

**THE MIDDLE EAST**

**WHAT NEXT?**

**RUSSIA**

**ISRAEL**

**CHRIST**

**&**

**YOU**

# **WHY PROPHECY?**

**To warn us to get our act together**

**AMOS 3:7**

**To remind us that God rules**

**DAN 4:17**

**To build our faith in JESUS**

**2 PET 1:19**

**To strengthen, encourage & comfort**

**1 COR 14:3**

## **THINGS OF WHICH WE CAN BE CERTAIN**

The return of the Jews to the land of Israel is the biggest, surest sign to our generation that the return of Jesus is

**e.g. among many passages -**

**JER 23:3-6**

**EZEK 37:21-26**

**MATT 24:30-33**

## **JEREMIAH 23:3-6**

**<sup>3</sup>I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them ... they will be fruitful and will increase in number ...**

**<sup>5</sup>I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.**

<sup>6</sup>In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. **This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness**

## **EZEKIEL 37**

**21 I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land ...**

**There will be one king over all of them ...**

**24 My servant David will be king over them ... 25 and David my servant will be their prince forever ... 26 ... I will put my sanctuary among them forever ...**

## **MATTHEW 24:30-33**

**30 ... the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory ...**

**32 Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.** <sup>33</sup>Even so, when you see all these things, you know that IT (*i.e. my coming*) is near, right at the door.

## **THINGS OF WHICH WE CAN BE CERTAIN**

**The Jews must first REPENT  
before Jesus can save them!**

**e.g. among many passages -**

**MATT 23:37-39**

**LEV 26:40-42**

**ZECH 12:10**



## **MATTHEW 23**

<sup>37</sup>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks ... but you were not willing.

<sup>38</sup>Behold, your house is left to you desolate.

<sup>39</sup>For I tell you, **you will not see me again UNTIL you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”.**

## LEVITICUS 26

<sup>40</sup> **If they will confess their sins** and the sins of their fathers – their treachery against me and their hostility towards me, <sup>41</sup>which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies – then **when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sins ...**  
<sup>42</sup>**I will remember my covenant ... and I will remember the land.**

## **ZECHARIAH 12**

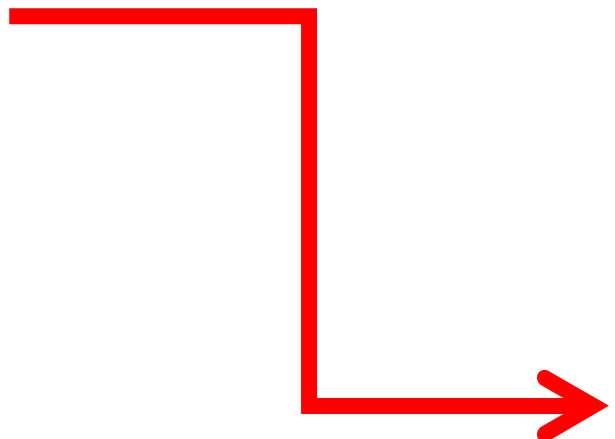
<sup>10</sup>I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look **on\* me**, the one they have pierced and **they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son**

**\* Or “to”**

**What will bring about the  
repentance of the Jewish nation?**

**WHAT WILL IT TAKE?**

# TRADITIONAL VIEW



**Gogian invasion  
of EZEKIEL 38**

... almost everything is related to that ...

e.g.

**ZECHARIAH 14 = EZEKIEL 38**

**But ... ..**

**is it so?**

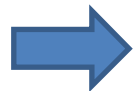
	<b>EZEK 38</b>	<b>ZECH 14</b>
<b>Identity of invaders</b>	Very specific: Gog-Persia-Ethiopia-Libya-Gomer-Togarmah	God gathers “all nations”
<b>Motive of invaders</b>	plunder, prey	Jerusalem!
<b>Conditions of land</b>	Israel dwelling safely: no bars/gates	Nothing about dwelling safely; God “gathers”
<b>Result of invasion</b>	Invaders destroyed before damage done	Jerusalem captured/houses rifled/women raped
<b>Demise of invaders</b>	Hailstones – fire – brimstone – given to birds & beasts	Flesh consuming in sockets – nuclear war?

# EZEKIEL 21

<sup>2</sup> ... Son of man, **set your face against Jerusalem ... prophesy against the land of Israel** <sup>3</sup>and say to her: This is what the LORD says: I am against you. I will draw my sword from its scabbard ...

<sup>7</sup>... every heart will melt and every hand go limp; every spirit will become faint and every knee become as weak as water ... ..

<sup>24</sup> ... Because you people have brought to mind your guilt by your open rebellion, revealing your sins in all that you do ... you will be taken captive ...





# EZEKIEL 21

<sup>25</sup> ... O profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, <sup>26</sup>this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Take off the diadem, remove the crown. It will not be as it was. The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. <sup>27</sup> **I will overturn, overturn, overturn it.** It will not be restored **until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs;** to him I will give it'.

This is a classic messianic prophecy -

BUT is the 3-fold reference to the nation of Israel being “overturned” -

- Just a literary device to emphasise to King Zedekiah the completeness and finality of God’s purpose with him and his kingdom AND/OR
- Is it meant to infer 3 separate “overturnings” of the nation of Israel -

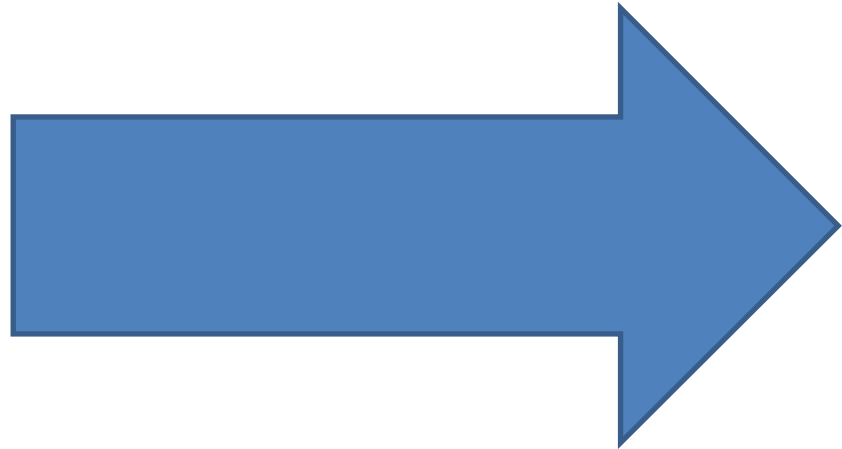
1 One by **Babylon** (Nebuchadnezzar) **BC 586**

2 A second by **Rome** (Vespasian & Titus) **AD**

70

**3 A third by forces yet to emerge?**

Numerous other prophetic passages seem to suggest this last alternative



## PSALM 83

<sup>1</sup>O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. <sup>2</sup>See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads. <sup>3</sup>With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. <sup>4</sup>**“Come”** they say, **“let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more”**.

<sup>5</sup>With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you ... **(10 surrounding nations)**

**10 horns? – 10 toes? – any connection?**

## EZEKIEL 35

<sup>2</sup>Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir: prophesy against it and say ... <sup>5</sup>“Because you have harboured an **ancient hostility\*** and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, therefore as surely as I live,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “I will give you over to bloodshed and it shall pursue you ... ..”

\* **OR perpetual hatred** (margin)

## EZEKIEL 35

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**\* OR perpetual hatred (margin)**

But there is a further reason for this prophecy ...

## **EZEKIEL 35**

<sup>10</sup>Because you have said, **“These two nations and countries shall be ours and we will take possession of them,”** even though I the LORD , was there ... <sup>11</sup>therefore, as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them. <sup>12</sup>Then you will know that I the LORD have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel ...

## EZEKIEL 35

<sup>12</sup> ... You said, “They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour”.

<sup>13</sup>You boasted against me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it. <sup>14</sup>Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate.

<sup>15</sup>Because you rejoiced when the house of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you ... O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. **Then THEY will know that I am the LORD.**



## **EZEKIEL 35**

**“<sup>15</sup> ... Then THEY will know that I am the LORD.**

**These concluding words suggest that divine judgment of the Arab enemy will be followed by some sort of public revelation of God to Israel.**

## JOEL 3

<sup>1</sup>I will gather all nations  
and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.  
There I will enter into judgment against them  
concerning my inheritance, my people Israel,

**for they scattered my people  
among the nations  
and divided up my land.**

<sup>3</sup>They cast lots for my people  
and traded boys for prostitutes;  
they sold girls for wine  
that they might drink.

## JOEL 3

<sup>4</sup>Now what have you against me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. <sup>5</sup>For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. <sup>6</sup>You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, **that you might send them far from their homeland.**

## JOEL 3

<sup>7</sup>See, **I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them** and I will return on your own heads what you have done ...

**This sounds rather like another scattering and regathering of the Jews – both FROM and TO their own land again ...**

**... in which case, all the prophetic passages we have looked at already concerning the return of the Jews to their land, might have to happen all over again!**

## **LUKE 21:24**

They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled

**AND**

## **JEREMIAH 23:3**

I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture

ISAIAH speaks of this further regathering after yet another scattering of the Jews from their homeland ...

This time it will be a regathering for good ... **a regathering of a repentant nation** ... finally ... never to be displaced from their land again

# ISAIAH 35

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees that give way;

<sup>4</sup>say to those with fearful hearts,

“Be strong, do not fear, your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you”.

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind will be opened  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

<sup>6</sup>Then will the lame leap like a deer  
and the mute tongue shout for joy ...

# ISAIAH 35

...Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
And streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup>The burning sand will become a pool,  
The thirsty ground bubbling springs ...

<sup>8</sup>And a highway will be there;  
It will be called the Way of Holiness.

The unclean will not journey on it;  
It will be for those who walk in that Way ...

<sup>9</sup>No lion will be there;  
Nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;  
They will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there ...



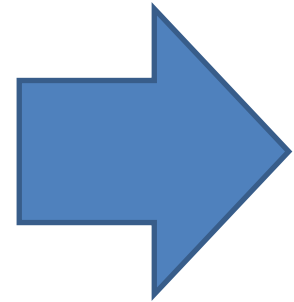
## **ISAIAH 35**

**...<sup>10</sup>and the ransomed of the LORD  
will return.**

**They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their  
heads.**

**Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee  
away.**

EZEKIEL explains why this last regathering will be such a joyful and celebratory event ...



## EZEKIEL 36

<sup>24</sup>For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. **<sup>25</sup>I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean:** I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

<sup>26</sup> **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 new heart of flesh.

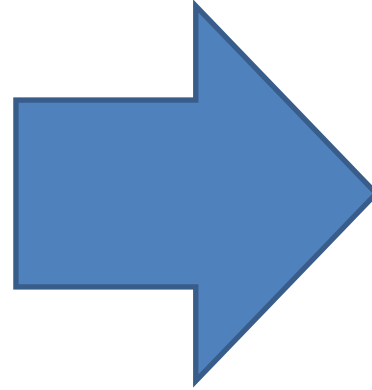
<sup>27</sup>And **I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees ...**

## EZEKIEL 36

<sup>33</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, **I will resettle your towns and the ruins will be rebuilt** ... <sup>36</sup>Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate ... <sup>37</sup> ... Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them.

Seen in this light, EZEKIEL'S prophecy of the valley of dry bones takes on a new, fresh and urgent meaning

## **EZEKIEL 37**



## **EZEKIEL 37**

The hand of the LORD was upon me and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.”

***NOTE: Everything in this vision takes place in the same location – a valley of death. The bones start out there and the bodies that come together, do so in the same valley.***

## **EZEKIEL 37**

<sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! <sup>5</sup>This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones ... <sup>6</sup>I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin: I will put breath in you and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

**Note the sequence:**

- 1. Dry bones in a certain location**
- 2. Tendons and skin are attached**
- 3. Breath enters them (all still in same location)**

## **EZEKIEL 37**

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

***Does this sound like a nation that has no spirit (i.e. Spirit of God) in them?***



## **EZEKIEL 37**

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’”

# EZEKIEL 37

... and breathe into these slain ...

**Q: Where were they slain?**

**A: Presumably in the same valley!**

## **EZEKIEL 37**

<sup>10</sup>So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army ...

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. **They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off’** ...

***Is the reference to the breath entering them, a reference to the Spirit of God being poured out on a REPENTANT Israel? In other words – is this a SPIRITUAL resurrection, not just a POLITICAL one?***

## EZEKIEL 37

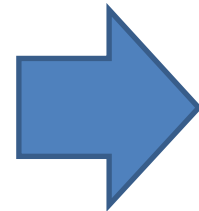
<sup>12</sup> ... ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup> **I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.** Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken and I have done it, declares the LORD.’”

# SUMMARY

- 1 The re-gathering of the Jews to the land of Israel is THE great sign to our generation of the nearness of Christ's return
- 2 The generation that saw the fig tree blossom (1948?) will not pass away until all is fulfilled
- 3 Israel must repent before Christ comes to them as their king
- 4 Israel's repentance will be brought about by a time of unprecedented trouble for them – Hypothesis – defeat & degradation at the hands of its many surrounding enemies€

# SUMMARY

- 5 Their repentance will be facilitated by at least one prophet of repentance – Elijah – in a ministry lasting  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years
- 6 This  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years could be technically what the Bible calls “the last days” during which all the other signs of Jesus’ Olivet prophecy will be most sharply in evidence, namely



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## Olivet Prophecy

Wars

Earthquakes } *even the environment*

Famines } *itself complaining!*

Roaring seas}

Strange goings on in the sky

False messiahs

False believers

Believers being deceived

Love growing cold among believers

People being turned from their faith

Persecution of true believers

Great distress for the nation of Israel

Great fear among the people of the world

# SUMMARY

- 7 Just when Christ will return – before, during or after – all these events is unclear because we know for certain that he will come at a time when MOST people will least expect it