

Prophecy Update: Israel is a Key! Genesis 12:1-3

If you were with us for our September PU you will remember that the focus of that PU on how all the puzzle pieces were falling into place - **as it relates to Bible Prophecy.**

A) We centered that conversation on the Words of Jesus on how - **the days leading up to his coming would be like the days of Noah - Lot**

B) When culture was living in **Defiance against God!**

C) We talked about how we are living in a culture that is becoming more and more defiant against God - and that Defiance is seen in the following ways

- **A culture of Disdain** - cancel culture
- **A culture of Deception** - turning from the truth
- **A culture of Distortion** - distorting God's view of marriage sexuality and gender.

D) It is true the Puzzle pieces are falling into place

But if we were likening the Prophetic picture to a Puzzle -

A) The nation of Israel would be the CENTER PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

B) Israel is indeed the epicenter of Bible Prophecy.

1) This tiny little nation - smaller than the size of New Jersey/ pause **Map**

C) with a population of 8.5 million people - **(that is smaller than population of Los Angeles county)**

D) And yet this little country has become the geopolitical center of the world.

Did you know Israel is mentioned in the nightly news more than any other nation except the United States?

A) Consider this in 2021 there were 260 editions of the USA today,

B) In those 260 editions there were 247 stories about the nation of Israel

➤ You say so what – contrast there were **88 stories** about the UK, **62 stories** about Australia, and **32 stories** about France

Why is there so much focus on Israel? - All a part of God's plan.

A) Consider the plan from the beginning

Now the Lord had said to Abram:

“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:1-3

B) This is known as the Abrahamic Covenant

C) God's covenant with Abraham consists of four unconditional promises.

First, God promised to bless Abraham personally.

A) That promise has been lavishly kept; Abraham has been blessed in many ways.

B) For thousands of years, Abraham has been revered by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

Second, God promised to bring out of Abraham a great nation.

A) Currently, more than 8 million Jews live in Israel alone.

B) the population of Israel is expected to exceed 20 million by 2065

C) Another 5 million live in the United States,

1) Another 14 million scattered around the world - all descendants of Abraham

D) Israel is number 10 on the list of the most Power countries in the World.

1) #10 out of 195 countries - IMPRESSIVE for a country the size of NJ

Third, God promised to make Abraham a blessing to many.

A)Just think what the world would be missing had it not been for the Jews.

B)Without the Jews, we would have no Bible.

C)Without the Jews, there would be no 10 Commandments,

1)the basis of jurisprudence among most of the civilized nations of the world.

D)Without the Jews, there would have been no Jesus.

1)Without the Jewish Jesus, there would be no Salvation.

E)Abraham is considered the father of faith -

1)Every Christian that has ever lived has a connection to Abraham.

Here are other ways that Israel is helping the rest of the world.

A)Israel is the world leader in promoting the rights of people with disabilities

B)Israel is the World leader in cyber security

C)Israel is the world leader in agriculture and water management

D)Israel is a world leader **in exports** - record \$165 billion dollar industry

Israel is the world leader in the exporting of Diamonds - RING

A)Israel is now supplying gas and oil to Europe.

B)Yes I would say that part of the Covenant God made to Abraham over 5,000 yrs ago has come true - BLESSING TO MANY

Fourth, God promised to bless those who blessed Israel and curse those who cursed her.

A)He has kept that promise faithfully.

B)I believe one of the reasons America has been blessed as a nation is that she has become a homeland for the Jewish people.

C)Here in America Jews can practice their religion.

1)Here they have economic, social, and educational opportunities.

D)America has been blessed because of our friendship with Israel.

The prophet Zechariah declared that God would plunder the nations that plunder Israel, "for he who touches [Israel] touches the apple of His eye" (Zech. 2:8).

A)History tells the tragic story of what has happened to nations and leaders who dared to oppress Israel.

B)Egypt - was the known power of the world - 400 yrs Israelites were enslaved there - (nation was growing)

C)God through Moses - said let my people go!

1)Pharoah and the Egyptians refused - Egypt was brought to its knees - through 10 plagues - **Red Sea** -

D)Egypt has never been the same!

The Midianites tried to oppress the people of Israel during their wilderness wanderings

A)Battle recorded in Numbers 31 was quick and decisive.

B)All the Midianite cities were burned to the ground, and the Israelites took as plunder massive amounts of gold, silver, bronze,

1)along with cattle, sheep, and donkeys

C)Get this the Midianites no longer exist - completely annihilated.

The countries of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome - have all been soundly defeated and weakened after their oppression of the people of Israel.

A)In modern days - Germany during World War II - Hitler killed six million Jews.

B)Germany was soundly crushed in World War II.

Israel's Six-Day War of 1967 stands today as the most spectacular modern example of God's punishment on those who curse Israel.

A)Although Israel became an independent nation in 1948,

B)the Palestinians and Islamic states surrounding it didn't recognize its statehood and vowed its extermination.

C)In 1967, the United Arab Republic (UAR) allied with Jordan, Syria, and Palestinian guerrillas to attack Israel from the north, south, and east.

Israel was hopelessly outmanned and outgunned.

A)The Arab armies numbered more than 500,000 men; Israel had only 75,000.

B)The Arabs fielded 5,000 tanks and 900 combat aircraft, whereas the Israeli total was only 1,000 tanks and 175 planes.

C)Yet when the smoke cleared six days later, the UAR had lost almost its entire air force (about 20,000 lives),

1)and Israel had taken over significant Arab-controlled territory, including the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, and West Bank.

D)A Highlight of our Israel trip is we go up to the Golan Heights - overlook the area where this battle took place -

1)Shaloam General in the Army - tells the story of that battle and his testimony.

In 2015 when Israel was receiving vicious threats of annihilation from Iran's supreme leader -

A)Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a powerful speech before the United Nations assembly

B)He spoke of the preservation of the Jewish people.

“In every generation, there were those who rose up to destroy our people. In antiquity, we faced destruction from the ancient empires of Babylon and Rome. In the Middle Ages, we faced inquisition and expulsion. And in modern times, we faced pogroms and the Holocaust. Yet the Jewish people persevered. And now another regime has arisen, swearing to destroy Israel. That regime would be wise to consider this: I stand here today representing Israel, a country 67 years young, but the nation-state of a people nearly 4,000-years-old. Yet the empires of Babylon and Rome are not represented in this hall of nations. Neither is the Thousand Year Reich. Those

seemingly invincible empires are long gone. But Israel lives. The people of Israel live.”

C)So that was the fourfold covenant that God had made to Abraham when he called him out of his land to go to this unknown territory.

D)God would make of Abraham who at the time was 75 years old and didn't have any kids -

1)make him a great nation.

E)God loves the underdog - loves doing the miraculous

It is interesting that the land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants was described with clear geographical boundaries. Map

A)It takes in all the land from the Mediterranean Sea as the western boundary to the Euphrates River as the eastern boundary-

B)If Israel were currently occupying all the land that God gave to them, they would control all the holdings of present-day Israel, Lebanon,

1)and the West Bank of Jordan, plus substantial portions of Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

C)The strange thing is, Israel has never, in its long history, occupied anywhere near this much land—

1)not even at the height of its glory days under David and Solomon.

D)But they will possess it all one day when Jesus returns - sets up his Kingdom.

The fact that Israel has never occupied all this land has caused many biblical scholars to spiritualize the meaning of the term land and equate it with heaven.

A)Others claim these promises were conditional and were forfeited by Israel's disobedience.

B) Dr. John F. Walvoord wrote:

“The term land . . . used in the Bible, means exactly what it says. It is not talking about heaven. It is talking about a piece of real estate in the Middle East. After all, if all God was promising Abraham was heaven, he could have stayed in Ur of the Chaldees. Why go on the long journey? Why be a pilgrim and a wanderer? No, God meant land.”

Any normal reading of Scripture recognizes Canaan as an actual place, a piece of real estate, an expanse of soil that belongs to Abraham's descendants forever.

A)The fact that Israel has been dispossessed of the land in three periods of its history is not an argument against its ultimate possession.

B)Occupation is not the same as ownership.

C)After each dispossession, God brought Israel back to its originally promised land.

D)God has consistently kept His promise to Abraham, and that gives us absolute assurance that He will keep it in the future.

Let's consider the miracle of the rebirth of the Nation.

A)After the death of Solomon - the nation of Israel was divided into two Kingdoms - Israel in the North - Judah in the South.

B)The Kingdom of Israel was the first to rebel against God and was taken captive by the Assyrian Empire.

C)Assyrians led by King Sennacherib, eventually took possession of Judah as well

D)The Assyrians were defeated by the Babylonians and King Neb -
1)took the best and the brightest of Israel captive.

E)But there was always a small remnant left in Israel.

The Babylonians would be overthrown by the Persian Empire.

A)During that time that Nehemiah and Ezra would lead a resurgence of Jewish people back to Jerusalem - rebuilt the walls and city

B)After Persians - Greece came into power - and then eventually Rome

C) Roman rule of the nation of Israel in 63 BC

In 70 AD Titus Vespasian who would eventually be Caesar of Rome,

A)He led the Roman legions down to Israel to put down the Jewish rebellions against the Roman Empire –

B)The Romans didn't just take Israel into captivity as Babylon had done, they massacred the Jewish people

C)They killed most of the Jews living in Israel,

1) those that survived were made slaves or driven out of the promise land

D)Rome even changed the name of their country and named the land after Israel's ancient enemies the Philistines,

1)calling Israel from 70 AD on Palestine, a Roman form of the word "Philistine"

E)So Israel lost its homeland, eventually they lost their language.

1)It was at that time that they ceased to exist as a nation - the people of Israel were dispersed all over the world.

But way back in the time of the prophets,

A)God spoke through two particular Jewish prophets about what would happen to Israel right before the Lord would come back to rule the world.

B)Long before Israel even ceased to exist as a nation

C)The Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah spoke about a nation being reborn

D)Ezekiel saw a vision of a Valley of dry bones. - Powerful Passage

E)Turn to Ezekiel 37 -

The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. 2 Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. 3 And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

So I answered, "O Lord God, You know."

4 Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'

5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I

will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ’ ”

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.

9 Also He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ’ ’ ” 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.

Ezekiel is writing this in Babylon in the year 550 BC he is in captivity but he is seeing the nation of Israel coming back to life again.

Even though 50 yrs after Ezekiel wrote these words -

A)Nehemiah and Ezra would lead a contingency of people back to Israel

B)Rebuild the city of Jerusalem- repair walls, - Israel would not become a great nation or have a great army.

C)Ezekiel was seeing something different - a nation that was completely dead that was having life breathed back into it -

1)A nation that would become great!

They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.’ ”

Skip down to v.21 - revealing

“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” – Ezekiel 37:21-23

Some wonder if this passage is really about the end times,

A)They say, well you have to realize Israel was in captivity when Ezekiel wrote this and so he was only speaking about his captivity in Babylon

B)and God was going to restore them from that time in their history

➤ And when people say that I love to point out that Ezekiel says God is going to draw His people from the “nations” from which they have been scattered to

C)When Ezekiel was in captivity, Israel was not scattered in the nations,

1) they were in captivity in one nation, the nation of Babylon

D)And on top of that, Babylon had left many of the poor in the land of Israel,

1)Israel didn’t cease to be a nation during the Babylonian captivity

So Ezekiel is seeing something different - A dead nation coming back to life. -

A)A scattered nation coming home -

B)None of that would happen until after Israel ceased to exist after the Roman invasion AD 70

C)For 2,000 yrs the nation was dead - the nation was gone.

1)A forgotten people.

In Ezekiel 36:8-15 he would prophesy of the restoration of Israel in

- It will be restored like a tree producing fruit (v. 8).
- God will increase the numbers of the house of Israel.
- Its cities will once again be inhabited and its ruins rebuilt (v. 10).
- Animals will be plentiful, and the land will become fruitful (v. 11).
- The people will never again be deprived of their children (v. 12).
- God then declared that the nation of Israel will never be destroyed or suffer taunts from other nations (vv. 13–15).

B)None of that happened until after Israel was reborn on May 14th 1948 -

C)much of what was prophesied has happened in our lifetime.

The people of Israel have returned to their land in massive numbers -

A)starting with 650,000 in 1948 to over 8.5 million today.

B)Since 2015 the greatest population of Jews are now living in Israel

C)And today Israel is an agriculture powerhouse -

D)Israel's military might is legendary

The prophecies of Israel being reborn and becoming great have been fulfilled right before our eyes.

A)But Ezekiel wasn't the only prophet to Prophecy about this - Isaiah the prophet writing 740 yrs before the birth of Christ

B)And 817 yrs before Rome would invade Israel - and cause the nation to cease to exist - wrote these words

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?” (Isa. 66:8).

C)Guys this has never happened in the history of humanity where a nation that was eliminated driven from their homeland

1)Ceased to exist for 2,000 yrs- their language was done away with

D)Was reborn! Never ever happened before

“Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.” – Isaiah 27:6

Today Israel is one of the largest exporters of fruit in the world

Israel's reemergence in her ancient homeland sets the stage for the final fulfillment of biblical prophecies.

A)The return of the Jews to their homeland pinpoints where we are on history's timeline.

B)Without the existence of the nation of Israel, we would not be able to say with certainty that we are in the last days.

C)That single event, more than any other, is the most prominent sign that we are living in the final DAYS before the coming of Jesus!”

Why is Israel important in the PRESENT AND FUTURE Prophetic picture?

#1 A cup of drunkenness and a heavy stone for the World - Zechariah 12:1-3

The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³ And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

Zechariah says two things that will be true about the city of Jerusalem in the last days

A)It will be a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples.

B)Idea is Jerusalem will intoxicate and stupefy the surrounding peoples.

C)ESV – a cup of staggering – NIV a cup that sends the nations reeling

D) Obviously – He is telling us that there is going to be this abnormal preoccupation with this city.

#2 V.3 A heavy stone – that others will try to heave away OR divide.

A) It's interesting why anyone even cares about Jerusalem... **Relatively small population of just over 800K – SD = 3.3 Million**

B) It has little strategic value, no natural resources, no inherent riches, is far from a body of water.

C) Yet, it's the most hotly contested piece of real estate on the planet.

Why would this city – no port – no real significance be such a focal point –

A) Nothing to do with politics or economics – everything to do with **religion and Race.**

B) The Arab nations especially those that are Muslim – despise the people of Israel

1) and really refuse to acknowledge their right to exist as a nation.

C) Example: Map on Turkish airlines - no Israel

The Arab peoples surrounding Jerusalem have a passion for possessing the city that is not justified by their history.

A) Muslims claim Jerusalem as their third-holiest city, **but Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Koran.**

B) However – Jerusalem is mentioned over 800 times in the OT scriptures.

C) Also worth nothing: “During the centuries when Jerusalem was under complete Arab control, no Arab ruler or Islamic leader ever made it the object of a religious pilgrimage –

D) Again a strange indifference toward a city which is now considered to be the third-holiest religious site in Islam after Mecca and Medina.”

1) And when they pray they pray with their back side – facing that city – great disrespect

Well this preoccupation with Jerusalem comes to a head during the tribulation time.

A) Did you know the Tribulation is known as the time of Jacob's trouble - why?

B) Two parts to the Tribulation - God's wrath is being poured out on a world that rejected Jesus

C) Part of that Wrath is giving the world into the control of the Devil - the Anti-Christ

1) another Christ - get what you deserve

So that is one of the things happening during the Tribulation -

A) But another reason for it - is God is using it to get the attention of the people of Israel

B) A lot that happens - happens in Israel -

C) Two 31/2 year periods - 1st 31/2 yrs Anti-Christ is at peace with Israel

D) Helps them rebuilt their temple - solves the problem with the temple MT area - Arabs

1) Dwelling peaceably

But at the end of that first 31/2 yrs the Anti-Christ shows he true collars -

A) He goes into the Temple - demands to be worshipped

B) This is what Jesus and Daniel refer to as the abomination that brings Desolation

C) Jesus says in Matthew 24 - Flee - and pray that it doesn't happen on the Sabbath

D) Wouldn't matter for us - But for the Jews the Sabbath is still sacred and practiced

E) So the 2nd 31/2 years the Anti-Christ is against Israel terrorizing the people of Israel

F) Until Jesus shows up for his 2nd coming

Zechariah further describes a scene that is in the book of revelation where the nations of the world led by the Anti-Christ are coming against Jerusalem

A) And Jesus himself is going to intervene on their behalf

⁸In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. ⁹It shall be **in that day** that I

will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

B) Jesus shows up as the defender of his people

Israel's eyes are opened about Jesus

Zechariah 12:10 quotes God, "I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son..."

One day the Jews will admit their mistake.

A) Once betrayed by the False Christ, Anti-Christ they'll realize they missed the True Christ.

B) And when Jesus appears at His second coming they'll be ready.

1) We're told, "They will look on Him whom they pierced."

C) The Jews alive at the time will repent and believe. In the end all Israel will be saved.

1) The Prophecy of Ezekiel 37 the people of Israel becoming the people of God is brought into fruition

D) Jesus bears the Scars – John in Revelation 5 **Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy to open**

1) Looked saw a lamb as though it had been slain

E) Zechariah is describing the Battle of Armageddon here - and again in Ch.14 - V.3 the Lord will go and fight for his people

Verse 4 adds "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..." In the spot where Jesus ascended into heaven He'll return to earth.

A) Interesting to me – Several yrs ago Sheraton Hotels were looking at the Mount of Olives to put in Israel a flagship hotel.

B) but as they did their environmental studies they found that there is a huge fault line, the flows right under the Mount of Olives – AMAZING

C) They ended up building further south - away from the fault line. The hill is unstable.

1) It's waiting on the pressure of one foot.

D) Jesus' big toe will cause it to split in two, and the whole topography of Jerusalem will be altered.

The Lord parted the Red sea in Moses day, in this day, He will part a mountain

A) And water will flow from it to the dead sea to the East, and the Mediterranean Sea to the West

B) The same geologists that advised Sheraton NOT to build on the Mount of Olives,

1) also found large amounts of water under the Mountain that would be realized if the earthquake was severe enough

C) JESUS STEPS ON THE MT OF OLIVES – BOOM – IT HAPPENS – IT IS ON!

Verses 8-9 tell us a river will flow from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean –

A) and from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea – thus, connecting the two bodies of water.

B) This will bring life to the Dead Sea, and turn Jerusalem into a port.

Verse 9 declares, "And the LORD shall be King over all the earth..."

C) GLORIOUS DAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Israel is important because it is literally the stage where the whole ends time scenario takes place

#2 Jesus comes back to Israel - sets up his headquarters in Israel

So we pray of the peace of Jerusalem - Jesus to return

We honor Israel as God's people

A) Doesn't mean we agree with all that they do

B) Many ungodly people in Israel -

C) Tel Aviv is very irreligious

D) Pay attention to what is happening