew 24:48-51](#) of some of God's servants then abusing others, and we see that same problem throughout the Church age, as all ministers are human and subject to slipping into the self-centered corruption we read of here. Nevertheless, it is a misapplication of this prophecy to claim that it directly foretells corrupt ministers serving the true Church, men who fail to care for God's spiritual flock.)

One of the best examples for rulers, Christian ministers and leaders of all kinds to emulate is that of a good shepherd—a "servant leader." God repeatedly describes in the Bible what makes a good shepherd. God should know—Jesus Christ is "the good Shepherd" ([John 10:11, 14](#)), "the great Shepherd" ([Hebrews 13:20](#)) and the perfect Shepherd (Psalm 23). Jesus taught that a good shepherd is devoted and self-sacrificing, putting the needs of the sheep above his own desires—he "gives his life for the sheep" ([John 10:11](#)). By contrast, a "hireling" will readily abandon the sheep because he "does not care about the sheep" (verse 13). Leaders should have the mindset of being assistant shepherds serving under Jesus Christ, submitting to, following and applying His attitude and approach (see [1 Peter 5:1-4](#)).

Jesus told His disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men hold them in subjection, tyrannizing over them" ([Matthew 20:25](#), Amplified Bible). But here in Ezekiel 34 God says the rulers of Israel—"My shepherds" (verse 8)—have been as bad as gentile despots about advancing and enriching themselves at the expense of the people. They acted more like wolves than shepherds, causing suffering rather than relieving suffering. Therefore, God pronounces, "Woe to the shepherds of Israel...!" (verse 2).

Good shepherds are concerned for every individual, diligently seeking to save even one lamb if it goes astray ([Matthew 18:10-14](#)). By contrast, God said the supposed shepherds of Israel had not "sought what was

lost" ([Ezekiel 34:4](#)). God in His mercy would have saved and "brought back what was driven away"—either from Him spiritually or from the land literally—if the leaders and people had repented and begun to truly serve God.

In verses 5 and 8, God says that "there was no shepherd." Yet in the second reference, note that God says that "there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search..." This might sound like a contradiction. Were there shepherds, or weren't there? What is meant is either that there were no shepherds in their scattered condition or, perhaps more likely, there were no *true* shepherds over the Israelites. There were people in the *positions* of shepherds (national leaders)—but not ones who *thought and acted* as shepherds. (This should help us to see that political rulers were more in mind, for in Ezekiel's day was not Jeremiah a true religious leader? And in the last days, will there not be true spiritual leaders, such as the two witnesses of Revelation 11?)

Because there were no right-minded rulers over the people—because there won't be any at the end of this age—God says He will personally step in to lovingly serve as Israel's shepherd (verses 11-16). He will "bring back what was driven away" (verse 16). While this refers in small part to the liberation of the Jews from their ancient Babylonian captivity, it refers more to the end-time restoration of "scattered" Israelites from all over the world, as the latter part of this chapter shows.

Official rulers are not the only ones guilty of evil. God judges each person individually—"I shall judge between sheep and sheep" (verse 17). All too often the stronger oppress the weaker—the "fat" sheep take advantage of the "lean sheep" (verse 20).

How valuable that King David's boyhood experience was as a shepherd! God foretells that He will one day establish David as the shepherd over Israel and "prince" or ruler under Him (verses 23-24). Critics often don't

interpret this literally, saying this is simply a prophecy of the Messiah, who was to be of Davidic lineage. But Ezekiel specifically says that the resurrected and glorified David will once again be king over all Israel (37:24; [Jeremiah 30:9](#); [Hosea 3:5](#)). To put it simply, Jesus will be King of all nations. David, serving under Him, will be king of Israel. And the 12 apostles, under David, will each serve as leader over one of the tribes of Israel (see [Luke 22:29-30](#)).

During the coming reign of Jesus Christ, God's "covenant of peace" will even extend to the animal kingdom ([Ezekiel 34:25, 28](#)). This is also a type of transforming all people to act more like lambs than wolves and other wild beasts. God will cause rain to come in due season; and there will be many other physical and spiritual "showers of blessing" (verse 26). Blissful and wonderful conditions will prevail when all the world is cared for by the Good Shepherd. (To learn more, request or download our free booklet [The Gospel of the Kingdom](#).)" [END]

Day 649 – THURSDAY: May 22nd

Ezekiel 35

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Chapter 35 may appear a digression from the subject of Israel's restoration, and yet the removal of Israel's great enemy, the most persistent thorn in its side, is indeed central to Israel's restoration. Mount Seir is Edom (verses 2, 15; 25:8; 36:5; [Genesis 36:30](#); [2 Chronicles 20:10](#)). The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, so the strife began as sibling rivalry ([Genesis 25:30](#)). But Esau's resentment turned into never-ending "ancient hatred" ([Ezekiel 35:5](#)) and "anger," "envy" and "hatred" (verse 11).

"Edom had sought to block Israel's first entrance into the Promised Land ([Numbers 20:14-21](#); [Numbers 24:15-19](#))...There were conflicts during the times of Saul ([1 Sam 14:47](#)), Solomon ([1 Kings 11:14-22](#)), Jehoshaphat ([2 Chronicles 20:1-23](#)), Jehoram ([2 Kings 8:21](#)), and Ahaz ([2](#)

[Chronicles 28:17](#)). The prophets regularly made reference to Edom's antagonism toward Israel and the resulting judgment they would receive ([Isa 11:11-16](#); [Dan 11:41](#); [Amos 2:1](#)). Malachi demonstrated that the hatred between these nations was still common in his day ([Mal 1:2-5](#))" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on [Ezekiel 35:1-9](#)).

The clearest example of hostility today is seen in the branch of Edomites that comprises many of the Palestinians, whose hatred regularly breaks out against the Israeli state. (The persistent failure of the West to understand that deep-seated hatred that transcends hundreds of generations is one of the principal reasons that peace plan after peace plan fails utterly—and will continue to fail.) It also appears that Edom will constitute part of the end-time Babylonian power bloc—the great enemy of Israel in the last days—perhaps through Turkish participation in the coming European empire as well as a large influx into Europe of Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa (see the [Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Obadiah](#)).

Esau lost the birthright and the blessing, and in jealous envy has repeatedly tried to capture territory from the descendants of Israel. "These two nations" in verse 10 refers to Israel and Judah (see 37:15-28). Once ancient Israel and Judah both had gone into captivity, Edomites thought they could move in and take over the land. This will again be Edom's attitude in the end time—which may well be the primary reference in Ezekiel 35.

Mentioned more than once in Scripture is how the Edomites have attacked, and will attack, Israel at her times of vulnerability—when she is engaged in conflicts with other enemies (35:5; 36:2-5; 25:12; [Obadiah 11, 13-14](#)). *Unger's Bible Dictionary* says in its entry on "Edomites": "When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem the Edomites joined him, and took an active part in the plunder of the city and slaughter of the Jews. Their cruelty at that time seems to be specially referred to in the 137th Psalm. It was on account of these acts of cruelty committed upon

the Jews in the day of their calamity that the Edomites were so fearfully denounced by the later prophets ([Isa. 34:5-8](#); [63:1-4](#); [Jer. 49:17](#); [Lam. 4:21](#); [Ezek. 25:13, 14](#); [Amos 1:11, 12](#); [Obad. 8, 10](#), sq.). On the conquest of Judah, the Edomites, probably in reward for their services during the war, were permitted to settle in southern Palestine, and the whole plateau between it and Egypt; but they were about the same time driven out of Edom proper by the Nabataeans. For more than four centuries they continued to prosper. But during the warlike rule of the Maccabees they were again completely subdued, and even forced to conform to Jewish laws and rites and submit to the government of Jewish prefects. The Edomites were now incorporated with the Jewish nation, and the whole province was often termed by Greek and Roman writers *Idumaea*. Immediately before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, twenty thousand Idumaeans were admitted to the Holy City, which they filled with robbery and bloodshed."

Scriptures indicate the Edomites will once again—in the end time—gleefully join in attacking the Israelites.

Edom has chronically been guilty of another sin that God despises—pride and arrogance. And when the Edomites exalt themselves against God's nations and God Himself, they are getting into deep trouble with their blasphemies ([Ezekiel 35:10-13](#)).

The history of the Edomites toward the Israelites has largely been hatred, hardheartedness, cruelty, and arrogance. Consequently, in several scriptures, prophecies of the end time foretell God's annihilation of all Edomites (see [Ezekiel 35:14-15](#); [25:13](#); [Obadiah 18](#); [Jeremiah 49:17-18](#)). The good news is they will be raised to life in the second resurrection, humbled, and ready to receive God's instructions—something we will read more about in Ezekiel 37." [END]

Day 650 – FRIDAY: May 23rd

Ezekiel 36

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Ezekiel 36 foretells the end-time repentance, conversion, and transformation of Israel. Of course, the offer from God to "give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (verse 26) ultimately applies to all people, since all people will be invited to become a part of Israel in a spiritual sense ([Romans 2:28-29](#); [Galatians 3:26-29](#)).

Although God uses nations to punish other nations, the nations inflicting the punishment are not truly mindful of this and end up heaping guilt on themselves in each endeavor—their pride becomes worse, they boastfully take credit to themselves, they take gleeful pleasure in causing suffering, they are too harsh, they think they can steal their enemies' land and get away with it, and they don't repent of their own sins. Some of those sins are stated in [Ezekiel 36:2-5](#) regarding "the rest of the nations and against all Edom."

In verses 6-9, God reassures the land of Israel that "I am for you" and that "the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame." In verse 8, God speaks joyfully to the mountains and land of Israel and says, "they [the returning captives] are about to come!" The return of Babylonian exiles to the Promised Land in the time soon after Ezekiel was but a small forerunner of the great second Exodus of the end-time. God says, "I will multiply upon you man and beast" (verses 10-11, 38).

The "you" in verses 13-14 is again the Holy Land, which has gotten the reputation of being a cursed land that devours its inhabitants. Yet God is going to vastly change that reputation at the return of Jesus Christ.

The analogy of verse 17 is based on the laws of a woman's monthly "uncleanness" detailed in [Leviticus 15:19-24](#). During her monthly period, a woman was considered ritually unclean for seven days, meaning primarily that she was not allowed to go to the tabernacle to participate in any sacrifices or other worship. But, also, everyone and

everything she touched were then considered unclean for a time. So God is saying that the way of the people of Israel had not only been evil, cutting themselves off from fellowship with Him, but also that the Israelites had been a bad influence on everyone they had "touched"—“wherever they went, they profaned My holy name” ([Ezekiel 36:20](#)). The Israelites caused God's name to be profaned among the nations in two ways: 1) in misrepresenting Him themselves through their evil conduct before other nations—taking His name in vain by claiming to be His people and yet not living according to His will; and 2) provoking other nations to make derogatory remarks about Israel's God and religion based on Israel's sinful conduct.

God chose and blessed Israel with the intent that it would model His way of life, thereby making a way for all nations to come to know and worship Him—and to receive His blessings. Instead, the nations of modern Israel wallow in the wealth God gave them, their people living in such gross immorality that other nations are repulsed by the emptiness of their character. Plainly, the name of Israel sets upon the United States, Britain and other nations of northwest European heritage. While these nations provide the economic engine and the military might for the entire world, their spiritual heart is hollow. The rest of the world thinks of them as materialistic, not the spiritual model for their people.

In verses 22 and 32, God gives the justification for the restoration of Israel—in a sense, God's grace. It will not be because Israel has earned it by a record of righteousness. God will do it, He says, "for My holy name's sake."

In verse 25, God says He will "sprinkle clean water" on His people. Numbers 19 describes the process of purifying those who, for whatever reason, are ritualistically "unclean." Water from a running stream (verse 17) was mixed with ashes from a burned red heifer (verses 2, 9) to make "water of purification" (verse 9) that is "sprinkled on him" who

was unclean (verse 20). (Interestingly, the Hebrew term in verse 17 translated "running water" in the New King James Version literally means "living water.") [Hebrews 9:13-14](#) calls this process the "purifying of the flesh" and goes on to say that real spiritual cleansing is only possible by the blood of Christ. This true purification is referred to in [Hebrews 10:22](#) as having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." So in [Ezekiel 36:25](#), God is saying He will take Israel through His spiritual cleansing process.

In the Bible, water is used to represent many things, including God's Spirit ([John 7:37-38](#)). However, before one receives the Holy Spirit ([Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)), he must first begin to receive "the washing of water by the word [the gospel, the Word of God]" ([Ephesians 5:26](#)). So whereas the primary emphasis in [Ezekiel 36:25](#) is on God's forgiveness of sin and the whole process of spiritual cleansing, the sprinkling of clean water on His people may also have the specific meaning of the dissemination of the gospel among them.

[Ezekiel 36:25-28](#) is a prophecy of the New Covenant with its better promises. Peace on earth and God's showers of blessings will only come about when there is a radical change in human nature. Man's "heart of stone"—his hardened, stubborn nature—must first be replaced with a pliant "heart of flesh" (verse 26). This change of heart was earlier described in these terms in [Ezekiel 11:19-20](#). It will happen when Satan and his demons and their corrupt society are no longer present to harden man's heart. The powerful presence of Jesus Christ will put the humble fear of God in people's hearts as well. After that, and once people learn the truth of God's plan of salvation, most will eventually repent of their sins (36:31), trust in Jesus Christ to be their Savior and receive water baptism, whereupon God will fulfill this wonderful promise: "I will put My spirit within you" (verse 27).

Studying these scriptures demonstrates the *spiritual* message of the Old Testament, a concept often little understood in nominal

Christianity. Misled by teachers who themselves do not understand the truth, many think that the words of the Old Testament belong on a dusty library shelf and have no bearing on their lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only does much of the New Testament draw upon the language, events and spiritual direction of the Old Testament, but also the New Testament Church of God believed and practiced God's law as revealed there. Indeed, the point of receiving God's Spirit is to help us develop and grow in His character, which is expressed through His laws!

The rest of the chapter describes the condition of the earth during the millennial reign of Christ—peace, agricultural abundance, the rebuilding of cities, and a population explosion. "So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden'" (verse 35). It will be a return to paradise, as we also read earlier in [Isaiah 51:3](#): "For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."" [END]

Day 651 – SATURDAY: May 24th

Ezekiel 37

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "As chapter 37 opens, it appears to continue right on from the prophecy of Israel's restoration in the previous chapter. Consider the great hope that was there offered to the people of Israel, to be realized at the time of Christ's return and reign, when they would ultimately return from captivity and receive a changed heart. Yet how could that help the Jews who were hearing Ezekiel's message at the time he received it? They would be long dead and gone by the time Israel's great restoration was accomplished. And what about all the Israelites who had already died or the millions who would yet die before that restoration? Where was their hope? Things

looked rosy for their end-time descendants—but what about them personally?

God reveals in the wonderful prophecy of [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#) that all hope is *not* lost. He intends to raise all the Israelites who have ever lived from the dead! Some see this passage as merely figurative of national resurrection—that is, restoration of the country of Israel—at the time of Christ's return. But it more naturally reads as something that is actually going to happen—a literal resurrection of people to physical life. Indeed, their being literally raised from the grave will serve as a proof of God and His omnipotent power (verse 14).

However, figurative language certainly is used here. For instance, to represent the apparent hopelessness of death, the dry bones are portrayed as saying as much (verse 11). Some, influenced by the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul, might view even that as somewhat literal—thinking it pictures disembodied souls once connected with the bones doing the speaking. But that is not the case. The imagery is similar to Abel's blood crying out to God in [Genesis 4:10](#) or the slain martyrs crying out to God in [Revelation 6:9-11](#). These are all figurative images, as there is no consciousness in death (see [Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10](#)).

The bones of all Israel being in one valley may also be figurative, since the people of Israel actually died in many different places over the millennia. However, it could be that the bones—or at least whatever is left of them—will actually be miraculously gathered together by God in one place prior to the resurrection described. Of course, even if He were to do it this way, the Almighty God does not actually need bones or any other body parts to recreate human bodies. What about the covering with sinews and flesh and being brought out of graves? The description given may be literal, although the process could be somewhat figurative, the main point being the ultimate *result*—an actual physical bodily resurrection. We don't really know exactly how

God will reconstitute those who are long dead—especially considering that for many any physical remains long since decomposed or were otherwise destroyed. It may look like the vision Ezekiel described, or it could appear like a Star Trek "beam up" or something entirely different—we just don't know.

Now, what is the time frame of this resurrection? We find that spelled out in [Revelation 20:4-6](#). That passage explains that the saints of God—His spiritually transformed servants of all ages (that is, the faithful people of Old Testament times and all faithful true Christians of New Testament times)—will be resurrected at the time of Christ's return in what is referred to as the "*first* resurrection," to reign with Him over all nations for 1,000 years, a period Bible students often refer to simply as the Millennium. Verse 5 contains this parenthetical note: "But *the rest of the dead* did not live again until the thousand years were finished." The NRSV appropriately places this sentence in parentheses.

Since the resurrected Israelites of Ezekiel 37 are not saints—indeed, they receive God's Spirit only *after* they are raised from the dead (verses 13-14)—they will not be part of the first resurrection. Therefore they must be part of "the rest of the dead" in the second or general resurrection, which occurs *after* the Millennium.

This fact is further substantiated by the nature of the resurrections. The first resurrection is described in 1 Corinthians 15, where we are told that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 50). According to that chapter, the saints of God, who formerly had "natural bodies" of flesh, will be resurrected with "spiritual bodies." Some think this merely refers to spirit-preserved physical bodies, but that is not the case. When Jesus Christ, the "last Adam," was resurrected to glory, He returned to the state of being "a life-giving spirit" (verse 45). And that is what resurrected Christians will be like (verse 49)—having bodies actually composed of spirit. While these glorified spirit beings will be able to manifest themselves as flesh if they so choose (just as Christ did

after His resurrection to spirit), they will not actually be composed of flesh as is clearly the case with those in the resurrection of Ezekiel 37.

Since the resurrection of Israelites in Ezekiel 37 must be part of the general resurrection at the end of the Millennium, it follows that all others of that resurrection will experience basically the same thing. So this prophecy is representative of how God will deal with all people, not just Israel. What this means is that all the unconverted of mankind who have ever lived—which is almost everyone—will be raised at this same time to physical life. [Revelation 20:11-12](#) describes this time in which people will be judged according to their works. Yet it should be explained that this will be a *judgment over a period of time*—not an *immediate sentencing*. Just as God's Church is being judged *now* ([1 Peter 4:17](#)), so will the rest of mankind be judged according to how they live their lives *then*—following their resurrection. Those who never knew God or His truth will at last be given the opportunity to repent of their sinful past, understand and receive forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice and be converted through receiving God's Spirit. And they will be evaluated according to how they live out the rest of their physical lives. This is not a "second chance" at salvation, as some would argue, for none of these people will have ever had that opportunity when they lived previously.

Jesus Himself referred to this future judgment period as a time when people who lived many centuries apart "will rise up in the judgment" together ([Matthew 11:20-24](#); [12:41-42](#)). During that judgment period, those who choose to serve God and remain faithful to Him until the end of their lives will ultimately be changed into immortal spirit beings, joining the saints who will have been glorified with eternal life 1,000 years before.

How wonderful and amazing this truth is! It answers so many questions. For instance, if it is only through Jesus that human beings can be saved ([Acts 4:12](#)), what about the untold millions who lived and

died without ever hearing His name or anything He ever taught?
Answer: the second resurrection! What about the billions of little children who have died over the millennia of human history? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the vast numbers God destroyed in the Flood of Noah's day? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the millions dying of AIDS today in Africa? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the 6 million Jews who died in the Nazi Holocaust of World War II? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the millions of men, women and children who have lived and died under communist dictatorships where religion was forbidden? Answer again: the second resurrection! And what about our relatives and friends who have died without understanding and obeying the Bible? Yes, the answer yet again is the second resurrection! Without the reality of this wonderful and paramount truth, the vast majority of mankind truly is lost and without hope. Thankfully, God has a plan to offer His salvation to *a//*humanity, not just a few.

Israel and Judah to Be One United Nation

Another prophecy is given in verses 15-28 of Ezekiel 37. It returns to the beginning of the Millennium—continuing the theme of Ezekiel 36 and the other chapters at the end of Ezekiel's book. (The flash-forward to the end of the Millennium at the beginning of chapter 37 was to give hope to those who would be dead at the time of the initial restoration.)

Here we see that the descendants of the southern kingdom of Judah and the descendants of the northern 10 tribes of Israel will ultimately be reunited as one nation, never to be divided again. (The northern tribes are represented by the birthright people of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—chief among whom is Ephraim.) This reuniting will happen when the remnant of Israel and Judah are brought back to the Promised Land when Jesus Christ returns to rule all nations. As we have seen in other passages, David will be resurrected (as part of the first

resurrection) to serve as king, under Christ, over the entire reunited nation (verses 24-25; 34:24; [Jeremiah 30:9](#)).

Of course, while this passage will be fulfilled at the time of Christ's return, its fulfillment won't end there. That is, it is not just a millennial prophecy. There is obviously also a relation to the time, following the Millennium, of the second resurrection—when all Israelites who have ever lived will be joined together as one nation and David will reign over them all.

Indeed, while verse 27—regarding God's tabernacle or dwelling being with the people, they being His people and He being their God—finds initial fulfillment at the time of Christ's return, greater fulfillment will still lie yet ahead. For this verse is used in [Revelation 21:3](#) to denote the time of the new heaven and new earth, when even God the Father will come to dwell among His children forever.” [END]