

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Ezekiel Message 78*

*April 2, 2017*



Valley of Dry Bones Artist Unknown

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# Dentwater Bible Church

## The Book of Ezekiel Message Seventy-Eight

### RESTORATION OF ISRAEL TO THE LAND PT. III

April 2, 2017

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 36:32-38

*<sup>32</sup>Nor for your sake do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.<sup>33</sup>Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. <sup>34</sup>And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. <sup>35</sup>And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. <sup>36</sup>Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, Jehovah, have builded the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and I will do it.*

*<sup>37</sup>Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: For this, moreover, will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. <sup>38</sup>As the flock for sacrifice, as the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am Jehovah*

GOD GLORIFIES HIS NAME

Ezekiel 36:32

*<sup>32</sup>Nor for your sake do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel (ASV, 1901).*

All that God has done in choosing the nation Israel He has done to glorify His name. His efforts in this area have been to demonstrate to the world that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that we can see on this earth and in the heavens. In fact the Heavens declare the glory of God. The entire panoply of stars and planets are signs pointing to Him. Genesis 1:14

*<sup>4</sup>And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years (ASV, 1901).*

Psalms 19:1

*<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament showeth his handiwork (ASV, 1901).*

Isaiah 40:26

*<sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (ASV, 1901).*

God said at the beginning of all creation that He made the heavenly bodies as signs pointing to Him. Psalm nineteen of David announces that the heavens declare the glory (splendor) of God's handiwork. The majestic Creation is evidence of the even more majestic Creator-God. The heavens continually (every day and every night) display the fact that there is a Creator. Even though Creation does not speak audibly as humans do, its message goes out for all the earth to witness. The message from nature about the glory of God reaches all nations, and is equally intelligible to them all. It is a universal language.

God is telling Ezekiel that He chose Israel and did wondrous miracles through them for the same reason. He clearly says that *Nor for your sake do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah*. He is working through the nation Israel to bring the His Oracles and His Messiah to this earth. At the time these chapters were written God was reprimanding Israel for their sinful behavior. Because of that they caused others to have an inaccurate view of God. He is telling them that they should *be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel*. This same message is true to the Church of Jesus Christ. If our behavior is sinful or we lack faith in God then others will look on God as unimportant if they look at all. This draws them away from God instead of to Him.

The false leaders had brought Israel to ruin. The false leaders in the Church and world are bringing us to ruin. The people are also responsible to seek out the truth of God and abandon the false leaders. Only the truly saved will seek the truth. Those who are saved and know God will be ashamed when confronted with a correction by God. This is all to bring Glory to Him. These actions He does with Israel are signs to lead the world to realize who God is and what He is doing.

GOD WILL PROSPER ISRAEL'S LAND

Ezekiel 36:33-35

*<sup>33</sup>Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. <sup>34</sup>And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. <sup>35</sup>And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited (ASV, 1901).*

Now the Lord says that when He cleanses the nation Israel of all their sins He will bring people back to the cities and the desolate land will flourish. This is clearly a reference to the Messianic Kingdom when the land of Israel will be desolated from the Tribulation and the cities abandoned as citizens flee from the armies of all countries who come against Jerusalem under the Antichrist's leadership. The Jews will return and the land will flourish. Since the return to the land has been a gradual phenomenon starting in the 1800's it is startling to see what has happened there so far. It is as if He is saying, "Watch Me, See what I want to do for you." One prime example is the Jezreel Valley.

It is now home to some of the most fertile farmland in Israel. It is the largest and richest valley in the land of Israel. As the agricultural heartland of the country it is rich in natural springs. There are other valleys in Israel, but the Jezreel Valley is one special place. It is simply referred to in Hebrew as “Ha’emek - The Valley”.

The valley got its name from the ancient city of Yizre’el that served as a wintering place during the time of the Israelite kings. The city flourished under the reign of King Omri and was ultimately destroyed by the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser III, in cir. 732 BC. While in biblical times the primary cities mentioned in the valley were Megiddo, Yizre’el and Beit Shean in modern times Afula and Beit Shean are the primary towns in the area. Yizre’el is no longer a city, but rather the name of a kibbutz.

It was at the Spring of Harod, at the foothills of the Gilboa, that Gideon chose the warriors that would help him defeat the Midianites (Judges 7:1). It has been the site of the great battles between Saul and the Philistines. When Naboth the Jezreelite (I Kings 21) refused to give his land to King Ahab his wife Jezebel had Naboth stoned to death and then told her husband to go claim what was rightly his. The Afula Beit Shean road is aptly named Navot Junction (Navot is the Hebrew pronunciation of Naboth). This is also the place where the Antichrist will gather his armies for the final war on the earth (Revelation 16:12-16).



Kfar Sava 1925



Jezreel Valley 1913

The Plain of Jezreel was the granary of Palestine in all periods, and became a large malaria-infested swamp only after the Muslim conquest in AD 636.<sup>1</sup> In 1891 Yehoshua Hankin began negotiating for the purchase of 40,000 acres and the sale was closed in 1909. Merhavia, was the first settlement in the valley, in 1911. Mark Twain came here in 1869; his impressions of the Jezreel Valley are recorded in his book “Innocents Abroad” – “Of all the lands for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, the valleys unsightly deserts....it is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land.

Until the early 1920s when the first Jewish settlements were established in the area the Jezreel Valley had many swamps and many early settlers died from malaria. In September 1921 Kibbutz Ein Harod was established near the Spring of Harod, it was the second Jewish settlement in the area. During the 1920s there were six Jewish settlements in the valley. The swamp, the depressing landscape, the disease and hardship were formidable

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<sup>1</sup> Negev, A. (1990). In *The Archaeological encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (3rd ed.). New York: Prentice Hall Press.

challenges which the young settlers were determined to overcome. The draining of the swamp took precedence over all other work and only when it had been completed were the pioneers able to farm the Jezreel valley.



Settlers Draining the Swamps in the 1920's Source [www.jnf.co.uk](http://www.jnf.co.uk)

Today looking across the valley from the same vantage point where Mark Twain stood, the view is now decidedly different. It is now one of the most beautiful views in Israel. It is now a patchwork of fields, citrus groves, orchards and fish ponds. Because of all the efforts of the early Zionists the agriculture production has replaced the swamplands. There are grasslands for cattle and sheep that dominate the fauna. Agricultural land produces white beans, chickpeas, cotton, wheat, green beans, cowpeas, oranges, sunflowers, corn, squashes, and watermelons. Herbs and spices are also cultivated for the local market. The Jezreel valley is now referred to as the breadbasket of Israel. Wine production is beginning to rival France and California there. Annual production of just one winery in the Jezreel Valley, the Jezreel Valley Winery is approximately 100,000 bottles in 2016.

GOD GIVES SIGNS OF HIS PRESENCE

Ezekiel 36:36

*<sup>36</sup>Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, Jehovah, have builded the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and I will do it (ASV, 1901).*

Again God gives a sign as to His power, might and sovereignty over all of the creation. These activities of God are all done so that various people groups in the earth will know that Jehovah *have builded the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate.*



Agriculture in the Jezreel Valley from <https://www.robertharding.com>



Jezreel Valley also called the Valley of Armageddon  
from <http://2014-israel.iflblog.com/category/locations/megiddo/>

God gives us so many signs of His presence and might that it is impossible to deny His existence. God wants to draw all mankind to Himself and glorify Him. Although many do deny God and follow their own self driven desires on this earth they are without excuse. The Bible tells us that God has revealed Himself.

Romans 1:18-23

*<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth through unrighteousness. <sup>19</sup> For what may be known about God is clear to them since God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> The invisible things about Him—His eternal power and deity—have been clearly seen since the creation of the world and are understood by the things that are made, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him or give thanks to Him as God, but became futile in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools. <sup>23</sup> They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things (MEV).*

We are seeing in our culture today a massive shift to a man centered philosophy away from a God centered philosophy. The Lord Jesus described this time as the same as in the Days of Noah before the Great Flood. Our Lord Jesus told us that the conditions on this earth are going to be just as bad as they were before He destroyed the earth with a Flood many years ago:

*Matthew 24: 37*

*“<sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (KJV)*

In the first instance, God destroyed the earth by a flood. When Christ returns the destructive means will be a fire, with nuclear weapons contributing to it. In both instances, the sin on the earth had degraded to the point where violence was rampant and all flesh was corrupted. The earth will continue to degenerate to the point that the Lord will rapture the true believers off the face of the earth to be with Him, leaving behind only the unsaved, massively sinful population. The Great Tribulation will follow the event of the Rapture.

Adam wrote parts of Genesis in which we find his prediction of both the flood, and the fiery destructions of the earth. Josephus affirmed Adam’s writing (circa A.D.68):

*“Adam’s prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, they made two pillars; the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on them both, (71) that in case the pillar or brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit those discoveries to mankind; and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them. Now this remains in the land of Siriad to this day.” (Josephus and Whiston, 1987, Book 1, Chapter 2 ¶71)*

The sinfulness characteristics of humankind, which caused the Lord God to bring a Flood upon the earth, are listed here:

## Characteristics of the Earth Before Divine Judgment

- Preoccupation with physical appetites (Luke 17: 27)
- Rapid advances in technology (Genesis 4: 22)
- Grossly materialistic attitudes and interests (Luke 17: 28)
- Uniformitarian philosophies (Hebrews 11: 7)
- Inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort (Genesis 4: 21)
- No concern for God in thought or deed (II Peter 2: 5; Jude 15)
- Disregard for the sanctity of marriage (Matthew 24: 38)
- Rejection of God's Word (I Peter 3: 19)
- Satanic population explosion (Genesis 6: 1, 11)
- Widespread violence (Genesis 6: 11, 13)
- Corruption throughout society (Genesis 6: 12)
- Preoccupation with illicit sexual activity (Genesis 4: 19; 6: 2)
- Widespread words and thoughts of blasphemy (Jude 15)
- Organized Satanic activity (Genesis 6: 1-4)
- Promulgation of abnormal depravity (Genesis 6: 5, 12).<sup>2</sup>

Each one of these items listed above came about because of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden. Ever since then, man has been trying to mitigate the effects of these behaviors.

## DESOLATE PLACES REBUILD

### Ezekiel 36:37-38

<sup>37</sup>*Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: For this, moreover, will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock.*  
<sup>38</sup>*As the flock for sacrifice, as the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am Jehovah*

God is describing the regeneration of the nation Israel at the end of the Tribulation when He says, “*be inquired of by the house of Israel.*” He then goes on to say that He will cause the nation's population to be blessed by an increase in numbers. This has historically been a sign of God's blessing (Genesis 12:2; 15:1; I Samuel 1:5-6; 2:1-11; Zechariah 8:4-5). Finally God compared the blessing of the increasing population of Israel to the numerous flocks of sacrificial animals gathered for the feasts in Jerusalem. Just as the jammed packed herds struggle for space because of their vast numbers, so too will Israel's formerly ruined cities, then empty and desolate, will be filled with flocks of people.

## NEXT MESSAGE: THE VALLEY OF THE DRY BONES PROPHECY

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

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<sup>2</sup> Morris, Henry M. The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI 2009 pgs. 174-175).