

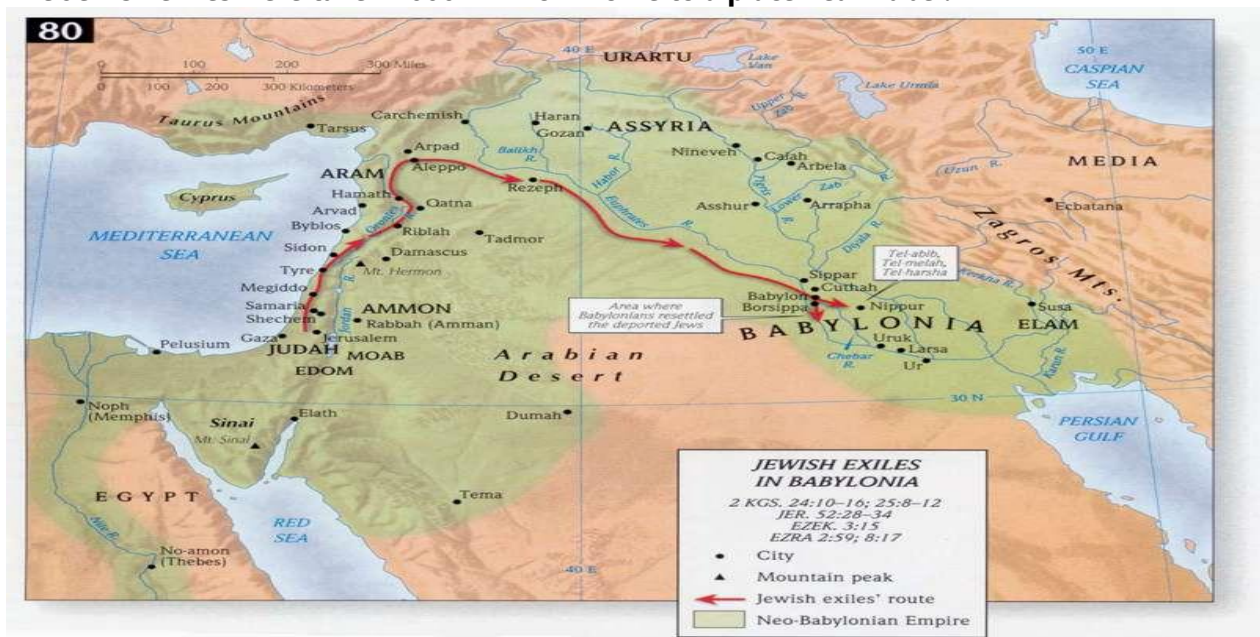
Judeo-Christian future expectation from Ezekiel. Part 1.

A. Ezekiel 33 to 35.

Who is Ezekiel?

Ezekiel is from a priestly house. Presumably he is descended from the high priestly line of Zadok. His father's name is Buzi. Ezekiel 1:2,3 *On the fifth of the month – it was the fifth year of King Jojachin's exile – the word of the LORD explicitly came to Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Kebar River, and the hand of the LORD was upon him.* He lived in Jerusalem until he was 25. Ezekiel was led away with exile under King Jojachin. That was in 597 BC, which was a relatively large deportation. All those who could pose a threat to Babel in Jerusalem were taken by King Nebuchadnezzar, including the king and his mother. It involved a march of some twenty thousand people. 2 Kings 24:15-16 Ezekiel lived among the exiles on the banks of the Kebar River close to Babel, some 1000 km from Jerusalem. He was called 5 years after the exile. So that was in 592 BC. Four years before the siege and six years before the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel was probably about 30 years old when he was called by God. Priests began their official service to the LORD in the temple at that age. The name Ezekiel means 'God is strong'. The date of his exile – 597 BC – is for Ezekiel the fixed point in all his dating, as in Ezekiel 40. The temple vision received the Prophet 25 years after the march, so in 572 B.C. Ezekiel 40:1 *In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was defeated, on the same day the hand of the LORD was upon me and he brought me there.* So Jerusalem had fallen 14 years before the temple vision from Ezekiel 40-48, in 586 BC. The prophet Ezekiel was working at the same time as the prophet Jeremiah and Daniel. Their public appearance overlapped with the other person's. It is remarkable that Jeremiah – who lived in Jerusalem where he was later imprisoned in the palace garden – receives prophecies about Jerusalem and Judah. The prophecies that Ezekiel received from God are also very much involved in Jerusalem.

The Jewish exiles were taken 1000 km from home to a place near Babel.



Ezekiel is dumbfounded by God until Jerusalem has fallen.

Everyone agrees that chapter 33 will store a new page in Ezekiel's prophecies. The book of Ezekiel is therefore divided into two pieces; *before the fall* and *after the fall* of Jerusalem. Presumably

Jerusalem meant so much to the exiles that the fall of Jerusalem before then was simply non-negotiable. Even for Ezekiel, it probably wasn't a foregone conclusion. Is the city really that bad? Are people really that bad? God personally had the prophet – in a vision – take a look at the city to show him how hard the decay was, in religious terms alone. Ezekiel 8-11 Yet the message was hardly to be delivered. God had already called Ezekiel – Ezekiel 3 – *a watchman*. Presumably because of the enormous opposition the Prophet encountered in the message, the LORD chose to beat Ezekiel with stupidity. He couldn't talk anymore. Ezekiel 3:25-26 *And as far as you are concerned, child of man, behold, they would put ropes around you and bind you with them. That's why you shouldn't be in their midst. I will make your tongue stick to your palate, so that you become stupid and you cannot be to them as one who punishes, for they are a rebellious house!* God therefore made it virtually impossible for Ezekiel to act as a *watchman* at the beginning. Ezekiel 3:25-26 Instead of speaking, the prophet, at the behest of God, makes a kind of model of Jerusalem as a besieged city and depicted – in what he ate and with the movement of his arms and the position he took – the siege of the city. There was no verbal contact between the Prophet and the exiles who came into his home, except when the LORD gave him a prophecy to pronounce. For that was clear – Ezekiel was dumbfounded by God – but God would open the prophet's mouth every time He wanted to give a revelation. The LORD says so in so many words in Ezekiel 3:27 *But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say to them: This is how the Lord says: Whoever listens, let him listen. Whoever fails to do so, let it be omission, for they are a rebellious house!* Just on the day when Ezekiel's wife dies, God foreman says that – when Jerusalem falls – a refugee will come and bring the message to the prophet. From the moment of the fall of the city – says the LORD – the stupidity of Ezekiel will be a thing of the past. God will open his mouth. For the exiles, Jerusalem is like a dear relative. That may be so, but God has always said through Ezekiel that Jerusalem will be destroyed. The proof is provided when the refugee reports the message of Jerusalem's fall. Ezekiel 24:25-27 *As far as you are concerned, child of men, will it not be the day when I take away their power, the listening in which they rejoice, the lust of their eyes, the invigorating of their souls, their sons and their daughters, that on that day someone who has escaped will come to you to hear your ears? On that day, your mouth will be opened with that of those who have escaped, so that you will speak and no longer be stupid. So you will be a miracle sign for them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.*

In the twelfth year of our exile. Someone from Jerusalem said, "The city is defeated."



Through the prophet Ezekiel, the LORD expresses a prospect of the future that offers perspective.

Both things are mentioned in this chapter – which stores a new page in Ezekiel to the future. In the year 586 BC, the time has come. A refugee who escaped from Jerusalem reports the fall of the city. Ezekiel 33:21 *It happened in the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth of the month, that someone who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city is defeated."* From that moment on, the seal on Ezekiel's mouth was removed. God takes the stupidity away

from him. He can talk freely again. Ezekiel 33:22 *Now the Lord's hand had been on me in the evening before the escapee had arrived. He had opened my mouth before he came to me in the morning. That's how my mouth was opened and I was no longer stupid.* One may wonder why God had closed the prophet's mouth. Except for the prophecies Ezekiel received from God, he could not talk. The LORD probably did so to spare the Prophet. They didn't want to hear a bad word about Jerusalem. The exiles did not thank Ezekiel for his views. According to God, they would have tied him with ropes if things had gone differently. If a man can talk, one will ask 'What he thinks of it himself'. But if someone can't talk, he can make a gesture, but he can't lose his personal opinion. That's hard, but it helps. In this way, God prevented the prophet from being among his fellow people and would suffer greatly himself. But now that Jerusalem has fallen, it's time for a different kind of message. God gives hope to His people Israel. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the LORD expresses expectations of the future from providing that perspective. Not only do people look up to it, people live on it. People are now probably willing to listen to the Prophet because he has good news from Ezekiel 33 – after the fall of Jerusalem.

The prophet Ezekiel in the Sistine Chapel.



The shepherds of Israel, the prophet, the high priest and the king.

The first hopeful prophecy of Ezekiel 34 – after the fall of Jerusalem – is about the Shepherd for which God Himself is to take care of. It was the desert time when the people of Israel received their first 'shepherd' in the person of Moses. God spoke "the Ten Commandments" directly to His people. Deuteronomy 5:4 *Face to face, the LORD has spoken to you on the mountain, from the center of the fire.* It was the first and last time the people heard God's Voice directly from heaven. One was very impressed by the appearance of God, an apparition accompanied by dark clouds and lightning and fire. No one was allowed to approach the foot of the mountain where God manifested himself. Only Moses was personally called by God to meet on Mount Sinai. Moses shuttled back and forth between God and the people. Even then – in the desert – the people asked for *a prophet*. They thought that was too intense to hear God's voice for themselves. Exodus 20:18,19 *And all the people witnessed the thunders, the lightnings, the trumpet and the smoking mountain. When the people saw this, they were frightened and stood at a distance. They said to Moses, "If you speak to us, we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, or we will die."* That's how it came to be, and that's how it stayed. God spoke to His people through Moses, and the people answered Moses what he could say to God. The first prophet was born, Moses. By the way, he wasn't the only shepherd born in the desert. The second connecting person – between God and His people – was Moses' brother Aaron. He was called by God to be a *high priest*. Exodus 40:13-15

You must put Aaron on the sanctified clothing, and sanctify him so that he can serve me as a priest. Then you have to let his sons approach and put on their underclothes. Then you must anoint them as you have anointed their father, so that they may serve me as priests. And it will happen that their anointing will mean to them an eternal priesthood, all their generations through. With the king it still lasted until after the Judges time. It is also somewhat understandable that the people asked for a king. The king, or rather a royal family, provided stability, it was thought. The Judges had the curve of a heart stroke. Each new Judge had to provide new momentum and new faith and new devotion to God. With the death of the Judge, however, the revival had come to an end. A time of adversity and alienation arrived. With a king one hoped for a stable government on behalf of God. 1 Samuel 7:5 Samuel – the last Judge – was not necessarily happy about it. It felt to him like a rejection of the way he had fulfilled his office. But God said, "They did not reject you, but me." 1 Samuel 8:7 Nevertheless, the LORD agreed, but not before He had seriously warned the people through Samuel about the side effects of a king's time. One is that the royal family costs quite a bit of money. 1 Samuel 8:10-22 It may not even be the main side effect. A much more serious consequence is that when the king fails an entire people is led on the wrong track. These are the shepherds of Israel: the prophet, the priest and the king. All three have failed.

The shepherds of Israel thought mostly of themselves.



God takes the wrong shepherds hard.

This chapter is about people. It's also about God. The LORD, the God of the Bible has entrusted important things to people. These people do this work – leading a people – on behalf of the LORD. Nice work. A special calling. Important work too. If they do their job well, the whole people will be blessed with them. If not, ordinary people in particular have a problem. To cut a long story short, the shepherds didn't do their job well. The people are the victims. That's why God takes the leaders hard. The LORD mentions once again briefly what His problems were with the shepherds. Ezekiel 34:7,8 *Therefore, shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! So where I live, the Lord speaks, indeed, because My sheep have become prey, and My sheep have become food for all the animals of the field, because there is no shepherd, and My shepherds have not asked for My sheep, but the shepherds have we grazed themselves, and my sheep have not grazed.* We may be a little surprised that someone like Samuel – towards the end of his active life – takes stock. 1 Samuel 11:3 *Behold, here I am, bear testimony against me in the presence of the Lord and in the presence of His anointed: from whom have I taken a beef, from whom have I taken a donkey, who have I suppressed, who have I abused, from whose hand have I taken hush money to close my eyes to him? Then I'll give it back to you.* Not only in the Old Testament, the leader was accountable to God and the people. Paul, in the New Testament experiences it the same way. Acts 20:32,33 *And now, brethren, I dedicate you to God and to the word of His grace, to Him who is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all the sanctified. I didn't want anyone's silver or gold or clothes.* Paul, by the way, does not consider this merit of himself. It should be normal for someone in charge to selflessly serve the church of God. The LORD God feels the same way. He is going to save His sheep – which were exploited – from the hand of those so-called shepherds. The shepherds are being dealt with harshly. Ezekiel 34:9,10 *Therefore, shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! So the Lord says, "Behold, I shall punish these shepherds! I demand my sheep out of their*

hand, and make them stop grazing the sheep. Those shepherds will no longer graze themselves, and I will save My sheep from their mouths, so that they are no longer food to them.

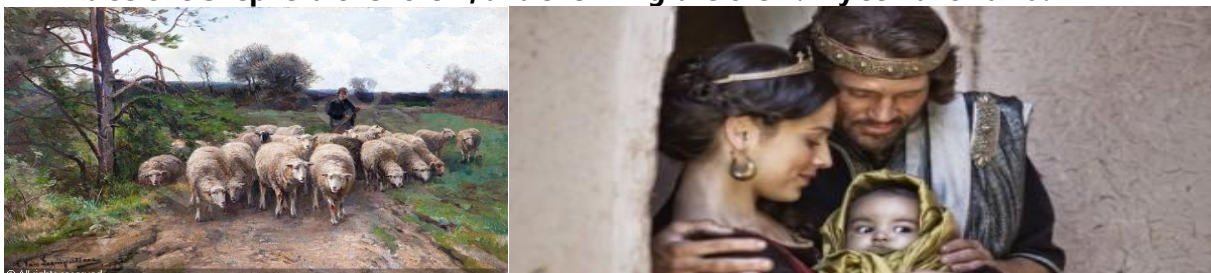
You do not strengthen the weak and you do not bring back and the lost.



God will raise a Shepherd from David's house.

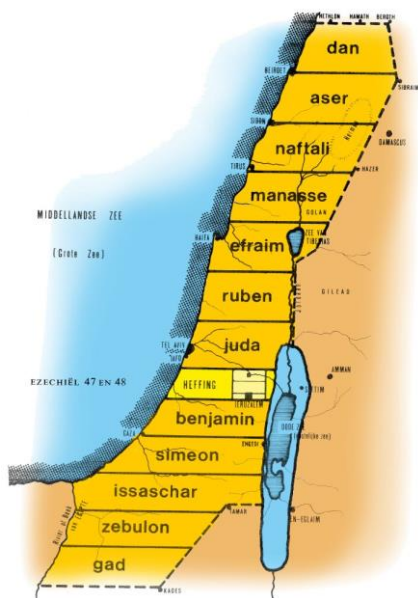
When there is the shepherd in the Old Testament, it is mainly about God and the king. When there is talk of the king, it is particularly about King David. The 'coincidence' means that he was a real shepherd at first. He was the king to God's heart. With him – with his house – God has made an eternal covenant. There would always be someone king from David's house. If the king misbehaved, the LORD would punish him, but God's choice for David would remain. The LORD would not change royals, as with King Saul. We find that promise in 2 Samuel and he is uttered by the Prophet Nathan. It's become known as *the Nathan's Promise*. 2 Samuel 7:16 *Your house and your kingship will be fixed before your eyes forever, your throne will be forever secure.* With the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the royal family of David has come to an end. The king – Zedekiah – is in prison for bad behavior in Babel. But God won't let it go. This is not the final end of David's house. God will raise a Shepherd from David's house. Through Him, God will lead the flock. Ezekiel 34:23 *I will raise one Shepherd over them, and she will graze them: My Servant David. He will graze them, and he will be a Shepherd to them.* David may have made missteps. He did come back from it and suffered the consequences. Despite his sins and shortcomings – Psalm 51 – the time when David was king over Israel – in the minds of the Jewish community – has been the ideal time for land and people. The people of Israel were united. The twelve tribes were part of one people. Jerusalem became the capital of the Empire and perhaps most importantly, God lived in Jerusalem in the tent that King David had provisionally arranged for the LORD. It was a time when justice and mercy still went hand in hand. Every Israelite from high to low got it right. Perhaps someone points to the time of David's successor Solomon as the ideal time because the temple was built and "each was under his fig tree and vine." It was definitely a good time, also because the wars had all but stopped. But then we do not count the end of Solomon's kingship in which he had temples built for his foreign women and invoked the wrath of God in such a way that the Empire tore in two. David's time has been a better time on reflection. That former time, the LORD imagines in the future, with David as king and the LORD as God above him. Someone like King David will come back to the government. He will lead God's people in peace and justice. The contours of paradise are set and the king – the Shepherd with a capital letter – gets a divine sheen.

I will raise one Shepherd over them, and she will graze them: My servant David.



The area and task of the monarch of Israel on the new earth.

In Ezekiel the construction of *the new temple* is announced. It will stand in *the sacred area* that is located in the center of Israel. The location of the temple is *the mountain of God*. Around it will be the area of the high priest and the priests, and above that a site will be cleared for the other Levites. To the south of this area – in the representation of Ezekiel 47 and 48 – space for the city is made, the future Jerusalem. The king who also called 'prince' has the task of providing the priests with everything that is needed so that an orderly sacrificial service is amply provided throughout the year with the animals and loaves of bread and the wine that is sacrificed to God. The monarch receives tax from Israel in nature. There are some privileges for him. For example, it is permissible for him – as the only one – to be allowed to approach the temple-square where the sacrifices are made through the inner Eastern Gate. There He bends His knees before God. Also the prince is allowed to eat the community sacrifice in the outer Eastern Gate. At this time the LORD seizes forward with the words of Ezekiel 34:27 *And I, the LORD, will be a God to them, and My Servant David will be Prince in their midst. I, the LORD, have spoken.* It is quite conceivable that the Lord Jesus from the house of David delegates the future position of prince of Israel to the other princes of David's house who participated in the resurrection and life on the new earth. The Holy Area in which the temple of Ezekiel is located – covers an area of 25 square km. The area to the West and east of this is of the Prince.



The Holy Area in which the temple of Ezekiel (light yellow)

The Lord Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd."

Our thoughts go to the Lord Jesus, the son of David, the Son of God. Wherever He acts as David's son, He brings recovery. Ezekiel 43:24 *And I, the LORD, will be a God to them, and My Servant David will be Prince in their midst. I, the LORD, have spoken.* In fact, David's kingship didn't work out well. After the exile it was Zerubbabel from the house of David who became something like city holder, but until king he did not bring it. That is not to say, however, that the LORD would not pick up the thread of the kingship at one time or another. Matthew 1:12 *After the Babylonian exile, Jechonia Begat Sealthuel, Sealthiël sired Zerubbabel; Zerubbabel sired Abihud, Abihud begat Eljakim, Eljakim begat Azor; Azor begat Zadok, Zadok begat Achim, Achim begat Eliud; Eliud begat Eleazar, Eleazar begat Matthan, Matthan begat Jacob; Jacob begat Joseph, the man of Mary, from whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.* Not only in the family register, the family tree of Jesus crosses the line of David. Also at the announcement of the birth – of the angel to Mary – the Lord Jesus, is called the son of David. Luke 1:32 *He will be great and be called the Son of the Supreme, and God, the Lord, will give Him the throne of His father David.* When the blind man at Jericho – if

Jesus happens to pass by – appeals to 'the son of David', the Lord responds and the man is healed. The kingship of the Lord is special. He has come to serve. In the serving manner in which He exercises the Kingship, even 'Giving his life to the people as a ransom' is decided. Mark 10:45 *For the Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His soul as a ransom for many.* Even more special than the identification with The son of David is the fact that the Lord Jesus appropriates the title 'Good Shepherd'. John 10:11 *I am the good Shepherd; The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.* In doing so, the Lord claims that He is the Shepherd who has been given to His people of God Israel. In the Old, but also the New Testament, the metaphor Shepherd is an important image of God's loving care for His people. The Lord ensures that we have life and abundance. He also protects us from our enemies. That love goes so far as to say that the Lord is willing to give his life for the sheep if He has to. In this you really see that He is the Shepherd. A mercenary would never have anything like that for the herd. The sheep are not his. He's running. But the Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The sheep know His voice. John 10 in which the Lord Jesus shows in different ways that He is the Shepherd and no one else. Also here – for us Christians from the nations – is in that we too are involved in the herd by this Shepherd. John 10:16 *I have other sheep that are not from this sheepfold; I must bring them in, and they will hear My voice, and it will become one flock and one Shepherd.*

Jesus is the good Shepherd.



The shepherd and the sheep as a metaphor of God and His people.

Genesis 49:24	through the hands of the Mighty of Jacob, hence He is the Shepherd, the rock of Israel –
Numbers 27:16,17	Then Moses spoke to the LORD: Let the LORD, the God who breathes all flesh, appoint a man about this community who goes out for them and who goes before them, and who makes them go out and make them go back into them, that the community of the Lord will not be like sheep who have no shepherd.
1 Kings 22:17	(The prophet Micha.) He said, "I saw all of Israel scattered everywhere on the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, "These have no lord, let each one return to his home in peace."
Psalms 23:1	Psalms of David. The LORD is my Shepherd, I am missing nothing.

Psalm 74:1	A teaching of Asa. Oh God, why did you disown us forever? Why does your wrath ignite against the sheep of your meadow?
Psalm 77:21	You led your people like a flock through the hand of Moses and Aaron.
Psalm 78:51,52	He was already the firstborn in Egypt, the first fruits of male strength in Cham's tents. He had His people move away like sheep and led them through the desert like a flock.
Psalm 79:13	Then we, Your people and the sheep of Your meadow, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will tell of Your fame.
Psalm 80:2-4	Shepherd of Israel, please, You, who leads Joseph like sheep. You, who is throned among the cherubs, appear shining! Raise your power before the eyes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasse, and come and redeem us. God, bring us back;
Psalm 95:7	He is our God, and we are the people of His meadow and the sheep of His hand.
Psalm 100:3	Know that the LORD is God; He has made us – and not us – His people and the sheep of His meadow.
Isaiah 40:11	As a shepherd, He will graze His flock: He will gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His womb; The suckers will lead gently.
Isaiah 56:11	Yes, they are shepherds who do not come to an understanding. They all turn in their own way, each is out for their own gain, no one except.
Jeremiah 3:15	I will give you shepherds to My heart, who will graze you with knowledge and reason.
Jeremiah 13:17	If you do not listen, my soul will weep in hidden places because of the pride, bitter crying, yes, tears flow down from my eyes, for the lord's flock has been taken away trapped.
Jeremiah 23:1-5	Woe betide the shepherds who kill the sheep of My meadow and spread it everywhere, the LORD speaks. Therefore, so says the LORD, the God of Israel, of the shepherds who graze my people: You have scattered and driven my sheep everywhere, and you have not looked after them. "See, I'm going to retaliate your evil deeds," the LORD says. I, however, I will gather the remnant of My sheep from all the lands to which I have driven them. I will return them to their sheepfolds, and they will be fertile and numerous. I will raise shepherds over them who will graze them. They will no longer be afraid, appalled, or missed, says the LORD. See, there will come days, the LORD says, that I will raise a righteous SPROUT for David. He will rule as king and act wisely, He will do justice and justice on the earth. In His days, Judah will be redeemed and Israel will live carefree.
Jeremiah 25:36,37	Hear the screams of the shepherds, and the wailing of the herd's grounds, as the LORD destroys their meadow. The peaceful meadows are destroyed because of the burning wrath of the LORD.
Jeremiah 31:10-14	Hear the word of the Lord, pagan peoples, proclaim it in the coastal lands from far away, and say: He Who has scattered Israel will bring it back together and herd it, as a shepherd herds his flock. For the LORD has freed Jacob, and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than him. They will come and cheer at the height of Sion, they will flow to the good of the LORD: to the corn, to the new wine and to the oil, to the lambs and cattle. Their souls will be like a irrigated court, they will no longer be sad. Then young women will rejoice in a row-dance, including the young men and the elderly with each other. I will turn their mourning into joy, I

will comfort them, I will make them happy after their grief. I will saturate the soul of the priests with abundance, My people will be saturated with the good of Me, says the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:24	And My Servant David will be King over them. For all of them, there will be one Shepherd. They will walk into My provisions and observe my ordinances and keep them
Zechariah 10:2,3	Therefore they have been moved away like sheep; they are oppressed, for there is no shepherd. Against the shepherds, My wrath has been ignited, and the bucks I punish. Yes, the LORD of the armed forces will look to His flock, the house of Judah.
Zechariah 11:1-19	Hear the wailing of the shepherds, because their splendor has been destroyed.
Matthew 9:36	When He saw the crowd, He was moved inwardly with compassion over them, because they were tired and scattered, like sheep that do not have a shepherd.
Matthew 18:12,13 Lucas 15:4-7	What do you think: if one has a hundred sheep, and one of them has strayed, he will not leave the ninety-nine others behind and in the mountains it will be stray? And if it happens that he finds it, I tell you that he rejoices more about it than the ninety-nine who had not strayed.
Matthew 25:32	And for Him all the nations will be brought together, and He will separate them from each other as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
John 10:11	I am the good Shepherd; The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.
Hebrew 13:20,21	Amen. The God now of peace, who has brought back the great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, from the dead, on the basis of the blood of the eternal covenant, may you equip yourself to any good work to do His will, and work in you what is pleasing in His eyes, by Jesus Christ. To him be the glory in all eternity. Amen
1 Peter 5:2-4	See after the flock of God that is with you and oversee it, not forced, but willingly; not for profit, but willingly; not as people who rule the Lord's inheritance, but as people who have become examples for the flock. And when the Supreme Shepherd appears, you will obtain the wreath of glory.
Revelation 7:17	For the Lamb, which is in the middle of the throne, will graze them and guide them to the living water sources. And God will wipe all tears from their eyes.

There will be no more wild animals in the land.



The trees on the field will give their fruit.



Final peace for God's people.

The future – which brings the Shepherd of God – has paradisiacal traits. The time of war and threat will be over. One will have an unprecedented peace. Peace not in the sense of absence of war, but of shalom, a carefree life with good relations between God and the people and the peoples among themselves; the relationship with the animals is also different. The animals do not scare and do not flee when people approach. Also, there are no more wild animals in the sense that people must feel threatened in the vicinity of lions or panthers. Ezekiel 34:25 *I will make a covenant of peace with them and get rid of the wild animals from the land. They will live carefree in the desert and sleep in the forests.* God Himself will dwell in our midst on the Sion, the hill of the Lord. Living around the LORD will be good. God will give His blessing to men and animal. The whole country will be blessed by it. Rains – which can normally also be destructive – will only consist of refreshing showers that will revive nature. Ezekiel 34:26 *I will give them and the area around My hill a blessing, and I will make the rain descend upon its time.* Rains of blessing will be there. Israel, the people of God has always known a more or less threatened existence. In Gosen in Egypt, the lives of free people were already transformed into a slave existence, serving the Pharaoh of Egypt. God has freed them from that slave existence, certainly, but even after that their stay in the promised land was certainly not without tensions. Only the period of David and the beginning of Solomon's reign knew Israel a time of peace and relative justice. At that time, they were the blessed people, but then that changed quickly. Then it was the great powers that developed in the Middle East one after the other. Assur, Babel, Media/Persia, The Greek Empire, the Romans. Powers that made Israel a vassal state. In 70 AD, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the Jews were driven from their lands. They spread all over the world. It was not until 1948 that this changed with the foundation of the State of Israel. But when "the Son of David" comes to power in full, it will all be different. Then the rod of the ruler will be broken. Then the threat that always is there, will be terminated. Then one can live in peace. Ezekiel 34:27 *The trees in the field will give their fruit, the land will yield its yield, and they will live untroubled in their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I break the rods of their yoke, and save them from the hand of those who were served by them.* Although the Jews at times led a fairly unnoticed existence among the people, there were always periods of persecution. Whether they lived in Portugal or Poland or Germany or Russia; they are the black sheep of the people's world. When looking for the cause of trouble or adversity or recession, the Jewish community was often looked at and had to be relieved. Not only politically or commercially, but also religiously, tensions were not off the air when one remembered "that it was the Jews who had surrendered Christ in the hands of his enemy." It culminated - in the once Christian Europe - in Hitler's attempt to make the Jewish people disappear completely off the face of the earth. That constant threat to which the people of God has been exposed all centuries – perhaps precisely because they were people of God – will be ended. Ezekiel 34:28 *They will no longer be prey to the pagan peoples, and the wild animals of the earth will no longer devour them, but they will live carefree and no one will frighten them.*

Israel no longer devoured by the wild animals and no longer a prey for the pagan peoples



Life on the new earth.

One of the things that can threaten a people is famine. Israel knows how to talk about it. But failed harvests are also a thing of the past in the future time that God envisions. God gives the promise that one will live in peace in Israel with the mountain in the center of the people – the hill he is called here – of the LORD, the Mount Sion on which God dwells on the new earth. With the tribes of the people of Israel to the north and south of it. See Ezekiel 48. From beneath the throne of God, a water will seep into a river. It is a river that produces life in always fruit-bearing trees – twelve times a year – and also the tree of life, whose leaves are vital. It is presumably to this wondrous Plant that God refers to. Ezekiel 34:29 *I will make a Plant of name for them to stand up. Then they will no longer be taken away by hunger in the land, and the defamation of the pagan peoples will no longer bear them.* There comes a time when God's people are experiencing the fulfillment of God's promises. Then we will be confirmed in the expectations we had placed on God. However, that will take quite some time. Since the time of Babel's exile, there has certainly been a recovery. Israel was allowed to return to its country of origin. Jerusalem is being rebuilt. The temple and temple service are restored. But it remains restless, a history of ups and downs. But one day we will experience the final fulfillment of all God's promises. But then we are on the other side of the final judgment, the new heaven and the new earth. Revelation 22:3. At that time, God is probably referring. Ezekiel 34:30 *Then they will know that I, the LORD, are their God, with them, and that they are My people, the house of Israel, the Lord speaks.*

The country will give its proceeds and they will live in their country without any worries.



The first fulfillment is already visible: Jesus, the Son of David is the Good Shepherd.

The beauty of Ezekiel's prophecy is that we already have the first fulfillment in the Person and the work of salvation of the Lord Jesus. It is a strong affirmation of the reliability of the premonition of God. When it concerns a house, we see that the first floor – after the New Testament – is already there. We can guess how the house will be further build up. Those who still want to wonder about the fulfillment can enjoy themselves. Ezekiel lives in the fifth century BC. What God tells us about the future through the prophet will thus be the beginning of his fulfillment after five centuries. Who wouldn't be surprised? Who would not praise the LORD, who has the whole world in His hand, for His Omnipotence. With the prophet Isaiah, it is one of the important things in which God distinguishes Himself from the idols. The LORD challenges the idols: "Let them also speak out about the near and distant future. Let's see what happens to it." About Himself – and the Biblical Expectation of the Future – God is neither uncertain. Isaiah 44:6-8 *So the Lord, the King of Israel, his Savior, says the LORD of the armed forces: I am the First and I am the Last, and beyond Me there is no God. And who, like Me, can call, make it known, and explain it to Me, ever since I have given an eternal people a place? And let them disclose the future things that will come. Don't be afraid and don't be afraid. Didn't I hear and disclose it to you from then on? For you are My witnesses: is there a God other than Me? There's no other rock, I don't know any.*

The lower floor of the house of the future stands with the coming of Jesus



The election of Israel.

Also – Ezekiel 35 – the LORD still has a bone to pick with the surrounding pagan peoples in particular with Edom. Edom was seriously misbehaving when Babel invaded Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem were taken away in exile. There was always a tense relationship between Edom and Israel, or Jacob and Edom = Esau. It starts in the mother's womb. Rebekah was pregnant with twins, Jakob and Esau. They weren't even born yet, or they were already clashing as two potential enemies. Genesis 25:22,23 *The children bumped into each other in her body. Then she said, "If this is so, why is this happening to me?" And she went to see the LORD. The LORD then said to her, "There are two nations in your womb, and two nations will separate themselves from your bodies." One people will be stronger than the other, and the superior will serve the lesser.* Jakob and Esau turned out to be very different children from the very beginning of their existence. Jakob was more of a mother's child, whereas Esau was really an outdoor child, a raw dud. Father Isaac had more with Esau, while mother Rebekah was charmed of Jakob. In the distribution of the blessing – and with it the spiritual legacy – things went completely wrong between these two boys. The history is not unknown. Jakob pretended to be Esau and took the blessing of his brother. There's a story behind that, by the way. Esau had 'sold' the blessing to Jakob on an earlier occasion. It would be a plate of lentil soup. Genesis 25:29-34 All that may be true. Esau didn't seem to see the worth of it at the time. But that Jakob cheated on him with his father, Esau never forgave him. From the story of the red soup we can see how Esau gets the name Edom = red. It didn't work out between the two of them. You can say the same of the peoples that came from them. From Esau came the people Edom.

Edom



God has chosen the people of Israel to be His people.

From Jacob came the people of Israel. Jacob was given the name 'Israel' when he fought with the LORD in the River Jabbok. That was on the eve of the meeting with Esau. Genesis 32:27,28 *And He said to him, What is your name? And he replied, "Jacob." Then He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have fought with God and with men, and have overcome.* It is clear from everything that God continues with Jacob in the line of the Covenant and the promises to Abraham. In Jacob, God realizes the promise of a great people when no less than twelve boys are born of him, *the twelve tribes of Israel.* And it is this people who became the legitimate heir to the promised land. As Jacob and Esau break up, we see something that reinforced that removal, and that is that God's choice fell on Jacob and not Esau. Behind all these things is the election of Israel. In Malachi 2:2,3 *It is said by the LORD: I have loved you, says the LORD, but you say: What have you loved us for? Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother? speaks the LORD. Yet I have loved Jacob, and Esau I have hated.* The Apostle Paul also cites the election of Israel when he speaks of the people he came from. Romans 9:10-13 Many people find it unfair. God would preface some people over other people. However, according to the Apostle, God is free to do what He wants, and it is a sign of election if people respect God's free choice. Esau/Edom didn't really succeed. It is the election that has left deep marks in the relationship between Israel and Edom. Edom never accepted the fact that God chose his little brother and not for him. For that reason, there has always been a love/hate relationship. During the Exodus, Edom did not want Israel to walk through his own country. Judges 11:17 We do not want to conceal the fact that King David has inflicted heavy blows on the people of Edom in the expansion of power of the kingdom of Israel. That won't have strengthened the friendship. Nevertheless, there was also some rapprochement. Who would be surprised if, for example, we also see Edom among the members of the peoples south of Babel who organized a kind of coalition to make one fist against the power on Babel. Jeremiah was to strongly discourage those peoples by the Lord. In this context, all nations are mentioned, including Edom. Jeremiah 27:2,3 *So the LORD has said to me: Make your ties and yokes and put them on your neck, and send them to the King of Edom, to the King of Moab, to the King of the Ammonites, to the King of Tyrus, and to the King of Sidon, by the hand of the envoys who come to Jerusalem to Sedekia, the King of Judah.* Despite the fact that at times there was apparently a reasonable relationship between Israel and Edom, reality did not lie. When Israel was lying on his back – after the fall of Jerusalem – Edom treated the people of Israel with extraordinary brutality. Several prophets have received prophetic words about Edom in this regard.

Because you – Edom – have an eternal enmity and made the Israelites crash (..).



Prophecies against Edom.

Genesis 32:3 And Jacob sent bids for himself to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir, the area of Edom.

Isaiah 34:5-8	Behold, it will descend upon Edom, upon the people I have beaten with the spell, as a judgment. The sword of the LORD is full of blood, it is saturated with fat, of the blood of lambs and bucks, of the kidney fat of rams. For the LORD is making a sacrifice in Bosra, a great massacre in the land of Edom. With them the wild oxen will fall, and the young bulls with the strong bulls. Their land will be drenched in blood and their dusty soil saturated with fat. For it will be the day of the revenge of the LORD, the year of the reckoning to the trial of Sion.
Amos 1:11,12	Thus the LORD says: Because of three transgressions of Edom, yes, because of four, I will not come back to it, because he pursued his brother with the sword and destroyed his mercy, because his wrath always shredded and he cherished his resentment forever. Therefore, I will cast fire in Teman; That will consume the palaces of Bosra.
Jeremiah 49:20-22	Therefore, hear the lord's council decision that He has taken on Edom, and His plans he has devised against the inhabitants of Teman: Indeed, the lesser of the flock will drag them away! One will destroy their place of residence above them! From the sound of their fall the earth trembles, the screams – at the Red Sea the sound of it is heard. Behold, like an eagle, he rises, he floats, spreads his wings over Bosra. The heart of Edom's heroes will be on that day as the heart of a woman in distress.
Psalms 137:7	LORD, think of the Edomites, of the day that Jerusalem fell, when they said, "Take down, take down that city, down to its foundations!"
Obadiah 1:1-4	The vision of Obadiah. Thus the Lord says of Edom: A message we have heard from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the pagan peoples: Rise up! Let us stand up to Edom in battle! See, I have made you small among the pagan peoples; You will be deeply despised. The hubris of your heart has deceived you, he who dwells in the rock gorges, in his high abode, he who says in his heart: Who will bring me down to the earth? Even if you raised yourself like an eagle, and even if you built your nest among the stars, hence I would bring you down, the LORD says.
Malachi 1:1-5	I have loved you, says the LORD, but you say, "What have you loved us for?" Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother? speaks the LORD. Yet I have loved Jacob, and Esau I have hated. I have made his mountains a wasteland, and have given up his hereditary property to the jackals of the desert. Although Edom says, If we are destroyed, we will rebuild the ruins, the LORD of the armed forces says this: Will it build, I will break down, and one will call them: Godless territory, and: The people upon which the LORD is enchanted forever. Your own eyes will see it, and you will say for yourself: Great is the LORD, beyond the borders of Israel!

Edom in the Seir mountains.



The people Edom lived in the Seir Mountains.

That area of Edom lies south-east of the Dead Sea. God does not appeal to the people of Edom at first. That only happens in the last verse where the name Edom falls. Ezekiel must initially turn against the Seir mountains where that people live. Ezekiel 35:1,2 *The word of the LORD came to me: Human child, turn your gaze to the Seir Mountains and prophesy against it.* People who know make it clear that there is a strong similarity between Ezekiel 35 and 36. At the beginning of chapter 36, the Prophet must address the mountains of Israel. Edom wanted to take the mountains of Israel for himself. When the people of Israel were in exile, they saw their opportunity. But instead of taking possession of the mountains of Israel, they will lose their own mountain land. Ezekiel 35:3 *Say to it: This is how the Lord says: Behold, I will fight you, Seir mountains! I will extend my hand to you and turn you into an abandoned wasteland.* If there is already talk of the mountains of Israel, so much more you can talk about the mountains of Seir. Especially since many of the inhabitants of that country had carved houses in the mountains. It is still a landmark for contemporary tourism. The houses – and other buildings carved in the mountains – are still there. But there is no trace of the people of Edom. Not only are the houses in the mountains without inhabitants, but cities like Dedan and Bosra have been completely wiped out. That's what God's going to do, too. He lets them say it by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 35:4 *Of your cities I will make a mess, and you will become a wasteland for yourself. Then you will know that I am the LORD.* The people of Edom have taken away the blood under the fingernails from the LORD. Whoever comes to Israel comes to God. Perhaps someone remembers how angry God was at Amalek who, during the Exodus, attacked Israel from behind, where the women and children were walking. Deuteronomy 25:17,18 Furious was God. God's first order for King Saul was to exercise the spell over Amalek. God may see it for a while, but He does not forget what people have done to His people. Sooner or later, the consequences must be borne. It never buttered up between Edom and Israel. God speaks of an 'eternal enmity'. By comparing what other prophets – Obadiah for example – tell about Edom, a sharper picture of the situation that has angered the LORD. Obadiah 1:10-12 *Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, shame will cover you and you will be exterminated forever. On the day you stood aside, on the day that strangers took his army away as prisoners, foreigners entered his gates and threw fate over Jerusalem, you too were one of them! You should not have watched your brother's day, the day he was a stranger to you. You should not have been happy because of the Judeans on the day of their demise.* Especially the fact that this is a fraternal people is heavily charged to them. You wouldn't expect that from a people descended from the same father – Izaak. Certainly, God hurts Israel too. But there was a reason. The people of Israel had sinned heavily against Him. The punishment couldn't last. But that is no reason for Edom to belittle and damage Israel. Ezekiel 35:5 *Because you have eternal enmity and you caused the Israelites to crash by the violence of the sword in the time of their demise, in the time of utter iniquity.*

Say to it: So the Lord says, Behold, I will fight with you, Seir mountains!



Edom's name is red as blood.

It is not, of course, the association of the color of blood, but the bloody action of Edom against the Jews at the fall of Jerusalem, which has caused God's wrath. Ezekiel 35:6 *Therefore, where I live, the Lord speaks: Surely, I will make you blood, and blood will haunt you. Because you didn't hate the bloodshed, blood will haunt you.* It may have taken a little longer than the Bible reader would expect, but a few centuries later, there was not much left of the people of Edom. The area where this people lived is – with the most soothing – totally desert. Instead of their aspirations – to take the land that the people inhabited Israel – they lost their own habitat. Ezekiel 35:7 *I will make the Seir Mountains an abandoned wasteland, and I will exterminate out who passes through it or who returns.* The people of Edom are not slowly but surely extinct, but decimated in the way of wars until there was hardly anyone left. The name Edom will therefore be searched in vain in the list of peoples. Ezekiel 35:8 *I will fill his mountains with his fallen. On your hills, in your valleys and at all your streams of water, there will lie those who fell by the sword.* When the king of Prussians was asked about a proof of God, he said, "The people of Israel." The king was deeply impressed that the Jewish people still existed after so many attempts to make it disappear from the face of the earth. The Egyptians had tried to exterminate the Jewish people by drowning all Jewish boys in the Nile. Exodus 1:22 Haman had declared in Persian time a day when the Jews – whom he had declared outlaw – could be killed anywhere in the empire. Esther 7:4 Also that attack against God's people failed. Edom therefore belongs almost in this list of enemy of Israel. Not so long ago – 1940-45 – Germany showed an extraordinarily dark side. Hitler also tried with his 'Endlösung der Judenfrage.' Fortunately, after five years, the LORD has put a stop to the extermination of His people. In the meantime, the Jews were doing reasonably well at times, but often a bitter fate awaited them in the ghettos where these people had been stowed away. But in 1948 the State of Israel was proclaimed and the Jewish people – the descendants of Israel – reside in the land that God has granted them since Abraham. The Jewish people are still there, there is no sign of Israel's neighbors, such as Edom and Ammon and Moab and Tyrus and Sidon. Ezekiel 35:9 *I will make you eternal wastelands, your cities will no longer be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.* A few centuries later there are still some remnants of Edom to be found, but his role is finally played out. With – someone from the family of David – Zerubbabel, the fulfillment of God's promise takes place when Israel returns to its own country after the exile. With Zerubbabel as city-holder and Joshua, as high priest, the Jewish people of after the exile settled in and around Jerusalem. The first fulfillment of this prophecy lies in the fifth century BC. Then the Jewish people were allowed by the Persian King Cyrus/Kores to return from exile to their own country and rebuild Jerusalem – city and temple. To give an indication: The second temple was finished in 515 BC.

Then they will know that I am with them and that they are My people, Israel, the Lord says.



Nations claiming Israel's birthright.

The people of Edom have tried to get their hands on the birthright that went to Jacob = Israel. They did so by occupying the land of Israel to a large extent during the time when Israel was in exile. God did not thank them, they have had to take this action seriously. They lost their people existence because of this. A similar situation may also be in our time. In the time when the Jewish people had been exiled from Jerusalem and its surroundings – since the year 70 AD after the destruction by the Roman general Titus – other peoples have settled in that area. It is mainly the peoples who later worshiped Islam, claiming that their Prophet Muhammad has gone to heaven from Jerusalem. The Arab peoples that are concerned are largely descended from Ismael, the son of Abraham, whom he fathered with his slave Hagar. Here, too, God has drawn a clear dividing line. By having Hagar sent away with her son, the LORD chose Abraham and Sara and their son Izaak, from whom the people of Israel later emerged through his son Jacob. In the Koran, the book of Islam, we see the name Ismael – not only – large parts of Biblical history such as many sermons about Joseph, but also Moses and David and even Jesus – Isa – we come across in the Koran. The Koran says that it is not Isaak but Ismael that is 'the son of promise'. In this way, the commitment of God for Isaak is involved in Ismael. Ismael and not Isaak would also have been almost sacrificed by Abraham. The Islamic Feast of Sacrifice is descended from this. It is especially the name *Ismael* that is remarkable in relation to the claim of the Palestinians – that it is their land – and the Claim of the Muslims to Jerusalem, which is 'their holy city'. Their Dome of the Rock was built on the temple square where the temple of the God of Israel stood, on the rock where Abraham Isaak wanted to sacrifice. It is – in biblical view – the land of Israel, the inheritance that God bestowed upon them. Again, there seems to be a fraternal dispute similar to what took place in the past between Jacob and Esau, or Israel and Edom.

Ishmael in Islam (Wikipedia) In Islam,

Ismail is a prophet and messenger sent by God to the people of the Hijaz. According to Islamic tradition and Arabic genealogy scholars, Ismail was the ancestor of the Arab people and also the ancestor (via Kedar and Adnan) of Muhammad. According to Islamic traditions, Ismail was almost sacrificed by Ibrahim, but saved at the very last. In the Hadith, Ismail is mentioned by Muhammad as his son of sacrifice. Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son to God is celebrated by Muslims every year during the Feast of Sacrifice.

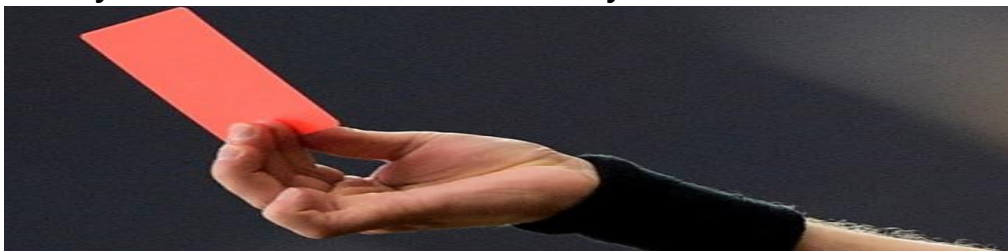
The land of Israel is the inheritance of the people of Israel.



Edom wants the land that God has given to Israel and Judah.

The devil of this chapter is in the tail. Towards the end of Ezekiel 35 we notice the underlying motives of Edom. Why did they provide it on the land of the people of Israel? They make it clear that they have provided it on Israel's territory. After the exile of Jerusalem and Judah – the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already gone into exile a century earlier – they want to seize both the territory of the Northern Empire and the land of Judah. From the way they say that it is to be seen that there is something that can be countered. Namely? It is not the land of Israel, but the land of God. He is the Owner, who makes the land available to His people Israel. Edom doesn't seem too impressed. They don't care if God is there or not. They want to take that land for themselves, and they will. Ezekiel 35:10 *Because you say, Those two nations, and those two countries, will belong to me, we will take possession of them, even if the LORD is there.* There is not a shred of respect for the people of Israel. That in itself might still be understandable because of the many abuses in the people of God. But even the fact that one gets the Name of the God of Israel through the mud, that goes a long way. The reason is clear. One is still jealous that God has chosen Jacob and Esau has not. With Jacob, God moved on. Not with Esau. Jacob received not only the promise of a great people, but also of his own country, the promised land. Apparently, this has hurt Esau so much that it still bothers his offspring. In fact, they're talking NB about hereditary property. They take over ownership of Israel – their land – as hereditary property. In other words, at the end of the day, they take the full price of the election for their realization. Why Israel, What do you mean, "God of Israel?" They were always out for revenge. They have left it unused for times, but now they see their chance to avenge themselves on the people and on God. Their intention is to draw a long nose to God and Israel. What do you mean, election? Well, they're going to make God and His people look at their noses ugly. But that kite doesn't fly. God personally puts a stop to it. Ezekiel 35:11 *Therefore, where I live, the Lord speaks: I shall act in accordance with your wrath and in accordance with your envy, with which you have acted out of your hatred of them. I will make myself known among them when I judge you.* Someone will say that the people of Edom probably weren't doing that at all. Some of them will have seen their chances clear when the city of Jerusalem fell and the land was wiped clean. But that's wrong. People were definitely working on it, stronger it was the talk of the town. One said in Edom to each other: 'They are devastated. Now the land is ours.' People were talking about it. The hatred and jealousy against the people of Israel – the descendants of Jacob – splattered away from it. Ezekiel 35:12 *Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all your insults that you have spoken to the mountains of Israel: They have been destroyed, given us food.* It has already been said that the people of Israel still exist; stronger it's back on home soil. While the people and the land of Edom have disappeared from the face of the earth. That is the result of their own intentions. What Edom thought Israel was doing, that returns – by the LORD, the God of Israel – like a boomerang on their own heads. Edom will be completely destroyed. Not Israel but Edom will leave history. Ezekiel 35:14,15 *So the Lord says: To the delight of all the earth, I will make you a wasteland. In accordance with your joy at the hereditary possession of the house of Israel, because it has been destroyed, so shall I do to you. You, Seir Mountains and all of Edom, will become a wasteland! Then they will know that I am the LORD.*

Edom, you will become a wasteland! Then they will know that I am the LORD.



The second attachment point for the Biblical Future Is the people of Israel.

Israel is the chosen people. That is what God emphasizes in Ezekiel 35. It is wise to respect that place of God's people. The people Edom didn't do that. On the contrary, they have done everything in their power to diminish Israel's preferred position. God did not thank them. The rest is history and that history teaches that the people of Edom are no longer found among the nations. What remains is a tourist attraction in places like Petra. It is also very important for us – who are concerned with the implementation of the future expectations – to recognize Israel's first place. If we are honest, Ezekiel's expectation of the future focuses solely on Israel, the ancient people of God. The promises are for them. It's about their country, their city, their people and their life with God. In fact, the paradisiacal situation of the new earth is drawn, on which Israel remains protected from attacks by the peoples and of the wild animals. God has a covenant of peace with them, so that they live safely and in peace with each other and with God. Also, God, who lives in their midst – with His protective and blessing hand – ensures that sun and rain and harvests contribute to a life of prosperity in the future. It is not insignificant to see how concrete and earthly the future is for God's people. It is about real people, who are farmers or fishermen and who eat and drink and live with each other and with God in their midst in a good relationship. Israel's preferred position may also be difficult for us. We think, "And where are we? – the believers from – the nations. Do we also appear in this picture?" Indeed, not or hardly. It's Israel before and Israel after. But there's a lucky one. Further on, we will see that Ezekiel's future is about the new Jerusalem. What we see in Ezekiel is the tangible and visible side of the story. Fortunately, in Revelation 21, God shows the spiritual dimension of that city and has made room for the believers of the nations.

Paradise (visible and tangible) and the new Jerusalem (spiritual dimension)



Judeo-Christian future expectations Ezekiel.

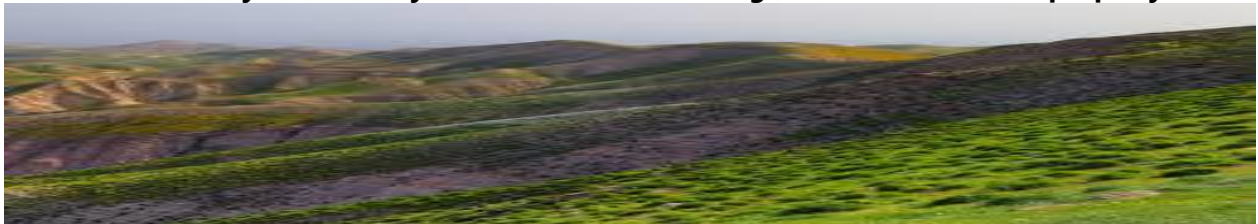
B. Ezekiel 36, 37

The neighboring people had taken possession of the land Israel.

After the fall of Jerusalem, the LORD looks to the future He has with the people of Israel. God still has big plans for His people. Those plans affect both promises of country and people. To start with the country. Perhaps the people thought that the area where Israel lived – when that people were in exile – belonged to no one, but they are wrong about that. God has given the land to His people of Israel. It is not for nothing that the LORD is talking about 'the mountains of Israel.' The people of Israel may be absent for a while, but they remain the legitimate owner of the area. Ezekiel 36:1 *And you, child of man, prophesy against the mountains of Israel, and say: Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD!* Before God comes to promises for Israel, He must first free the

land from the people who have taken it. The country of Israel is not in a good shape at all. Among the nations, apparently, the rule applies: "Risen, place perished." The people of Israel had not yet been exiled, or other peoples claimed to be the new owner of Israel's mountains. They had intended to stay there forever. As soon as they lived there, they called it a hereditary property. They would live there and their children and the children of their children would live there for ever. But that expectation is immediately crushed by God. Ezekiel 36:2 *So says the Lord LORD: Because the enemy has said about you: Haha! Even the eternal heights have made us hereditary property.* The area of Israel was certainly not empty after the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile. The stragglers were struggling. They were extremely vulnerable. People went over the tongue. The respect that once was there for Israel – and especially for the God of Israel for whom one was in awe – had turned into contempt and ridicule among the neighboring peoples. It was believed that the people of Babel had also taken away the God of Israel. In addition, the surrounding peoples had – as I said – foreseen it on their land. The Jews who were left behind had to flee or be killed. God has charged those neighboring people extremely heavily. In order to dislodge such a vulnerable minority, the LORD did not have a good word for it. God had seen this. Ezekiel 36:3 *Prophesy, therefore, and say: So the Lord LORD says: Therefore, because you have been destroyed and swallowed from all around, so that you became a hereditary possession for the remnant of the nations, you went over the tongue and there was an evil rumor among the people.*

Because the enemy said about you, "Even the eternal heights have become our property."

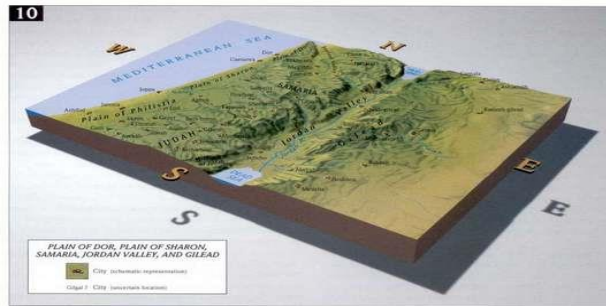


The neighbors have to make a sour.

This time, God is not angry with His country or His people, but at the neighboring peoples. Those peoples had nothing to do there. That land belonged to Israel. They should have respected the existing borders and supported the Jews left behind instead of handing them over to their enemy or – at worst – even killing them. Not only does God not have a good word for it, but His decision to punish those nations is certain. They will suffer the consequences of their actions themselves. Ezekiel 36:7 *Therefore, so says the Lord: I have sworn: Indeed, the pagan peoples who are around you will bear their own shame!* In the Biblical Future Expectations, we look for the near and distant future. This is now clearly an expectation that will be fulfilled in the near future. In 605 BC, the first group of exiles was taken to Babel. From 539 BC, the Jewish people received permission from the Medial/Persian monarch Kores to return to their own country and rebuild the city of Jerusalem and restore the temple service for the God of Israel. From that moment on, the Jewish people regained the land of Israel that God had assigned to them as their inheritance. In the meantime, the peoples who had settled in that country had to go back to their own land when Israel was allowed by the world leader Kores to resettle in their own country. Peoples like Edom had to withdraw. Yet, according to the history books, it takes until the second century BC for the people of Edom to cease to exist altogether. Meanwhile, history has moved on and in the year 70 AD there has been a second destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple. That was when the Roman Titus destroyed Jerusalem. The Jews were driven into the diaspora. This became even worse after the Bar Kochba uprising in 132 AD. From then on it was forbidden for people of Jewish background to live in Jerusalem. The name of Jerusalem was changed to Aelia Capitolina. Although it has taken about two thousand years, the question is whether God's thoughts have changed at this point. The country is and remains Israel's. They are the spiritual heirs. It is not surprising that the right to return since 1948 has given the Jewish community a foothold in Israel.

Even Jerusalem has come within their borders. The Jewish State controls a part of the land that, according to the God of the Bible, belongs to the Jewish people.

Indeed, in the fire of My after-zeal, I have spoken to the remnant of the pagan peoples.



God turns first to Israel, then to the nations, and then to Israel again.

What we can learn from this Bible part is that the return of the people of Israel to the land of Israel has always been one of the promises of the New Covenant. For the feeling of the Church, there are two promises of the New Covenant for this life – the atonement of sins and the Holy Spirit – and two for future life – resurrection and eternal life. This is not entirely correct. Two promises are missing, namely those of the land and people for the Jewish people. We can learn that from these chapters of Ezekiel, but also from Jeremiah 31:31ev, which is also about the New Covenant. The New Testament also assumes that God will not let go of His plans with Israel – land and people. It is true, God has punished His people with scattering worldwide because they have quite massively rejected the Messiah Jesus and also showed no openness to the Gospel. From the beginning, however, it was clear that God would turn again to His old people and that history would end with that people. That promise – that the hardening of Israel would be temporary in nature – we read, for example, in Romans 11:25 *For I do not want, brethren, that you have no knowledge of this mystery (lest you be wise in your own mind), that some of it has hardened over Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has entered.* The Lord Jesus also indicates in Luke 21 – in His speech on the last things – that the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people of Israel are 'until'. Luke 21:24 *And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are filled.* God has spent a long time in favor of the conversion of the nations, but will eventually return to His people Israel. The fullness of the number of believers from the Gentiles plays an important role in this. That – the change of nations to the people of Israel – is a given we can also notice in Revelation 7. We see the entry of the believers from the nations. Revelation 7:9 *After this I saw and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from all nations, tribes, nations, and languages, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clad in white robes and palm branches in their hand.* However, before the believers from the nations of God's realm are introduced into heaven, God turns to the twelve tribes of Israel. Revelation 7:4 *And I heard the number of those who were sealed: one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed from all the tribes of the Israelites.* It's a changing of the guard. God turns to His old people Israel towards the end of time. The time of (partial) hardening is over. There is still room – for the people who complete the number of Israel – to accept the Gospel and enter God's Kingdom. What we are stressing at the moment is that the land of Israel – as evidenced by what God says to Edom – will always remain the property of Israel, despite the fact that because of God's anger they have had to leave their land for centuries. God promises the people of Israel in Ezekiel that it will return to its own country. Some people wonder how often this will happen, because the Jewish exiles have already returned in 539 BC. For this reason, it is in a sense rejoicing that we are witnessing the

second diaspora period in the Bible. It is Christ who has foretold the destruction of the city and temple – and therefore the scattering of the Jewish population across this world.

Mark 13:1,2 *And when He left the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, look, what a stone and what a building! And Jesus replied to him: Do you see these great buildings? There will not be one stone left on the other stone that will not be broken down.* This prophecy took place in the year 70 AD, when the Roman Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem. In addition to the destruction of the city and temple and the diaspora of the Jewish people, as has been said, it is also clear from the New Testament that God has set a return to the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem in the offing. In this sense, 1948 is not surprising, although the absence of the Jewish people in their own country lasted for as much as 2000 years.

Jerusalem 2000 BC - 70 AD.



Rome 70 - 1948 AD



Jerusalem 1948 -



New promises for the country of Israel.

Not only does God open His heart again to the people of Israel – about which later – but that same favorable fate falls to the country. At the end of the day, God turns the buttons on nature. When He closes the button, the country does not yield what one might expect from it. The harvests leave a lot to be desired. If people don't change their lives, they may be ravaged by famine. Some people compare God – as far as nature is concerned – to a clockmaker. God made the clock. The movement would propel itself. Thus, God would keep himself away from all developments in nature, which are beneficial or unfavorable to all that lives. But the idea of the clockmaker does not match the revelation of the God of the Bible. The Bible draws the LORD as the God Who is not only the Creator of heaven and earth, but also the Maintainer. "He awakens the sun every day," sings a Psalm. According to the Bible, there is undeniably a relationship between blessings on the land and life according to God's commandments of God's people. When the people leave God, the consequences can be seen from nature and the yield of the farmland. The only standard is the Revelation of God. When one is clearly different from the Revelation, that is certainly a bad sign. When a movement of faith waste from the God of the Bible is experienced worldwide, it should come as no surprise that the climate is also changing.

Nature says something.

For example, when everyone – who thinks they know it – claims that we are dealing with climate change in our time, one may sometimes put the lives of the peoples along the yardstick of God's values; in other words, measure by the revelation. When – as is the case in the Western world – there is a sharp decline in the Christian faith, one may look up in the face of an apparant change in nature, but also around him. It fits with the Biblical image that in such a case, God makes nature function less well. Measures to have a positive impact on the development of the climate, for example by reducing CO2 emissions or nitrogen may not be insignificant, but the conversion of the peoples is of greater importance to change nature in a positive sense.

Not only the people but also the land of Israel is included in God's promise.

When we look at the past – the time when Israel was in exile – God comes with a great promise both for land and people. Both will flourish again. The beneficial change in nature precedes the profound change of the heart and the S/spirit of the people. Isn't that great?! It is certainly true that God had turned nature from maximum to minimal, when the people turned away from God. Before there is a restoration of relations, God agrees that He will give nature its full force of growth again. Ezekiel 36:8 *And you, mountains of Israel, you will bring forth your branches and bear your fruits for My people Israel, for they are approaching.* With a certain right, we can compare God to the sun. If the sun doesn't show itself, nature will languish. There is little or no way to grow when the sun is in hiding. But when the sun breaks through the clouds or stronger – after the winter – comes more above us and closer then a new season can arrive. Spring breaks out in all sorts of green on the trees and in all colors from purple to yellow in flowers and plants. God may be comparable to the sun, but in reality His people are much better off when the LORD says that He will turn to the people. God finally left the temple. We read that in Ezekiel. But He won't stand aside. Contrary. The LORD is also returning to His people.

And you, mountains of Israel, you will bring forth bear your fruits for My people Israel.

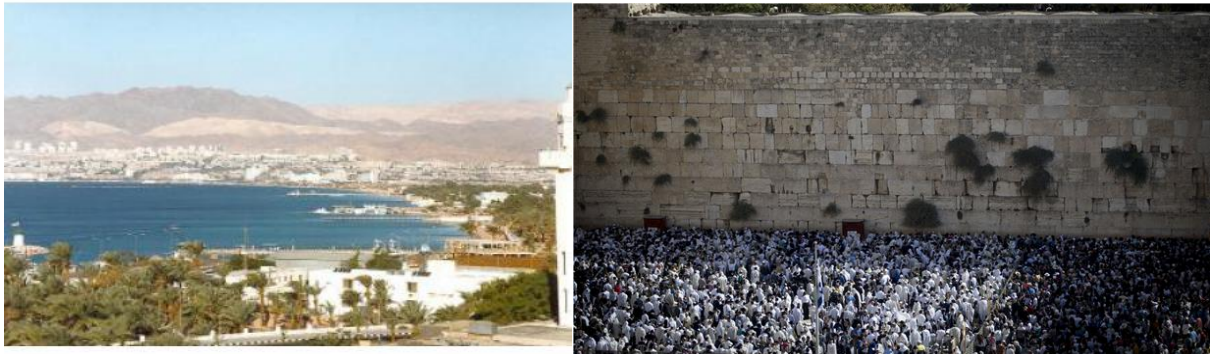


God is coming back and so are the people of Israel.

It makes sense that the land will be processed again and new seed with a wide bow through the hand of the sower will move in the direction of the ground. Ezekiel 36:9 *For behold, I will come to you, I will turn to you, and you will be edited and dotted.* Remarkable is not only the turn of God to the land, but also the people has come back. We can tell from editing and sowing. It is the people of Israel who carry out this work. The cooperation of God and man will become fully visible again in the future. The man who ploughs and settles the ground and who – with more or less precision – lays the seed in the earth. Man somehow also belongs to the mountains and the land. Man is also part of nature. Man belongs to the country as the country is inextricably linked to man. Man with its culture to agricultural methods and building art. The Israelites will return to their villages and towns and rebuild them. Ezekiel 36:10 *I will make the people on you numerous, all the house of Israel, in its entirety. The cities will be inhabited and the ruins will be rebuilt.* Believe that the people of Israel have been dealt a blow by the exile. Psychologically, socially, socially but certainly also in terms of number. If we read that in the end, some 700 people were removed from Jerusalem – after the fall of the city – that is nothing compared to the tens of thousands of inhabitants who populated Jerusalem in good times. The people of Israel have been fairly decimated in exile. But God is the promise to Abraham – of a crowd as numerous as the stars and grains of sand on the shore of the sea. Genesis 15:5 – not forgotten. Once again that promise of breaking out falls into crowd. The LORD is even more promising. Ezekiel 36:11 *I will make man and animal on you numerous, they will become numerous and fruitful. I will make you inhabit as in your former times, yes, I will do you more good than in your beginnings. Then you will know that I am the LORD.* Before we now think that the LORD has moved from a prophecy about the land of

Israel to a prophecy about the people of Israel, it becomes clear that it is still about the land when we hear that 'the people will walk over you'.

Land and people Israel.



No more famine.

The LORD immediately says who they are, so that there can be no misunderstanding as to which people are walking on the land of Israel; the people of Israel, of course. Not people from Edom or any other neighbor. The people of Israel will take possession of the land. They will inhabit it and the land will pass from parents to children. It's their hereditary property. There is something more to add; The country will not turn against them again as it has done before. Ezekiel 36:12 *I will make people walk over you, namely My people Israel. They will take you in possession, you will be hereditary property for them, and you will no longer deprive them of children.* Because the neighbors are choking on jealousy, they pay very close attention to things that go wrong in the land of Israel. Because of the setbacks, the country of Israel was thus given a bad name. The country would devour people in the sense that "it does not provide life and prosperity, but rather adversity and death." It is not clear what we are referring to, but since a later promise excludes famine for the future, it could be that crop failures and drought gave rise to this hope. God wants to put a definitive end to the backslapping and false rumors that were circulating over the mountains of Israel. He agrees that it will no longer prevent the country from turning against its own people, so to speak. It is clear to the Bible reader that the country does not have the ability to deliver a good or a bad product, but that God is behind it. In the chapter on blessing and curse, it is well explained that the curse of God turns the land of milk and honey into his opposite. Deuteronomy 28:15-19 In that sense – in the light of the sin and persistence of the people – it is not so strange that the country did not do what was expected of it. But that's going to change according to the promise of God. Ezekiel 36:13,14 *So the Lord says: Because they say to you, You are a devourer of man, and you are a land that robs your peoples of children, so you will no longer devour a man and stop robbing your peoples of children, the Lord says.* Because not only the land, but also the people of God are undergoing a profound change for the better, the relationship of the people of Israel with God will never again fall to zero. On the contrary, when it is the people's turn, it will become clear what the LORD has in store to turn the seemingly incurable disobedience and sin of its people into righteousness and holiness. Ezekiel 36:15 *I will no longer hear the defamation of the pagans about you, and you will no longer bear the shame of the nations. You will not make your nations stumble again, the Lord says.*

My people Israel, says the LORD.



Christians may know that God punishes Israel – and therefore them also – when necessary.

Twice the LORD has punished Israel: The Northern Kingdom of Israel in the exile to Assur in 722 BC and Judah with the exile to Babel in 586 BC. It was a judgment of the sins of the people of Israel that, for its part, had broken the covenant with God. The punishment for Israel has damaged the standing of the God of Israel. Not only the judgment of 586 BC, but also that of 70 AD has been announced by the Bible. The latter still by the Lord Jesus Himself. God had Jerusalem destroyed in 70 AD because the Jewish people had not accepted Christ Jesus as Messiah. The Lord Jesus said the following in Mark 13:1,2 *And when He left the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, look, what a stone and what a building!" And Jesus replied to him: Do you see these great buildings? There will not be one stone left on the other stone that will not be broken down.* The exile of the Jewish people lasted the first time for 70 years. In 539 BC, permission was given to return. The second exile – or diaspora, as it is also called – lasted until 1948 BC. After some 2000 years, the Jewish people were allowed to return to the land God had given them. God does it for His own name, not because the people have changed their position and recognized what had gone wrong. For the (Christians from) the peoples it is good to take note of this history. In the New Testament, we become aware of the righteous nature of our God. God loves the sinner, but hates sin. God often makes it feel when His children cross the line. Paul makes us feel something of this in a rather comprehensive section of 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 *And I do not want, brethren, that you have no knowledge that our fathers were all under the cloud and all have gone through the sea, and that all have been baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all have eaten the same spiritual food, and all have drunk the same spiritual drink. They drank from a spiritual rock, which followed them; and that rock was Christ. But in most of them, God has not had a good time, for they have been settled in the desert. And these things have happened as examples for us, lest we desire evil things, as they too have longed. And do not become idolaters like some of them, as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink, and they stood up to party. And let us not forage, as some of them have foraged, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell. And let us not ask Christ, as some of them have called for Him and died by the snakes. And don't mor, as some of them have spilled and died by the far away. All these things now have come to them as examples for us, and they have been described as warning to us about who has come to the end of the ages. Therefore, whoever thinks they stand, let him be careful not to fall.* It may increase the awe of the God of Israel when we see that the LORD is a righteous God who does not let sin and the apostasy of faith pass over his side, but also that He is faithful to His eternal promises and will save the elect to the last man, woman, and child. In this sense, Paul uses it as well – the history of the people of Israel with all its ups and downs as a warning to us believers from the nations. The

Old Testament testifies to incomprehension of the nations, but once incorporated into God's people, the faithful non-Jews will recognize the righteousness and holiness of God.



God punishes the son he loves.

Christians may know that God gives His people Israel – at the end of time – another chance.

God is taking the derision of the nations, but the LORD is not finished with His people. He spares them because He still has big plans for the future. It is possible that the LORD is despised for the harsh approach of His people. So be it. However, when He brings them back to their land and gives them a different mentality, the nations will start to think differently of Him. Ezekiel 36:21 *But I spared them because of My holy name. The house of Israel had desecrated it among the pagan peoples to which they had gone.* However, one thing Israel must remember. God does not do it because they have behaved so nicely, nor because they have come to understand and want otherwise themselves; No, God only does it for Himself. The reasons – for the salvation of His people – are not found in His people, but in Himself. It is About the Name and honor of God. This is particularly beneficial not only for the people of Israel, but also, remarkably, for the people of the nations. When people look down on the people of Israel and speak in a negative way about the God of Israel, they will make little use of it to believe in God. But if God stays true to His people and from them and by them brings salvation to man in general, then the people of other nations may also come closer and possibly join that new movement, with that new people with that new mentality. Ezekiel 36:22 *Therefore say to the house of Israel: So the Lord lord says: I do it not for you, house of Israel, but for My holy name, which you have desecrated among the pagan peoples you have gone to.* The LORD is not impervious to 'what people say about it'. Moses, for example, used this as an argument to keep the LORD from His wrath against the people of Israel. Exodus 32:12 *Why would the Egyptians say, "With evil intentions, He led them out to kill them in the mountains and destroy them from the face of the earth?" Let go of your burning wrath, and repent of evil for your people.* God had to watch His good name, Moses thought. "A good name is better than oil," says the book Proverbs. As we have seen, it was apparently not only about God's people of Israel, but also about the peoples that God wanted to reach through His people with the Gospel. God liked that those people respected Him and looked up to Him. That would help to get them involved later. Ezekiel 36:23 *I will sanctify My great Name, who has been desecrated among the pagan peoples, whom you have desecrated in their midst. Then the people of the heathens will know that I am the LORD, the Lord says, when I am sanctified before them in your eyes.* Perhaps the LORD is also referring here to the final phase of history in which He will turn again to His old people. God agrees to remove the partial hardening – which He has laid over Israel because of their disbelief – at some point. That moment is a turning-point in the history of salvation. Up until that moment, God had shown His gracious Face to all the (other) peoples in the

world. The moment these peoples forget that they were born of grace and look down upon the Jewish people – with all the consequences – God will, as I said, turn again to his old people. Christians are happy with that when it's right. We grant the Jewish people faith in the Lord Jesus and salvation by His Name. We give them this last chance wholeheartedly and hope and pray that many have taken the outstretched hand from God.

I will bring you together from all the countries. Then I will take you to your country.



The land of Israel is part of the promise of The New Covenant.

The first act by which God pays tribute is the return of Israel to the country of origin. Understandable. While not much remained of the surrounding peoples as a people, it is remarkable that God is faithful to His people through thick and thin. He may then crack down on the people of Israel, but in the end it comes from love to teach those people a different attitude that can save them. In any case, it is extremely surprising to see the people of Israel return to the land God gave them after 2000 years in 1948. The surrounding Islamic peoples have not only seen this with great eyes, but for them it is nothing short of shocking. With the construction of the Al Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, they thought they had obliterated once and for all the memory of the God of Israel. But now they have to see with their own eyes that the people of Israel are now the rich possessor, not only of a large part of the country but also of the eternal city of Jerusalem with the temple mount on it. The only thing missing is the rebuilding of the temple. Ezekiel 36:24 *I will take you out of the pagan peoples and bring you together from all the countries. Then I will take you to your country.* Not Edom is the chosen son, nor is Ismael, but Jacob. And the land of Israel will forever be Israel's. It's the inheritance they got from God.

Israel and the peoples.



God will cleanse His people of sin.

We do not want to forget: The land of Israel – and the return of the Jewish community to its country of origin – is also part of the commitments of the New Covenant. But then unmistakably

the Atonement or the cleansing of sins follows. As with the land, man must first be delivered from the wrong – the sins – before he can participate in the good – the Holy Spirit. After all, one must first demolish the ruin before the construction of the new house can begin. Something is taken away – the iniquities – before something is added, the Holy Spirit. The old man must die then the new man can come to life. Symbol for the cleaning stands the water. Holy Baptism says, "As the water washes the dirt, so we are cleansed of our sins by the blood of Christ. But it is also said – in line with the sacrament of Holy Baptism: As surely when the water washes the dirt, we are so surely cleansed by the blood of Christ of our sins. That is the promise of the New Covenant. Ezekiel 36:25 *I will sprinkle pure water on you and you will be pure. Of all your impurities and of all your stink gods, I will cleanse you.* In Judaism, there is also a wash. One even has a ritual bath for it, the Mikwa. When a non-Jew converts to Judaism, he or she is cleansed in this bath. The priests – Aaron and his sons – also had to be washed before they were held in office. In front of the temple was the copper laundry barrel in which the priests had to wash their hands and feet before entering the temple. Exodus 40:30-32 *Then he placed the laundry barrel between the tent of encounter and the altar, and he put water in it to wash.* Moses, Aaron and his sons wash their hands and their feet. Each time they entered the tent of encounter and approached the altar, they washed themselves, as the LORD had commanded Moses. In Judaism, therefore, one was/is certainly familiar with the ritual cleansing by water. Water has a religious meaning in addition to a household. One normally washed his hands of dirt, but in religious terms God cleaned with the water of the washing barrel the person also of sins. Yet it is undeniable that this water – with which God promises to cleanse the believer of sin – refers to holy baptism as we know it from the New Testament as a ritual by which the believer is absorbed into the Christian community, the people of God. John the Baptist – note his name – paved the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. When John was baptized, the Spirit had not yet poured out.

I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. The Mikwa.



God will bestow the Holy Spirit on His people.

Christian Baptism is not just a baptism of 'cleansing sins'. By the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, God cleanses the person of sin, but also works out the new life in him/her through the Holy Spirit. John, the Evangelist often talks about water and Spirit in this respect. John 3:5 *Jesus replied, "Indeed, I tell you, If one is not born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."* In his first letter, he repeats this insight. 1 John 5:7,8 *For three are witnesses in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; And these three are one. And three are witnesses on the earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; And these three are one.* The Apostle Paul calls the Holy Baptism the bath

of rebirth. Titus 3:4,5 *But when the benefactory of God, our Beatitude, and His love appeared to the people, He made us blessed, not on the grounds of the works of righteousness that we would have done, but because of His mercy, through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.* Paul emphasizes that the old man, as it were, goes down in the water and dies, while the new man stands up from it through the Holy Spirit and lives. Compare Romans 6 – 8. The Lord convinced the Apostle Peter – in the situation with the Roman officer Cornelius – of the gift of the Atonement and the Holy Spirit to non-Jews, by giving that gift before those believers from the nations were baptized. Acts 10:44-48 *While Peter was still saying these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word. And the believers who were of circumcision, so many as had come with Peter, were beside themselves that the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles, for they heard them speak in foreign languages and make God great. Then Peter replied, "Can one sometimes ward off the water, so that these people, who, like us, have received the Holy Spirit, would not be baptized?" And he commanded that they be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay with them for a few days.* This promise is thus fulfilled in principle in the New Testament. That's not so crazy either, because New Testament can also be translated with New Covenant. The word testament has been chosen because the new covenant is one-sided, so to speak: the death of God's Son strikes us as children and heirs of God with the promise of reconciliation and renewal. Presumably, the book of Hebrews played an important role in the transition from the term covenant to testament. Hebrews 9:15-18 *And therefore He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that, now that death has taken place to atonement of the transgressions that were there under the first covenant, the called receive the promise of eternal inheritance. After all, where there is a will, there it is necessary that the death of the creator of the will be determined. Because a will is binding after someone's death. After all, it will never take effect as long as the creator of the will is still alive. Therefore, the first one is not consecrated without blood.* The word testament has been chosen because the new covenant is one-sided, so to speak: The death of God's Son strikes us as children and heirs of God with the promise of reconciliation and renewal.



The anointing/baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In addition to the atonement of sin, there is also the promise of the Holy Spirit. The people of Israel had not succeeded in obeying God. Of course, there are the exceptions that confirm the rule. Someone like King David is called *a man after God's heart*. He's a righteous man. Even people who come up with David's sins – the sin with Bathsheba and the counting of the army – know that he has expressed his regret and received appropriate punishment. David offers his heartfelt apologies in Psalm 51 and begs God not to take the Holy Spirit from him. Psalm 51:12,13 *Give me a pure heart, o God, and renew within a steadfast spirit. Do not reject me from before your face, and do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.* That prayer was quite understandable because God had taken his Spirit from King Saul, as he continued to sin. As anointed king, David was a Messiah who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. With the priest and the prophet, the king was the only person in the Empire who possessed such a special gift of spirit. They received The Spirit with the anointing/Messiah of their calling. That changed when the Lord Jesus Christ came. Jesus is the Christ/The Messiah (= Greek and Hebrew for Anointed). He Jesus united the three anointments in his person. He is our *eternal king* and our *only high priest* and our *highest prophet*. Peter tells us that the Lord Jesus was anointed at His baptism in the Jordan. Acts 10:37,38 *You know what happened throughout Judea, which began in Galilee after the baptism that John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with strength.* Because we have received the Holy Spirit as believers with the sacrament of Holy Baptism, we are called Christians (= Greek for anointed). Acts 11:26 It is this promise of the New Testament – the Holy Spirit – that Ezekiel points to after the cleansing of sins. Ezekiel 36:26 *Then I will give you a new heart and a new spirit within you. I will take the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh.* The Holy Spirit is none other than The Spirit of God Himself who dwells in us. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, the faithful are richly equipped for the new life as a (wo)man and as brothers and sisters, and as children of God. Thus, with the Spirit, we receive the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12 Galatians 3:22 *The fruit of the Spirit is, however, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.* So while there are many and beautiful extras that the believers receive thanks to the Holy Spirit of God, it is mainly about the new obedience. Ezekiel points to this in Ezekiel 36:27 *I will give My Spirit within you. I will make you walk in My Ordinances and you observe my provisions and keep them.* The Lord Jesus also defines us in the words of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:17,18 *Do not think That I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish it, but to fulfill it. For, indeed, I tell you, Until heaven and the earth pass, not one iota or one tittle of the Law will pass until it is all done.* The Apostle Paul also points out the profound change that the people of Thessalonica have undergone at this point. 1 Thessalonians 1:9,10 *For they themselves mention how much we have gained input from you and how you have converted from the idols to God to serve the living and true God, and to expect His Son from the heavens, whom He has raised from the dead, namely Jesus, who delivered us from the coming wrath.*

Spirit fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.



The people, with their new mentality, are also having an impact on the country.

The people and the country can change place. The country is inseparable from the people of Israel. The renewed state of the people's hearts is extremely good news for the country. Israel is God's people and He is their God. When the relationship between God and His people is good, the land will be good for them. For the country is – as we now know – animated by God. Ezekiel 36:28 *You will live in the land I have given your fathers, you will be a people to me, and I will be a God to you.* The fact that Israel shows a changed attitude towards God, they owe to God. He makes it possible by forgiving their sins and radically changing their mentality. This will have a favorable impact on the land and the yield of the harvest. They won't have to bite the wood again. Ezekiel 36:29 *I will deliver you from all your bad harvests. I will shout at the wheat, and I will do it much: I will not impose famine upon you.* Perhaps it was mainly the famine that the neighboring people used against Israel. The country would be bad for its people. For them, the famine was "the stick with which they could beat the dog." They ridiculed God and His people Israel with the disappointing harvests and the empty shelves on the market. But that would now be a thing of the past. The country would bear fruit. Ezekiel 36:30 *I will increase the fruit of the trees and the yield of the field, so that you will no longer receive the libel of the famine among the pagans.* There is another byproduct of salvation by God: repentance of sin. It is remarkable that it is not the judgment, but the restoration of promises and blessings that will bring the people to their senses. If they see how well they are at some point, they will break down and blame themselves for the past. How could they have done that? Why hadn't they been more obedient? How could they lose God – who had delivered them from Egypt and given them such a beautiful land – so much? With these and other thoughts one will torment one's because things have gone so wrong between God and His people. Ezekiel 36:31 *You will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good. You will be disgusted with your iniquities and for your atrocities.* If one of them came to the thought that God had changed in relation to them because of their merits, such a person has misunderstood very much. God does not do this because of things he found in His people, but He does this for Himself. He does it for the things he finds in Himself to mercy and atonement. There is little Israel can do. Contrary. Let them be deeply ashamed. Ezekiel 36:32 *I do not do it for your sake, speaks the Lord, let that be known to you. Shame on you and be disgraced because of your ways, home of Israel.*

You will live in the land I have given your father and be a people to me, and I a God to you.



God gives His people the will in the heart to pick up the thread again.

God promises that the cities will also be restored to full glory. All is forgiven and forgotten. The people of Israel are making a fresh start. This time better equipped than ever. Not only the sins have been forgiven, but with a new heart and a new Spirit within them, the people will also rebuild. Because one thing is clear. People are going to have to do it. They will have to feel like returning to their devastated land. They will have to get up every day to figure out how to restore those ruins. But it's not just a matter of having meaning or not. Here, too, God is involved. The atonement of sins will also unleash a new enthusiasm among the people to go back and take up the reconstruction of the country. Ezekiel 36:33 *Thus the Lord says: On the day I cleanse you of all*

your iniquities, I will inhabit the cities and the ruins will be rebuilt. Perhaps this is recognizable to believers that they tend to keep their home in good condition and solve the common problems. In such a situation, God and the people of Israel look forward to the day when it is 'ready'. The walls have been rebuilt, the gates can be closed and opened. The streets are orderly and the houses are nicely finished. After yesterday's devastation and rubble, it is pleasant to show the restored residences to the visitors who pass by. Ezekiel 36:34 *The devastated land will be cultivated, rather than being a wasteland before the eyes of all who pass through it.* The country will even evoke thoughts that only paradise can evoke. Not that anyone has been there, but this is what the garden of Eden must have looked like with trees and plants and chirping birds and flowers and a field land on which the wheat rustles in the wind. The people of Israel have known several times when it has returned to the land. Such a moment has been going on for some 70 years – after the submission to Babel – in 539 BC. The Jews received permission from Kores, the king of the Persians, to return home. Isaiah 45. Under the leadership of Zacharia and Haggai as prophets and Zerubbabel as stadholder and Joshua as high priest, the community will be encouraged to continue the rebuilding of the temple. Let's face it: one was cheering when the restored temple was consecrated, but others – who had known the ancient temple – were crying. Ezra 3:10-13 At Ezra and Nehemiah, another return begins with the introduction of *a legal system with laws and judges and a popular register and the reconstruction of the Wall of Jerusalem and the houses in the city.* But then we're already halfway through the fourth century BC. Jerusalem remains a very exciting capital, even in the sense that passing armies and princes were aiming to incorporate the land and the Jewish people into their own state. For example, Syria under Antiochus Epiphanes IV did so in the early second century BC. It was and remained a fragile possession until the year 70 AD. when the Romans set the city and the temple ablaze. The Jews went again in the scattering. Since 1948 we have experienced a restoration of the people of Israel and the country and the eternal city of Jerusalem.

A restoration of the people of Israel and the country and the eternal city of Jerusalem.

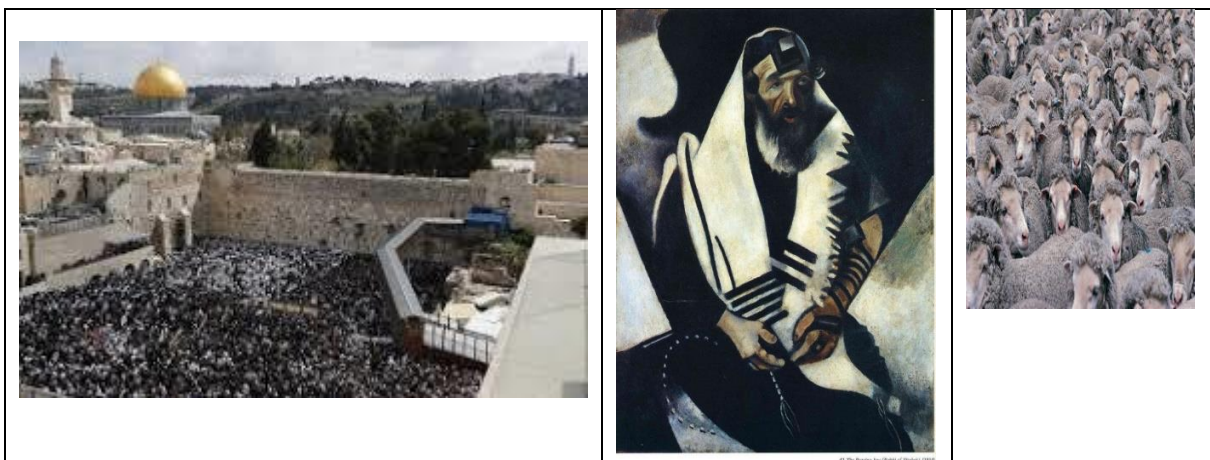


Jerusalem as eternal capital.

Even now that the Jews have returned since the 20th century and have held Jerusalem as an 'eternal capital', the tension is not off the air. Certainly, an untold amount has been achieved. Israel is currently a rich and prosperous country that meets the Western demands of a modern society. Then, but even now there is jealousy among the neighboring peoples. They did it again. God, the God of Israel doesn't let grass grow over it. What He promises He makes true. Ezekiel 36:35 *They will say, This land that was destroyed has become like the garden of Eden.* The cities that were destroyed, destroyed and demolished, have been fortified and inhabited. It is not that the peoples around Israel are cheering when the Jews resettle in the land that God gave them. On the contrary, one would rather see these people go than come. The new leaders in the area did everything possible to thwart the restoration of the city of Jerusalem in the 5th century BC. But in

the end they could not stand the tolerant attitude of Media/Persia. Even today, the surrounding Muslim people are mobilizing the Palestinians and the UN to protest against Israel and against the wall and against the new settlements, but so far they are on the short end. The Jewish people remain masters in their own country and if things go well, they will eventually want to resurrect the old temple in the temple square. There are now two Islamic buildings there, including the Al Aqsa Mosque. But God willing, the way is paved for this plan that certainly lives among the Jews. Ezekiel 36:36 *Then the pagan peoples that remain around you will know that I, the LORD, self rebuild what has been broken down and plant what has been destroyed. I, the LORD, have spoken and I will do it.* It now seems to be going over the country again, but that impression is not correct. It is still about the people, but in relation to the land and the reconstruction of the towns and villages and the farming towns. The inseparable bond between people and country makes it clear that – even in the future of the new heaven and the new earth – man will not be without nature and nature without people. The people of Israel will stay in their own country. Although this is the initiative of God and His strength emerges from it, it also loosens something in the people. In fact, the Jews are going to ask God for His blessing on the expansion of their people. They will need the people to work the land and do everything that needs to be done. Once again, the beloved metaphor is expressed when the LORD compares the people to sheep. Perhaps the bonding power that forms the faith makes people look more like the herd that is led and follows the Shepherd. Ezekiel 36:37 *So says the Lord: Again I will be asked by the house of Israel to do this for them. I will make them as many of the people as I do to sheep.* By God, the memory of the metaphor of the sheep evokes the memory of the heyday of the people of Israel in the time when the relationship was still good. As in those days the sheep were led through the streets of Jerusalem in the direction of the temple, where they served as a burnt offering and praise and dance case to "atone for the sins" of the people and to thank and honor God. In any case, beautiful memories are conjured up when God thinks of how it will be. Memories of Paradise and of the great celebrations in Jerusalem, what a wonderful time that was. The time behind them is ahead of them, too. It will be beautiful, very beautiful for God and His people. The future is full of God's glory. Ezekiel 36:38 *As with the sanctified sheep, as with the sheep of Jerusalem on their fixed holidays, so will the destroyed cities become with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.*

I will make them as many of the people as I do to sheep.



The valley of the arid dead bones

Ezekiel 37

This time the LORD gives Ezekiel a revelation through a vision. God wants to show the prophet something. It has happened to the prophet before that God spoke to him in a valley. While Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:22/ 8:4 himself goes to the valley, this time it is the LORD who takes Ezekiel and puts him down in the valley. There's something special going on with this valley. The valley is full of human bones. Ezekiel 37:1 *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and the LORD brought me out in spirit and put me down, in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones.* How's that going? Sometimes in a case like this, you think, "Were there so many bones?" To avoid any misunderstanding and to remove any doubt in advance, the LORD lets the prophet walk around the valley and then again. Ezekiel was able to convince himself personally that it was a valley full of arid dead bones.

The valley full of dead bones.



Because that impression is on him. There really are a lot of them. And then there's something else. They're not just dead bones, there's no memory of life in these bones at all. The people who were the bones of them were dead. There was no doubt about that. Ezekiel 37:2 *He made me go around it on all sides. And behold, there were very many on the ground of the valley, and behold, they were very arid.* Just as Ezekiel has come to the conclusion that those bones were 'very much dead', God asks him a question; "*Would those bones come to life?*" In itself, the Old Testament knows the resurrection from the dead. People already know that God is about death and life. In this way, Elijah was able to bring a dead boy to life and Isaiah expressed that expectation for his people and also for himself. Isaiah 26:19 *Your dead will live – including my dead body – they will rise up. Wake up and cheer, you who dwell in the dust, for Your dew will be like dew on young, fresh green, and the earth will give birth to the dead.* Daniel – a contemporary of Ezekiel – also lived in the expectation of the resurrection of the dead. Daniel 12:3 *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken, some to live forever, others to defame, to eternal ant.* Ezekiel will have the same expectation, but that is not yet an answer to the question God asks him. Ezekiel suspects that God has a plan and replies that he does not know. God Himself will know what He intends to do with these bones. Ezekiel 37:3 He said to me, "Child of man, will these bones come to life?" And I said, Lord LORD, You know it!

Ezekiel must speak to the dead bones on behalf of God.

What Ezekiel will not have expected is that he would witness on the spot the resurrection of the dead. In fact, God gives him an important task for this. He has to do it. He has to talk to those arid bones like they have ears and can understand him. He must call them to listen to the Word of the LORD. In it, he looks a bit like the Lord Jesus, who addressed Lazarus – who had been in the grave for a few days and was already beginning to dissolve. John 11:43 The Lord Jesus did so to make it clear that He had the power of death and life. Ezekiel must also speak on behalf of God against people who – in this case – have died a long time ago. Ezekiel 37:4 *Then He said to me, Prophecy against these bones, and say to them, Arid bones, hear the word of the LORD.* Before the time comes – that Ezekiel carries out the assignment on behalf of God – God tells him and us what He is going to do with the bones of deceased people. Most importantly, God will breathe life into

them, as He did with Adam. That will mark the transition between death and life. Ezekiel 37:5 *So the Lord says to these bones: Behold, I am going to bring spirit into you, and you will come to life.* But there's another change that the bones have to undergo. Before they can be brought to life, they must first be coated with tendons and flesh and skin. That will precede the in blazing of the mind. Apparently, it is not insignificant for Ezekiel to know what to say on behalf of God, but also that he knows in advance the stages at which the LORD will work on the resurrection of the dead. Ezekiel 37:6 *I will lay tendons upon you, make flesh come upon you, pull a skin over you, and give spirit into you, so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.*



I'll put tendons on you, put flesh on you.

In the case of resurrection, we may think more of the return of the believers who have gone to heaven, but God seems to think more from the remains here on earth. In fact, it seems that the bones that originally belong together in the body of the same human being are looking for each other to reassess that human being. Ezekiel 37:7 *Then I prophesied as I was commanded, and a sound arose as soon as I prophesied, and behold, a noise! The bones came together, each leg near the corresponding leg.* It is remarkable that in the resurrection of the dead, in this vision, the LORD actually uses the material present and rebuilds it. In that sense, we are not a whole new creation, but a revised creation. To the extent that there is still bones, this is covered by God with tendons and flesh, and that is brought back to life by the Spirit, at least in this representation. We know – as I said – that God can create from scratch (Hebrews 11:1), but this – of those dead bones – is beautiful and comforting because it shows so well the connection/continuity between man of the old and the new dispensation. In this way, the old earth is also reused. Perhaps we need to get used to the idea that God from the old is building the new, but the good thing is that there is continuity and that nothing of the existing one is needlessly thrown away. Similarly, the individuality of the faithful man is preserved. There is God's allegiance to Creation and man. Ezekiel 37:8 *And I saw, and behold, tendons came up, flesh came upon it, and He pulled a skin over it, but there was no spirit in them.* As with the creation of the first human being, there is first the formation of the body and then the spirit is breathed in.

Believe in the resurrection of the dead in the time of the Old Testament.

There are quite a few people who openly wonder whether, in the time of the Old Testament, people believed in the resurrection of the dead. Although not every page of it bears witness to it, the wonders of the revival of deceased people do not belong exclusively to the New Testament. We know that Elijah's prayer brought the widow's son – who provided him with hospitable shelter – to life. When his successor Elisa was placed in a grave during his funeral – due to skirmishes near the cemetery – the person buried there rose from the dead. The miracle of resurrection – on this side of death – is therefore not unknown in the Old Testament. On the contrary, the expectation of resurrection can be read between the lines and sometimes even in so many words.

For example, in Psalm 16:9-10 *Therefore my heart is rejoiced and my honor rejoices, also my body will live safely. For You will not leave my soul in the grave, you will not allow your Holy to see dissolution.* It is the Apostle Peter who brings this text to the fore on the first Pentecost day. Peter says that David said this not of himself, but of the Christ Jesus, the Son of David for whom it was fulfilled in the resurrection. Acts 2:29-32 *Brothers of men, I am allowed to say freely to you about the patriarch David that he has died and been buried, and that his grave is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would raise the Christ from the fruit of his body, as far as his flesh was concerned, to put Him on his throne, so he foresaw this and said of the resurrection of Christ that His soul has not been abandoned in the tomb and that His flesh has not seen a dissolution. This Jesus has raised God, of which we are all witnesses.*



The resurrection of the dead.

This text is therefore about the expectation of the resurrection of the dead, even though that promise has become a reality by Christ. We could also point to the expectation in which Daniel died. Daniel 12:12 *But you, go to the end, for you will rest, and you will rise up in your destiny, at the end of the days.* The expectation of the vision of the arid dead bones does not lie. It is noticeable – when we look after the Apostle Paul – that he has a tendency to bring to his Jewish brethren precisely this promise, which is fulfilled in Christ. This becomes palpable at the moment when the conflict between Paul and the Jewish community erupts. In the temple square, things went wrong. Paul – who had become a Christian – was suspected of abandoning the Jewish faith altogether. But that story doesn't add up. In the two interrogations we witness in Acts, it is precisely the belief in the resurrection that Paul seeks the heart of his Jewish people. Acts 24:15,16 *I hope for God – they themselves expect it – that there will be a resurrection of the dead of both righteous and unjust. And that's why I practice myself to always have a clear conscience for God and the people.*

The hope of the resurrection.

It is remarkable that the Apostle Paul invoke this confession when he has run into trouble in the Jewish community. What was the case? The apostle had converted from extremely radical Pharisee to Christianity, what was called 'the Way' at the time. He was not thanked for this change of faith. There were also all kinds of stories about Paul. He would lose the Jewish faith on all sides etc. etc. At the very moment when the apostle is busy showing everyone in the Temple of Jerusalem that he is – although Christian – still very Jewish, he is almost lynched by his Jewish people because it is rumored that he has pagans with him. Fortunately, the Romans are watching over the temple square from the Antony Barracks. They dismayed Paul and took him for questioning. In the book of Acts 19 we read this history while Paul justifies himself several times later in that book for his choices, for the Jewish Council and in front of the Roman city holders. In defending his faith, the apostle relies precisely on the conviction of the resurrection from the dead. There's a certain tactic behind that. The Apostle is in line with the faith of the Pharisees.

They also believe in the hope for Israel and in the resurrection. This is in contrast to the Sadducees, also an important representation in the Sanhedrin. It works like some kind of stick in the henhouse. The Pharisees and the Sadducees are flying in each other's hair at this point, and Paul remains out of shot. Acts 23:6 *And Paul, who knew that one part consisted of Sadducees and the other of Pharisees, cried in the Council: Men's Brethren, I am a Pharisee and son of a Pharisee. I am judged on the hope and resurrection of the dead.* Even if it was a tactically smart move, this point remains important, because the apostle with this conviction aligns with a deeply and widely shared Expectation of the Future of the Jewish people. A belief that, for example, is awakened and strengthened in the vision of the arid dead bones. That it is Paul serious, it is evident if he invoke this point at a later stage. Acts 24:14 *But I recognize this for you: according to that Way they call sect, I serve the God of the fathers in this way, and that I believe all that is written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope for God – they themselves expect it – that there will be a resurrection of the dead of both righteous and unjust. And that's why I practice myself to always have a clear conscience for God and the people.* The apostle seeks the connection. He does not come up with the confession that Jesus is the Son of God or with the salvation of the nations through the work of salvation of Christ Jesus. The apostle stresses that he has not changed as much as the Jews think. He believes the same as they do when it comes to the resurrection of the dead, on the understanding that they expect it, and that Paul already sees it fulfilled – in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead.



Jewish graves near Jerusalem.

We know from the Apostle that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead is the crowning glory of the work of salvation. We also know that according to Paul's vision, the Lord Jesus is the Firstborn of all creation. Colossians 1:15. The Lord has – so to speak – paved the way for all who hope for Him. The resurrection of Christ also answers the question of "whether God in Christ has secured the righteousness and sanctity of the believers." Without resurrection, we'd still be lost in debt. The resurrection has also acquired the atonement of sin and the promise of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 15:16 *After all, if the dead are not resurrected, Christ is not resurrected either. And if Christ is not resurrected, your faith is meaningless; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are also lost.* The belief in the resurrection is a cast-iron connection with the Jewish faith. This faith can open the conversation about how God fulfilled this promise in Christ Jesus. In this sense, it fits seamlessly with the Biblical Expectation of the Future that God awakens in the book of Ezekiel.

1. The coming of the Shepherd.
2. The promise of return of land and people Israel.
3. The gift of the atonement of sins and the Holy Spirit.
4. The promise of resurrection from the dead.

A preliminary or final fulfillment?

When we pay attention to the lord's explanation of the vision, there are two things that stand out. That crowd of people – who rose from the dead – stands for all of Israel. Furthermore, the VISION seems to give the LORD an answer to the defeat that lives among the people of Israel. They say: *Our bones are withered and our hopes have fallen, we are cut off!* With the vision, the LORD seems to want to give the people a heart under the belt. That is certainly the case. However, it would not be good to take the vision symbolically. In that case, it is a heart under the belt and the LORD says: 'Head on. Courage lost everything lost. It's going to be okay!' But for that, the misery seems too great. We must realize that the people would go into exile for 70 years. They're probably not even halfway there yet. In those 70 years, at least one but probably two generations would die. All these people are buried in Babel. The misery is not over and the end is not yet in sight in 539 BC. For this reason, the vision of God to Ezekiel goes beyond an encouraging idea. When there is not really a resurrection from the dead and a restoration of all things, their future does not look good. That will be confirmed in the future. The LORD talks very specifically about 'their dead' and 'their graves and resurrection from the dead' and 'a return to the land of Israel'. Ezekiel 37:12 *Prophecy, and say to them, "So the LORD lord says, Behold, I will open your graves, and I will raise you from your graves, My people, and I will bring you to the land of Israel.*

The LORD says, I will raise you from your graves, and I will bring you into the land of Israel.



If this is the case – and so it is – then this raises the question of what time the LORD refers to? In this sense, we may well distinguish between a provisional and final fulfillment of God's promises. This vision is basically about the final fulfillment. In this vision, it is not primarily about the return to the land of Israel in the time of the Persian prince Kores. This was played in 538 BC. Fore that, they had permission from the Persian monarch. In fact, this was also achieved under the direction of the later high priest Joshua and the city holder Zerubbabel and later of Ezra and Nehemiah. This is a fulfillment of the words of God, sure, but it is a preliminary fulfillment not the final fulfillment. Jerusalem was rebuilt and many Jews lived in that city and in the Jewish country and there was a certain degree of independence through the times – sometimes larger but often limited. Because this part of Ezekiel is about the Shepherd and the atonement of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, our thoughts go to the beginning of the first century AD. After the Jewish war in 70 AD, the Jews were once again driven out of the city of Jerusalem and scattered worldwide. It would take 20 centuries for the Jews – in 1948 AD – to be allowed back to the land bestowed upon them by God to establish their own State of Israel. In this context, we need to put forward something else. The Apostle Paul expects not only a return of God to Israel, but also vice versa: a return of Israel to God, when by the end of time the partial hardening has been removed. Paul sees it – accepted by Jewish people of Jesus as Messiah – as resurrection from the dead. In this context, this is a remarkable statement. Romans 11:15 *For if their rejection means reconciliation to the world, what does their adoption mean other than living off the dead?* There is talk of a return to

the land of Israel and a return to God. Once again there is a certain degree of freedom and independence at the moment, although it is constantly threatened and the construction of the temple is still pending. There is also a growth among the Messiah-Confessing Jews, 10 to 15,000 of whom live in Israel. The things that are unfolding in actual history seem to be a preliminary realization of the promise God makes to His people here.

Messiah-Confessing Jews.



The promise of resurrection from the dead and eternal life.

There is no denying that after the prophecy about the Shepherd Who God will send – in which we recognize the Lord Jesus Christ – we come to speak of the promises of the cleansing of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. With these promises, the heart of the Gospel is expressed – at least to the extent that we as believers are directly part of them. There are also promises that stand out from the work of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will not share them until Christ's second coming: The Resurrection of the Dead and the Kingdom of God. It is the promise of the resurrection of the dead that the Lord Jesus, for example, gives to the Jewish people as a sign in the revival of Lazarus, but also with the boy of Nain. In a discussion with the Sadducees, the Lord had already made it clear that the deceased believers live with God in heaven. Matthew 22:31,32 *And as for the resurrection of the dead, did you not read what has been spoken to you by God, when He said, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not a God of the dead, but of the living.* It is remarkable that the conversation is about the resurrection from the dead. The Lord actually sees the transition from the believer to heaven as a resurrection. It cannot go wrong for the believer who takes part in heavenly life. In the Bible, there is the first and the second death. It is about unbelievers/wicked people who go to the realm of the dead after their death and after the last judgment to hell. Revelation 20:6a *Blessed and holy is he who participated in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them.* For these people it is in two steps, but for the believer there is actually only one step: the stepping stone to heaven. On the last day, such a person receives the union with his body – in the resurrection from the grave – but that can no longer be endangered. The Bible speaks in two ways about the resurrection: the transition to heaven and the physical resurrection on the last day. From the first step one is on the way to the new earth. It is not strange in this light either when the Lord Jesus says to the (good) murderer on the cross, *"Today you will be in paradise with Me."* Luke 23:43 In the revival of his friend Lazarus – whose body was already digesting – the Lord showed that He has been given power over death and life. John 11:41-44 *And Jesus raised his eyes and said, Father, I thank you for interrogating me. And I knew that you would always interrogate me, but for the sake of the multitude that surrounds me, I have said this, that they may believe that You have sent me. And when He said this, He cried in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out! And the dead man came out, tied to*

hands and feet with grave cloths, and his face was covered with a sweat cloth. Jesus said to them, "Let him go and let him go." There is a problem with the resurrection, and that is that death is a judgment of God upon the sinful man. It is through the atonement of sin – brought about by carrying the world's guilt on the cross of Calvary – that the Lord has broken the bonds of death. The physical resurrection of our Lord from the grave is the guarantee of the resurrection of the believers. 1 Corinthians 15:12 *If Christ is now preached that He is raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* The resurrection from the grave remains – despite the fact that the deceased believers live by God in heaven an indispensable link in the restoration of all things. For this reason, the souls of the deceased believers – at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ – are united with our bodies and are carried away with the Lord to heaven. The believers who are living at that moment are changed from the old to the new situation in the blink of an eye. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry, with the voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God. And the dead who are in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living that remain, will be taken with them in the clouds, to a meeting with the Lord in the sky. And so we will always be with the Lord. So then, comfort each other with these words.*

The new earth.

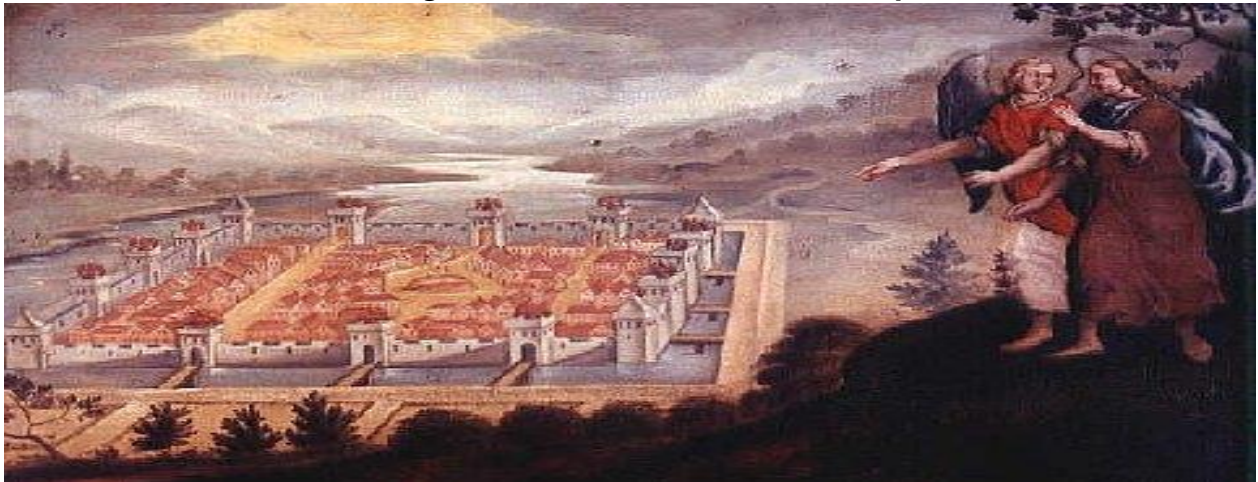


The believers of the nations.

Also, the situation of the entry into God's Kingdom of non-Jews is fairly new and possibly unexpected, so that this is sometimes told in the margins as in John 10, for example. In John 10, the Lord Jesus talks about the good Shepherd. He, Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd. The herd is the people of Israel. But there is also room for the non-Jews as the Lord says, in John 10:16 *I have other sheep that are not from this sheepfold; I must bring them in, and they will hear My voice, and it will become one flock and one Shepherd.* The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of resurrection. Romans 8:11 *And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through His Spirit, who dwells in you.* The Spirit not only brings about the new life, a life that is spurn with the intention and the commandments of God. That life, too, has only passed when it went through death and resurrection. In that sense, you can rightly say that we are 'rising to a new life'. Holy Baptism symbolizes that we have died with Christ and that we rise with Him – through the Spirit – to a new life. Romans 6:3,4 *Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized in His death? We are then buried with Him by baptism in death, that like Christ is raised from the dead to the glory of the Father, so too would we walk into a new life.* This is about that new life according to God's commandments. At the same time, it also touches the resurrection from the dead. Christ will send out the Spirit on the day of resurrection, and then the bodies of

the deceased believers will be resurrected. The Spirit will breathe new life into us, and we – believers from the peoples who are dignified – will rise up and go to heaven with Christ. Then we will descend to earth with the New Jerusalem and then go to our 'former' lands on the new earth. The people of Israel – at least the elect – go to the land that God promised to Abraham, the land of Israel. It is Revelation 21 where both the New Jerusalem is spoken – with gates and foundations – and of God's living in the midst of the people of God. Ezekiel 37:14 *I will give My Spirit in you, you will come alive and I will put you in your land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done so, the LORD speaks*. It is and remains extraordinary that in Ezekiel's eschatology we come across a number of things that are – in part – fulfilled. Things like the Shepherd (= the Lord Jesus Christ), the return of the Jewish people, the atonement of sins and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (through the sacrifice of Christ) and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave. A number of things are still outstanding, such as the unity of God's people, the final resurrection from the dead, the struggle of Gog and Magog, and the new temple on the new earth. But what has been fulfilled gives good courage to take a closer look at the things that have not yet been fulfilled and to trust that this expectation for the future will also become a reality.

The new Jerusalem with twelve gates (tribes) and 12 foundations (apostles).



"The already and the not yet" in the New Testament.

There is something going on in the Bible when it comes to fulfilling God's promises. We see this, for example, in Peter's Pentecostal sermon. Peter quotes the prophet Joel on the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. From that prophecy arises the idea that the Gift of Spirit and the last judgment are very close together. But it is a well-known fact that between these two things already lies a space of 2000 years. Acts 2:16-21 *But this is what has been spoken by the prophet Joel: And it will be in the last days, god says, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your elders will dream. And also to My servants and to My servants, I will pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. And I will give miracles in the sky above and draw on the earth below: blood, fire, and smoke wall. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon in blood, before the great and awe-inspiring day of the Lord comes. And it will be the case that anyone who will invoke the Name of the Lord will be blessed*. The Holy Spirit was poured out about 2 millennia ago while the final judgment is still in the offing. In this way, the Church learns to speak of 'the already and the not yet'. The Apostle Paul helps us in doing so when he makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is a kind of advance on staying on the new earth. Paul calls the Spirit *a collateral*. A collateral receives someone as an advance, which strengthens the security of the complete redemption. In that sense, the Holy Spirit is an advance. Ephesians 1:13,14 *In Him, when you came to faith, you were*

also sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, which is the collateral of our inheritance, to the salvation that was shared with us, to the praise of His glory. We do have a new Spirit, but we don't have a new body yet. We have already received God's Spirit while our new body is guaranteed in heaven in the Person of the risen Lord. That's what the Heidelberg Catechism teaches us.

Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 18 Question and Answer 49

What use us the ascension of Christ?

First, that in heaven, He is our Fore-speaker in front the face of his Father.

On the other hand, that we have our flesh in heaven to a certain property, that He, as the Head, will also take us, his limbs.

Third, that He sends us his Spirit to a collateral, by whose power we seek that is up there, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not seek that on the earth.

Paul articulates the broad-based "desire for the salvation of our bodies" in Romans 8:23. That's going to happen. At the time of the resurrection from the dead, we will receive a new body stamped by the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 15:46-49 *However, the clergyman is not first, but the natural, and then comes the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, physical; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the physical, so are the physical people, and as the Heavenly is, so are the heavenly people. And as we have carried the image of the physical, so too shall we bear the image of the Heavenly.* Also about the moment of resurrection, the Apostle Paul expresses himself: First there is Christ with the Resurrection and the Ascension. When Christ returns to earth, we will share in the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:22,23 *For as all die in Adam, so too will all be made alive in Christ. Each, however, in his own order: Christ as First-time, then who are of Christ, upon His coming.*

In the chapel the Chora Church in Istanbul: Christ pulling Adam and Eve from their graves.



The tribes around Judah and Ephraim become one people again.

Not only is there the promise of the resurrection from the death of God's people Israel, but explicitly – you will come to life and I will put you in your country – there is also talk of the return to the land that God has given them in the promise. It is clear that the LORD does not want a repeat of moves. God wants a complete restoration of the people's relationship with their God. But the relationship between the tribes of Israel – badly damaged by the rupture of the empire in Israel and Judah – will also be restored. To make that clear, Ezekiel has to take a piece of wood and write *Judah* on it with the people who belong to it and another piece of wood on which he

must write the name *Joseph* with everyone who belongs to it. Ezekiel 37:15,16 *The word of the LORD came to me: And you, child of man, take a piece of wood for yourself and write on it: For Judah, and for the Israelites, his companions. Then take another piece of wood and write on it: For Joseph, the piece of wood of Ephraim, and of all the house of Israel, his companions.* The country and the people that were broken – after the sins of King Solomon who made his foreign wives worship their gods – is now being healed. 1 Kings 11:11 *Therefore the LORD said to Solomon: Because it has happened to you that you have not observed my covenant and ordinances which I have commanded, I will surely tear the kingdom apart from you and give it to your servant.* The names of the twelve tribes have previously had a place on a staff of God. That was in the time of Moses and at the time when the people had problems with the choice of God for Aaron. Moses was instructed that each tribe must hand in a staff with the name of the tribe on it and the tribe of Levi with the name of Aaron. The bars were placed before the LORD in the tent of the meeting. The tribe that flourished would be the tribe designated by God. It became Aaron's tribe. In this way, there was peace among the people. God had chosen Aaron as high priest. This time the leading tribes were written on two pieces of wood, that of Judah and that of Ephraim. Ephraim stands for the northern tribes and Judah for those of the south. In Ezekiel's hand, those two pieces of wood would merge into one piece of wood, symbolizing the restored unity of the people of God. Ezekiel 37:17 *Then bring them together, one by the other, into one piece of wood, so that they become one in your hand.* The people who surround the prophet see it but they don't understand it, and so they ask Ezekiel what he wants to say with this. Ezekiel 37:18 *When your fellow members of the people say to you, do you not want to tell us what these things mean to you?* Joseph and Judah, they weren't friends. Joseph was initially the great man among the tribes of Israel. He had been viceroy of Egypt and had saved the people of Israel from starvation. He had also given them a place on the water-rich delta of Egypt – the area of Gosen – where they could herd their small cattle. When the other sons of Jacob bowed before Joseph in Egypt, his leadership position was undisputed. In fact, he was so uncontroversial that his tribe was split in two – Ephraim and Manasseh – when God took the Levi tribe between the tribes for service to God's temple. Ephraim has, so to speak, taken over the leadership role of Joseph. It is in the area of that tribe – to be precise in Silo – where the LORD initially lived in the tabernacle that was set up there. But things didn't go well at all in Silo with the high priest Eli and Hofni and Pinehas as priests. Those two priests were about the drop that made the bucket overflow. This made God look for another tribe and He found Judah. Psalm 78:67-72 David, who came from Bethlehem Judah, took a great deal of effort in the run-up to his kingship to become king of the Northern tribes. But when his son Solomon went missing, it was certainly no coincidence that it broke again there – where the old fault line was between Judah and the Northern tribes. But that old fracture that had arisen around the year 900 BC would be fully repaired in the future. Ezekiel 37:19 *Then speak to them: So says the Lord LORD: Behold, I will take the piece of Joseph's wood, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and of the tribes of Israel, his companions, and I will add it to the piece of wood of Judah, and I will make them into one piece of wood. They will become one in my hand.*

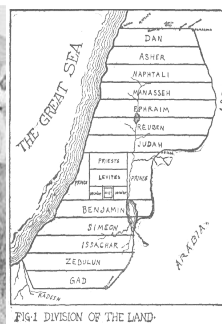
I will turn them, Ephraim and Judah into one piece of wood. They will be one in my hand.



One king and one people.

God has a plan with the tribes of Israel who still live scattered in a large circle around the land of Israel, but especially in the areas of Assur and Babel. God will return all Jews to their own land. So they are not only merged into one people, but as a people they are also allowed to return to their country of origin. God is going to take care of that. Ezekiel 37:21 *And speak to them: So says the Lord: Behold, I am going to take the Israelites from the pagan peoples to which they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them to their land.* Now it also emerges the way in which God thinks He can restore the unity of His people to Israel. That's not just by bringing them together in the land of Israel. In itself, the tribes of Israel lived together for a long time in the promised land without truly forming a unit. For hundreds of years there had been talk of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. At that time there were two kings who were in government; one in Israel and one in Judah. David's house ruled in Jerusalem, but in Samaria was another royal family pulling the strings. A changing family in the North, by the way, because some rulers were driven out and replaced by others. But this time it would be different. Not only would God bring the tribes back to the land of Israel, but He would also appoint one king over them. In the king, they would find a new unity. One shepherd and one herd. Ezekiel 37:22 *I will make them one people in the land, on the mountains of Israel. They will all have one King as king. They will no longer be like two peoples, and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms.* The people of Israel will consist of truly changed people after the judgment of the exile and the new Covenant that God establishes with them. That will be noticeable by their way of life. They will walk in the ways of the LORD, and all odious sins – such as idolatry, etc., about which they invoked God's anger – will no longer be found in God's people. On the contrary, in fact. Not only will evil be missing, but good will be abundant in the hearts and deeds of Israel in justice and mercy. This too is elementary for the unity of God's people: the return to the land of Israel and the new king, but certainly also a different way of life and thinking. God cannot dwell among people who have broken with Him in every way and live separately from God. When, on the other hand, they are cleansed of sins and live in a way dedicated to God, the LORD will take his place again in the midst of His people. Then it is again: He will be their God and they will be His people. Ezekiel 37:23 *Then they will no longer contaminate themselves with their stink gods and with their hideous idols and with all their transgressions. I will deliver them to all their dwellings, where they have sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they will be a people to me, and I will be a God to them.*

So the Lord says, Behold, I am going to gather the Israelites and bring them to their land.



King David.

Then David's name falls, and that's no coincidence. He is the man to God's heart. In someone like David– because he was guided by God – it is difficult to distinguish between the things that belong to him and those of God. The fact is that this man came into view in Israel because of his

special love and awe of the God of Israel. The first time he rolls into public history is in the army town where he brings food to his big brothers. He cannot have the giant Goliath mocking the God of Israel from the Philistines' army. He takes on him and defeats the giant by the power of God, who always stood by him when he wanted to keep the wild animals away from his flock. Not only is there David who extends from earth into the history of Israel, but on God's side there is also movement – and more than that – when God calls him king. With the calling and anointing, David also receives the Holy Spirit of God, which should allow him to be a good king of God's people. 1 Samuel 16:13 It is to David's credit that he forged the people of Israel together as he sought rapprochement with Abner the general of King Saul and the other tribes came under his power and influence. David probably felt that it wouldn't be wise to operate out of Judah. It would evoke the jealousy of the other tribes if, for example, he made Bethlehem his birthplace the center of power. David chose to conquer the city of Jebus (=Jerusalem) in Benjamin which was more central and that – militarily very attractive – also on a mountain. That city made David his metropolis.



The Temple Mount and the City of David.

King David gives To God a place among the people.

Yet the merits of King David have not been brought together. There is another important act missing, and that is that he brought the ark of God into Jerusalem and brought it – albeit provisionally – into a tent. David made a unity of the people of Israel and gave the LORD the central role in Jerusalem, the center of faithful Israel. At that time David already had the plan for God to build a temple in Jerusalem, but because he had too much blood on his hands, it was entrusted to his son, Solomon. That David to whom God had promised an eternal kingship, That David – someone from His bloodline – would become the king of the new Israel. By now we know that this is the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of David. Luke 1:31-33 *And behold, you will become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and you will give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Supreme, and God, the Lord, will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will be king over the house of Jacob forever, and His Kingdom will not come to an end.* The Lord Jesus stands with arms spread between the Old and the New Testament. He is the bearer of God's promises, including the institution of the temple and the sacrificial service. With the sacrifice of His life for mankind, the Lord also bears the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the Atonement bestowed upon God's people at that time. Thanks to the salvation work of the Lord Jesus, there is not only in the New Testament atonement of sins but also the gift of the Holy Spirit for faithful Jews and gentiles through which the believers can walk in God's ways. Ezekiel 37:24 *And My Servant David will be King over them. For all of them, there will be one Shepherd.*

They will walk into My provisions and observe my ordinances and keep them. The fact is that this foretelling was fulfilled in the time of the Lord Jesus. Through His righteousness, He brings the faithful Jews together into one people, the people of Israel. We know that – with 'the already and not yet thought' – the final fulfillment on the new earth is done. Then God's people will be gathered and given their place with the location of Israel on the New Earth.

And My Servant David will be King over them. For all of them, there will be one Shepherd.



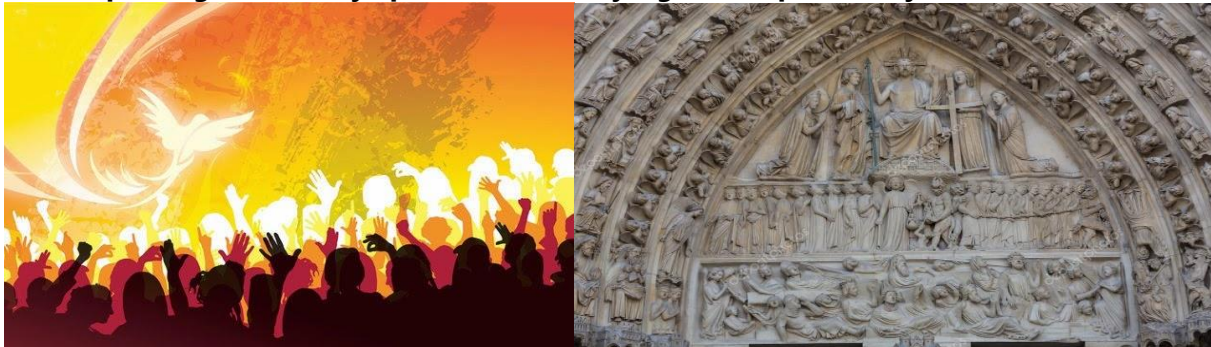
The right to return to the land god gave Israel.

The New Covenant touches man to soul and body in the resurrection of the body, but also the people of God is not without land. By land, the LORD really means the same country that He has promised Abraham. It is remarkable that this time the LORD is attaching the promise to Jacob, for whom the LORD has repeated that promise, as He did to Isaac. The fact that the LORD speaks here of Jacob may have to do with all kinds of candidates for the people and the country – people who were born of the patriarchs or at least were related – such as Lot, Abraham's nephew with his sons Ammon and Moab, but certainly Also Ishmael, the son of Abraham and not to mention Esau (=Edom) the son of Izaak could claim it. By specifically naming Jacob – as the one over whom the covenant line continued – God renders the aspirations of potential competitors meaningless in advance. Ezekiel 37:25 *They will dwell in the land I have given to My servant, to Jacob, in which your fathers have lived. They will dwell in it, they with their children and their grandchildren, forever, and My Servant David will be their Prince forever.* With the Covenant of Peace that God offers to these, our thoughts go to paradise. In Ezekiel 34 there was also the Covenant of Peace. It creates a situation where people can sleep safely outside the house. Something that can actually only be done in some kind of paradise. Ezekiel 34:25 *I will make a covenant of peace with them and get rid of the wild animals from the land. They will live carefree in the desert and sleep in the forests.* The term forever falls here. From the history of God with His people Israel we can see what is meant by it. Think of Jerusalem, the eternal city. At times that city was destroyed and the Jews were even refused as a resident. But – this is the meaning of the word eternal – God does not forget His commitment. All the time, that city gets up from the ashes. Time and again, Jerusalem is inhabited by people descended from Jacob. We also see God's fidelity to this promise in the New Jerusalem, which descends from heaven. Revelation 21. In the New Jerusalem, we also see paradise conditions emerging when the river – which creates and pours life from under the throne of God – once again makes the Dead Sea a sea of living water where fish swim and fishing boats lie on the shore. There – from the new Jerusalem – the Son of David will reign as king forever.

The provisional and final fulfillment of God's promises.

Although there is a lot of eternal – our thoughts go to the moment when this dispensation is interspersed with the future of the new earth and the new heaven – there is undeniably also a growth of the people when the LORD promises to make the people numerous. Because in the future glory according to Christ, the Lord is no longer a marriage – and therefore not of family expansion – the expansion of God's people must have actually occurred before the end of the old and the new dispensation. Once again, we come across the special way in which expectation and fulfillment works in the Bible: The expectations that the LORD raises for the future will become reality not at once, but certainly in twice – with a preliminary and final fulfillment. How do we know? Reality teaches us this. Take the expectation aroused by the LORD in Joel. See above in Acts 2. The expectation is raised that the gift of the Holy Spirit coincides with the end times and the beginning of the new world. But in fact, that promise is divided into a preliminary fulfillment of the gift of the Holy Spirit and a later definitive fulfillment of the end times and the dawn of the new earth and heaven. The day of the Lord seems to coincide with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but in fact it appears that between that day of the Spirit and the new heaven and earth there is already a space of some 2000 years. Is that bad? No, that teaches us that there is a promise and that that promise is fulfilled, but not always on the same day. The Holy Spirit turns out to be an advance from heaven sent by God to the faithful to help them live honestly and faithfully. This teaches us to speak and think in terms of the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the last judgment separated by time.



Forever, God will dwell in the midst of His people.

Once again, in the vision, we are determined in the final fulfillment of expectations when God fore says that His tabernacle will be with them. Ezekiel 37:26,27 *I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an eternal covenant with them, I will give them a place and make them numerous, and I will put My sanctuary in their midst for eternity. My tabernacle will be with them, I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to me.* The tabernacle recalls the tabernacle built in the time of Moses with God's directions. Exodus 25 When the lord's tent was finished, the LORD moved in. In this way, God lived among His people and moved with them from the Sinai Desert to the promised land. With the vision of Ezekiel 40-48, God shows *the new temple* where He will dwell on the new earth in the midst of His people of Israel. That temple, too, is sometimes called a tent. Later – in the Revelation of John – we witness the vision of John who observes with his own eyes how God stores His tent among His people on the new earth. Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven say, Behold, the tent of God is with the people, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.* Soon – Ezekiel 40 to 48 – we will take a close look at the vision of the new temple, but already there is talk that God will dwell on the new earth in the temple among His people. It is not right to say that God does everything for the bystanders 'the pagan peoples'. But it is indeed an important factor in God's actions. When the pagan people see that God does not abandon His people but even preserves them through exile and death in view of His glorious future, they will also glorify God. There will

be gentiles who look down upon Israel, but the true believer is pleased with all the good that God is assigned to His old people Israel. In fact for the believers of the nations, the Old Testament is a source of knowledge of the grace and righteous judgment of the God of Israel. We believers from the nations – who have personally not experienced first-hand what the people of Israel have been through over the course of history – can nevertheless inform us of the seriousness of our situation and the awe that is due to God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel 37:28 *Then the people of the pagans will know that I am the LORD who canonizes Israel, when My sanctuary will be in their midst forever.*



and I will put My sanctuary in their midst into eternity.

Does God live in a temple in the midst of His people on the new earth?

Many people who read Ezekiel's temple vision have difficulty with the idea that God will – still – live in a temple on the new earth. What also bothers them is the pronouncement of John in Revelation 21:22 *I saw no temple in her, for the Lord, the almighty God, is her temple, and the Lamb.* This remark fits perfectly into the thinking of many believers from the nations. For their realization, Christ has opened the way to God's heart with the sacrifice of His life. In fact, Christ has come to the place of the temple. He's the sacrifice. He's the high priest. He is the "new and living way to God" as Hebrews 10:20 says. The arguments against the idea of God's living in the temple are piling up. Does the Apostle Paul not call the believer "*a temple of the Holy Spirit*?" 1 Corinthians 6:19 Of the Christian church, the same can be said. 1 Corinthians 3:16 *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?* Nevertheless, there is something to be said for this. To name a few. The Holy Spirit has a dwelling in the believer of now and later, but where does God the Father live and God the Son? And further: John speaks in Revelation 21 of God the Father and the Son by metaphor: Christ is the Lamb. But He is also the sun. Yet Revelation opens with the message that God's tent = is the temple among the people. Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven say, Behold, the tent of God is with the people, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.* There's something more to that. Not only the temple vision, but also what is said about the future beforehand assumes that God lives on the new earth in a temple in the midst of His people. Ezekiel 37:26,27 *I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an eternal covenant with them, I will give them a place and make them numerous, and I will put My sanctuary in their midst for eternity. My tabernacle will be with them, I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to me.* Some people believe that the knowledge of a temple at that time is thought of, but that we should think of Christ with today's knowledge, because the atonement of the guilt and gift of the Holy Spirit did not come until after Christ. The latter is true, but do we realize that God has already spoken about these matters in Ezekiel – the Shepherd and the atonement of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit? It is not Ezekiel who gives a Biblical Future Expectation, but God Himself. Ergo; God will also dwell on the new earth in a temple in the midst of His people.

God will also dwell on the new earth in a temple in the midst of His people.



The Biblical Future Expectation of Ezekiel 33 to 39 reminiscent of the new earth.

Ezekiel 34:25-31	I will make a covenant of peace with them and get rid of the wild animals from the land. They will live carefree in the desert and sleep in the forests. I will give them and the area around My hill a blessing, and I will make the rain descend upon its time. Rains of blessing will be there. The trees in the field will give their fruit, the land will give its yield, and they will live untroubled in their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I break the rods of their yoke, and save them from the hand of those who were served by them. They will no longer be prey to the pagan peoples, and the wild animals of the earth will no longer devour them, but they will live carefree and no one will frighten them. I'll put a plant of name on them. Then they will no longer be taken away by hunger in the land, and the defamation of the pagan peoples will no longer bear them. Then they will know that I, the LORD, is their God, with them, and that they are My people, the house of Israel, the Lord speaks. And you, My sheep, sheep of My meadow, you are human, but I am your God, speaks the Lord.
Ezekiel 36:7-11	Therefore, so says the LORD Lord: I have sworn: Indeed, the pagan peoples who are around you will bear their own shame! But you, mountains of Israel, you will bring forth your branches and bear your fruits for My people Israel, for they are approaching. For behold, I will come to you, I will turn to you, and you will be edited and dotted. I will make the people on you numerous, all the house of Israel, in its entirety. The cities will be inhabited and the ruins will be rebuilt. I will make man and animal on you numerous, they will become numerous and fruitful. I will make you inhabit as in your former times, yes, I will do you more good than in your beginnings. Then you will know that I am the LORD.
Ezekiel 36:33-38	Thus the LORD lord says: On the day I cleanse you of all your iniquities, I will inhabit the cities and the ruins will be rebuilt. The devastated land will be cultivated, rather than being a wasteland in front of everyone who passes through it. They will say, "This land, which was destroyed, has become like the garden of Eden." The cities that were destroyed, destroyed and demolished, have been fortified and inhabited. Then the pagan peoples that remain around you will know that I, the LORD, self rebuild what has been broken down and planted what has been destroyed. I, the LORD, have spoken and I will do it. Thus the Lord says: Again I will be asked by the house of Israel to do this for them. I will make

them as many of the people as I do to sheep. As with the sanctified sheep, as with the sheep of Jerusalem on their fixed holidays, so full will the destroyed cities become with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:11-14

Then He said to me, "Child of man, these bones are all the house of Israel." Behold, they say: Our bones are withered, and our hopes have fallen, we are cut off! Prophesy, and say to them, "So the Lord says, Behold, I will open your graves, and I will raise you from your graves, My people, and I will bring you to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD, if I open your graves, and if I make you rise from your graves, My people. I will give My Spirit in you, you will come alive, and I will put you in your land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done so, the LORD speaks.

Ezekiel 37:24-25

My Servant David will be King over them. For all of them, there will be one Shepherd. They will walk into My provisions and observe my ordinances and keep them. They will dwell in the land I have given to My servant, to Jacob, in which your fathers have lived. They will dwell in it, they with their children and their grandchildren, forever, and My Servant David will be their Prince forever.

Ezekiel 37:26-28

I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an eternal covenant with them, I will give them a place and make them numerous, and I will put My sanctuary in their midst for eternity. My tabernacle will be with them, I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to me. Then the people of the pagans will know that I am the LORD who canonizes Israel, when My sanctuary will be in their midst forever.

The river with the water of life flows from under the throne of God.



Judeo-Christian future expectation from Ezekiel.

C. Ezekiel 38 and 39

What can the people of Israel expect after the exile?

The LORD is still working on the most important issues that will play out – after the exile of His people Israel. After the prophet Ezekiel has received the news of the final fall of Jerusalem, the LORD focuses on the near and distant future of Israel after exile. Ezekiel 33:21 *It happened in the*

twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth of the month, that someone who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city is defeated." God makes clear what His people can expect for the time after 586 BC, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 33-48 by and large.

1. God draws Israel's guidance to Himself. The HEERE is very dissatisfied with the so-called shepherds up to that point. God Himself is going to take care of a Shepherd, especially through the arrival of 'God's servant David'.
2. Edom was one of the neighboring peoples who – after the exile – seized the open territory of Israel and destined for themselves. God takes care of Edom and the neighboring peoples. The land of Israel will be rebuilt for God's people Israel with towns and villages and bear fruit again.
3. With the renewed promise of land and people, God not only holds on to a life as man and people here on earth, but also pledges God to cleanse the people of sin in the future and to give a new heart and a new Spirit within you, so that it will otherwise deal with God's commandments.
4. The promises mentioned are underlined by the vision of the arid dead bones, which are brought to life. This is accompanied not only by physical resurrection from the dead, but also with the return to the land of Israel from the diaspora.
5. God returns to His people Israel. The resurrection from the dead also represents the return of – part of – Israel to God.
6. God then makes sound the expectation of the reunification of the people that at that time – with Judah and Joseph – consists of two parts. This reunification takes place by bringing them out of David's house under the guidance of one king and shepherd.
7. God promises to live forever in their midst in His sanctuary complete with priests and sacrifices

The prophecy about Gog and Magog.

Now – in Ezekiel 38 and 39 – follows the prophecy about Gog and Magog. It makes it clear that the people of Israel throughout history will always maintain a certain vulnerability. There is a kind of irreducible enmity being drawn from the nations against Israel. That battle between Israel and its enemies will hit its lowest point in *the end times*. We come to this because in the text Ezekiel 38:16 refers to the Hebrew term – Be-acharit Hajamim – which means *in the last days*. When the enemy is in Israel – with the aim of destroying that people forever – God will intervene saving from heaven and put an end to all enemies and all enmity. The enmity of the people of Gog and Magog – towards *the end of time* – makes us realize that the covenant of peace has not yet begun. This becomes different when God involves Ezekiel in the so-called temple vision – Ezekiel 40 to 48 – which then becomes a reality. This is the vision of God's living among His people Israel on the new earth.

Gog and Magog.



The people of Israel are threatened by the times.

It is clear from the history of Israel that – from the beginning of its popular existence – the people have been threatened with death and destruction. The underlying reason is not clarified. Psalm 2 asks the question of the 'Why?' It is a struggle against the people of Israel, but perhaps especially against the God of Israel. Israel is not yet a people or in Egypt – where they found temporary shelter in the time of Joseph – they are already threatened with death and extermination. Exodus 1:15,16 *In addition, the King of Egypt said to the midwives of the Hebrew women, whose name was one Sifra and the name of the other Pua, he said: If you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and you watch the stone perch chair, then if it is a son, you must kill him, but if it is a daughter, she may live.* During the Exodus, the Pharaoh planned to exterminate the people of Israel. God reversed his plan to his opposite. In Persian times it was a certain Haman who took it to exterminate the Jews who lived in all the countries of the great empire. He had permission from the Persian monarch and the day was already determined by fate (Pur). Were it not for God – through Mordechai and Esther – having put a stop to it, otherwise it would have looked bad for the Jews. Esther 3:8-11 *Then Haman said to King Ahasveros: One people is there that is scattered and scattered among the peoples in all the regions of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of all nations, and there is no one who carries out the laws of the king. It is not appropriate for the king to leave them alone. If the king sees it, let it be written that they are killed. Then I will weigh ten thousand talent silver on the hands of those who do the work, to bring it to the king's treasury. Then the king took his seal ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagiet, the opponent of the Jews. And the king said to Haman, "Let the silver be bestowed upon you, and the people, to do with it what is right in your eyes."* The Jewish people still celebrate the Purim Festival to commemorate the day of liberation. Also in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes IV – 167 to 164 BC – the people are threatened in his deepest being, his faith in the God of Israel. This king draws up the statue of the Greek god Zeus in the temple of Jerusalem. 3.5 years the temple service comes to a stand still, while the faithful Jews are persecuted and killed for the possession of the Torah and the execution of the circumcision and the celebration of the Sabbath. After 3.5 years, the Syrian monarch is expelled and the temple is re-consecrated. It is the Jewish Hanukkah festival that has its origins here. Of the great peoples of the North, Israel has experienced a great deal of threat and exile; of Assur and Babel but also of Media/Persia and the Greek and Roman Empires, which in the year 70 AD destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and drove the Jewish people into the diaspora. Although there was a promise of a return to the country of origin, after 70 AD, it would take about 2000 years for the Jewish people to re-live in the country of Israel. We were aiming for the time of 1948 when the Jewish State was founded. Before then, however, a huge enemy loomed in the person of Adolf Hitler and Germany who had intended to completely exterminate the Jewish people. Six million Jews died in the concentration camps until world history took a turn to prevent worse in the victory over Nazi Germany.

The State of Israel since 1948.



The League of Nations gave the oppressed Jews the opportunity to establish the Jewish State in their country of origin; which has been taking shape for some 70 years now in the country of Israel where the Jewish people – after many wars and threats – have declared the capital Jerusalem the eternal capital of the State of Israel.

Psalm 2

- 1 Why do the pagan peoples conspire and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves up, and the princes conspire against the LORD and against His Anointed:
- 3 Let us tear their bonds and cast their ropes from us!
- 4 Who dwells in heaven will laugh, the Lord will mock them.
- 5 Then He will speak to them in His wrath, in His burning wrath to frighten them.
- 6 I have anointed My King over Sion, my holy mountain.
- 7 I shall announce the decision: The LORD has said to Me, You are My Son, I have begat you today.
- 8 Demand from Me and I will give you the peoples of the pagans as Your property, the ends of the earth as Your possessions.
- 9 You will crush them with an iron scepter, you will smash them to pieces like pottery.
- 10 Now then, kings, act wisely. Let you teach, judges of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear, rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, that He may not become angry and you will be destroyed in your the way, when His wrath only ignites for a moment. Blissful all who resort to Him!

The people of Israel are enclosed by Gog, the enemy from the north.

The enemy of Israel comes – as of ancient time – from the North. You can see this, for example, in Jeremiah 6:22 *The LORD says: Behold, a people comes from the land in the north, a great nation will be resurrected from the corners of the earth.* The peoples and countries – of which Ezekiel mentions the name – are indeed located in areas north of Israel. Mesech and Tubal, we need to look in the direction of the Black Sea. Some know exactly the location with Frygia and Cappadocia, namely the present-day Turkey. Ezekiel 38:1,2 *The word of the LORD came to me: Man child, turn your gaze to Gog, the land of Magog, the supreme prince of Mesech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.* We know Magog from the peoples-list of Genesis 10. This people come from Jafeth, one of Noah's three sons. Tubal and Mesech are also mentioned there. Genesis 10:2 *The sons of Jafeth are: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesech and Tiras.* The LORD seems to

have chosen names that capture the imagination in Israel. They are the powers that dominated the Middle East in the sixth century. It seems that Gog is the name of the Supreme Prince – the President of the Land Magog – who also controls Mesech and Tubal. The fact that Magog is located in the present Turkey does not have to indicate that the final battle against the people and the land of Israel is based on the Islamic countries, but it is not excluded. It is clear that, since the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, Israel has been confronted with a certain regularity with superpowers who, with a particularly equipped army, posed a major threat to the peace and security of the region. At the same time, it is obvious to assume – because of the relationship with Revelation 20 – that the prophecy focuses primarily on *the end times* and that the enemy force has by then taken on global proportions.

Ezekiel 38:3 This is what the Lord says: Behold, I am against you, Gog, prince of Mesech.



The entire Middle East under arms against Israel.

From the data we have, we can see – something that also applied to the armies of Assur and Babel – that Gog's military apparatus has a great diversity in the composition of riders and foot people. Soldiers were summoned from all subjugated nations. There's something more to that. When the names Cusj and Put fall, our eyes move across the map of the North of Israel – the Euphrates basin and the Tigris – to the South, for these two peoples controlled the entire Nile Delta at the beginning of the sixth century. The Persians come from the North with Gomer and Beth Togarma, but the Cusjites and the Puteeans are located in the area south of Israel or North Africa. The war being announced seems to be taking the entire Middle East by arms against Israel. It is a bit like the six-day war that Israel has – miraculously – won. It played in the sixties to be exact in June 1967. The people of Israel must have felt trapped when, at that moment, the enemy was approaching menacingly from the North and East and South sides. Ezekiel 38:5,6 *With them are Persians, Cusjites and Puteeians, all with shield and helmet, Gomer with all his troops, Beth-Togarma, in the far north, with all his troops, many peoples with you.* Because the leader of this coalition – Gog – is in the North, the danger to the bible reader's feeling comes mainly from the north. But the fact is that the people of Israel are apparently enclosed at all borders at the time of that war. The countries from North Africa to Turkey are currently Islamic countries. It is possible that we should think in this direction when it comes to the question of which enemy power will develop against Israel? The fact is that at the moment the Islamic people already feel a strong dislike for the Jewish people. It is certainly not separate from the fact that Judaism (and Christianity) is experienced as a competing religion in the sense that Islam believes to worship the true god Allah. Although one lives under this assumption, there is no denying that Muhammad has taken over large parts of the Bible in the Koran, such as creation and the patriarchs, Moses and David and especially Joseph. Even Jesus (Isa) and his mother Mary (Miriam) appear in the Koran, albeit as prophets, but still. The Koran shows a great tension with the other religions of the book. For example, it is said to Christianity that Allah has no sons. It seems to be a fairly straightforward attack on the confession "that Jesus is God's Son and truly human." With Judaism, the tension is felt at two points. The Arab peoples are descended from Ismael, the son Abraham fathered at Hagar, his slave. The fact that the God of Israel sent Ismael and his mother away and

chose Izaak still bothers them. It is noticeable that the Koran refers to Ismael as 'the son of promise', whereas in the Bible that title is given to Izaak. Surah 19:54 and Surah 37:83-109 Also according to the Koran it would not be Izaak, but Ismael who was 'sacrificed' by Abraham on Mount Moriah. One even borrows the feast of sacrifice from this history. Mount Moriah is the temple mount where the Islamic Golden Dome was erected as a memorial. The Arab peoples seem to want to prove with their history that their God is the true God and that Jerusalem is theirs. In the temple square in Jerusalem, they built the Al-Aqsa mosk fairly triumphantly. That would have happened at the place where Muhammad would have sailed to heaven according to their tradition. It is – not coincidentally – also the place where the God of Israel lived in the temple for centuries among the Jewish people. The fact that the country is once again in the hands of the Jewish people – and also the city of Jerusalem – is felt by the Islamic peoples as an undesirable situation. It is humanly due to the fact that the Sunnites and the Shiites, two Muslim groups, are close to each other, that the Jewish people remain reasonably standing. The State of Israel feels particularly threatened by a country like Iran and its Shiite population and presumably has a rather friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia as a counterweight. Whether these peoples are the threat in *the end times* is uncertain but not impossible. The power of Islam seems to pass after the Arab Spring with the radical Muslim brothers. It is only possible that the end-of-time enmity will mainly be based on the former Christian continents, such as Europe and the United States of America.

With them are Persians, Cusjites and Puteeians, all with shield and helmet, Gomer with all his troops, Beth-Togarma, in the far north, with all his troops, many peoples with you.



Threat to Israel (possibly) from former Christian continents.

In addition to the threat posed by Islam, there is another danger that comes from the religious side and that is the threat from a post-Christian world, Europe and America. What is the case? From the beginning of the merciful indulgence of Israel's God to the nations, the Gentiles are warned of hubris. It is true that, according to Romans 11, God has broken away branches – i.e. people with a Jewish background from the olive tree, which is a symbol of Israel – because of their disbelief in the Messiah Jesus Christ. In these open places on the olive tree, from the coming of Christ, the new branches are grafted, which are in fact Christians from the nations. From the beginning, these people are warned of hubris. Romans 11:17 *If some of these branches have now been torn off, and you, who are a wild olive tree, have been grafted into their place and have been given part of the root of the olive tree, do not boast of the branches. And if you boast: You do not carry the carrot, but the root you.* Us – Christians from the nations – fits modesty because the tree is formed by Israel. It's a tree that, so to speak, has been there for 4,000 years. Looking down on Israel would also testify to an idea that 'we would be better than them'. Nevertheless, things have often gone wrong on this point. In the history of AD, the Jews, who had sought refuge in many

countries, often had to suffer. In this respect, WWII is the low point when the Jewish people – as a whole – are threatened in their survival. Adolf Hitler had the motto 'die endlösung der Judenfrage', and was in his sense to completely destroy the Jewish people. It should come as no surprise that with WWII the change of God's sympathy from the peoples towards His old People Israel follows. It is true that the Apostle Paul announces that change in Romans 11. Paul sees as it were a movement of God's sympathy to Israel – then to the nations – and eventually returned to His old people Israel. From the context of Romans 11, we could see what is the reason for this: the pride of the believers from the peoples of which the Jewish community would suffer badly. Romans 11:25 *For I do not want, brethren, that you have no knowledge of this secret (lest you be wise in your own mind), that some hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has entered.* From the above we could see that it does not look very good for the Jewish community, when the Christian community alienates from its roots. When the believers of the nations forget that they were born of grace, the Jewish people must probably suffer greatly. This came true in WWII. Paul speaks of *the fullness of the Gentiles*. He means that the number of those who are rescued from the nations will fill up at some point, and then God will turn again to His People Israel so that the number of that people can also be filled. The change of God to His People Israel could be made out of the permission of the League of Nations to establish its own State in the country of origin.

In 1948, the State of Israel was founded and many Jews moved to the land of the fathers.



Not only in Romans 9 to 11 we see this line of thought, but also in Revelation 7 in which we see on the one hand that the fullness of the nations enters heaven. Revelation 7:9 *After this I saw and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from all nations, tribes, nations, and languages, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clad in white robes and palm branches in their hand.* It is remarkable that the entry of the believers from the nations into heaven takes place after the change of God – from the nations – towards His old People, Israel, has taken place. If there is that one side, then there is the other side, when God turns to His old People Israel on earth. If this observation is correct, we are currently in a situation where the last believers from the nations are led into heaven. It will – if we see this correctly – become a time of sanctions from God because of the waste of faith worldwide. What we are already experiencing are things like climate change, the big woodfires in Australia, the corona-virus, a locust infestation. Violent movements of the earth and heaven serve to return the former believers from the nations to God, but they do not give a hopeful reaction according to the expectation. Revelation 9:20,21 *No one returns to God.* With Israel, the ancient People of God, this is different. As in these years the last believers from the nations are led into heaven, God continues to focus on Israel. Revelation 7:3,4 *Do not harm the earth, nor to the sea and the trees, until we have sealed our God's servants to their foreheads. And I heard the number of those who were sealed: one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed from all the tribes of the Israelites.* It is clear that history – as it is followed up in Revelation 8 to 13 – focuses on Israel and Jerusalem. Something that receives its climax in the

attack Gog and Magog on Jerusalem. Revelation 11:1,2 *And I was given a yardstick that resembled a staff. And the angel had come to stand there and said, "Rise up and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship in it." But leave out the outer forecourt of the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.* The observant reader will notice that *in the end times* another temple in Jerusalem is supposed to be. That is something that the Lord Jesus (Mark 13:14) and the Apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:4) confirm. The antichrist shows in the temple in Jerusalem that he is 'god'. For us as Christians from the peoples, it will be important – in the development of eschatology – to get into the skin of Jewish Christians. For them, the living of God in the temple and the service of sacrifice is much more self-evident. To name a few things: We see Christ in the place of the temple. He's the sacrifice. He's the high priest. He is atonement for our sins. For Jewish Christians, however, the temple service – even after the resurrection and the Ascension of Christ – continued. Even the Apostle Paul remains focused on the temple in his contact with God. Thus he made a vow to go to Jerusalem to the temple of the LORD. Acts 18:18 *And when Paul had remained there for many days, he said goodbye to the brethren and left from there by ship, in the company of Priscilla and Aquila, to Syria, after shaved his head in Kenchreeën. He had made a vow.* He wanted to go to Jerusalem. God always lived in a temple in heaven and on earth. The LORD God has also continued to live in a temple in heaven after the Ascension of Christ. Revelation 11:19 *And the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant became visible in His temple. And there were lightning bolts, voices, thunder, an earthquake and large hail.* According to the temple vision of Ezekiel 40 to 48, the LORD will also dwell on the new earth in a temple among His people.

Jesus and/or the temple?



God gives Gog a push when he conceives the plan to destroy Israel.

Although Gog is in charge, it seems that he is stimulated from above – by the God of Israel. Gog is preparing for war. It's a massive military operation. This is extremely threatening to the Jewish community. A foreign superpower arming itself to attack them. How are we supposed to take that? It appears to be in accordance with the plan of God. Ezekiel 38:3,4 *Say: This is how the Lord says: Behold, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Mesech and Tubal! I'll turn you around, I'll slap hooks in your jaws, and I'll pull you off.* The LORD does not do so to punish His people, on the contrary. God does it to deal once and for all with the enmity that reigns showed over and over again in this world against the people of Israel and against the God of Israel. Some people will be disturbed that God seems to have a hand in the final battle. It seems as if the LORD is inciting the enemy to attack Israel. That's true, too. We see something similar more often in the history of God's people. Similarly, the LORD influenced the pharaoh to pursue the fleeing people of Israel with the aim of killing the pharaoh in the Red Sea with his army. It is not that God invents the enmity, quite the contrary. The pharaoh has been extremely hostile to Israel's request to leave to

serve God in the desert in such a way that God stokes that fire even higher. We see the same thing in the final battle. It is not God who puts hostilities in their hearts, but He lets the world powers – in their hatred towards the people of Israel and the God of Israel – shoot through so that they walk in their own knife. Because that's the goal. God will deliver a gigantic defeat to the enemies of Israel in the end times. He'll deal with them once and for all. Ezekiel 38:8 *After many days you will be punished.* It is clear that it is about the people and the land of Israel. They are the people "restored from the sword." They are 'the people who have returned from all continents to settle on the mountains of Israel' to build an existence there – in the country of origin. The Jews will feel safe in Israel. That doesn't mean they don't have a military apparatus. It means that after years of diaspora – scattered around the world because they were not safe in their own country – they are back in the land and the people of God. From the carefree life, the confidence of the LORD, that He takes care of them, may also speak in favor of the Lord. Ezekiel 38:8 *At the end of the years you will come to a land restored from the sword, brought together from many peoples on the mountains of Israel, which had become a lasting destruction.* When they are led out of the nations, they will all live without worries. What makes the people angry to Israel? Is that their carelessness? Is it the fact that they're living in the land of promise again? The latter is very possible. Behind the return of the Jewish people to Israel lies the belief that the God of Israel is the living God who rules. Everything is done according to His plan. One may hurt the people of Israel, they may be persecuted, they may be driven out of the country, etc. etc, but they will not succeed in thwarting the plans of God. Throughout history, the LORD has fulfilled all his promises to His old people, including this one: the right to return and the reunification of the Jews in Israel on Israeli territory. Gog's plans are not unknown to us either. He intends to ban and completely destroy the country and the people of Israel. His army is bigger than big. Such a size is not actually necessary to overshadow such a relatively small population. But he, Gog wants to be like a dark cloud and cover the whole country. Ezekiel 38:9 *You will advance, you will come as a devastation; you will be like a cloud and cover the land, you and all your troops and many nations with you.*

Who did it begin? Is that God or Gog himself or the devil?



The war of Gog and Magog against Israel and his God.

We can ask our chapter, "Who is going to turn Gog on to fight Israel?" "God," says the LORD through Ezekiel. "It's me," says the LORD. So God persuades Gog to start a war against Israel. That's what the Bible says. But Gog himself thinks very differently. He thinks it's him. "I came up

with it myself." He can say that with an honest conscience, because indeed the thought came into his mind and he followed that thought. Ezekiel 38:10 *So says the Lord: On that day, it will happen that there will be deliberations in your heart and that you will come up with an evil plan.* Gog thinks it's his own plan. Now that we are thinking about this, it is good to also consult the book of Revelation. Surprisingly, the book of Revelation – where Gog's final battle also occurs – comes with yet another explanation. He puts full responsibility on the devil. If God releases the devil from his underground prison, he will set the world on fire. Revelation 20:7,8 *And when those thousand years have come to an end, Satan will be released from his prison. And he will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for war.* All three of them are true, God did it. Het did it himself. The devil did it. There may be something more to that. "Gug" is the Sumerian word for "darkness." That Gog isn't a fresh guy. It's probably a political leader, a president. According to the book of Revelation 13, he works closely with the dragon and the beast. Revelation 13:2,7 *And the beast was given power to wage war against the saints and to overcome them, and he was given power over every tribe, language, and people.*

It comes to Gog mind as a good idea to stand up with an immense army against an extraordinarily vulnerable nation. Not only do these people have hardly any protection in walls and gates – for they do not have them – but it is also a people with the dramatic history of persecution and pogroms and attempts to make them disappear completely from the face of the earth as a people. It's not really a noble thought, on the contrary, "What kind of person are you when such thoughts come to you and then you let them guide you?" Ezekiel 38:11 *You will say: I will rise up against a land not walled, come to people who live peacefully and carefree, all of whom live without a wall and a bolt and have no gates.* You might wonder what motivates someone to do something like that? The story goes that it would be about the loot. The people of Israel would be easy prey. Furthermore, it would have many valuables in gold and silver and goods and many cattle, which Gog thinks he can enrich himself with. He thinks or says it's about the spoils, but in fact there's that other side of the story, the destruction of a people, the destruction of a faith.

Ezekiel 38:12 The Aliyah to Israel.



The merchants are getting involved.

It is not entirely clear why the trading cities and their merchants suddenly interfere. Sheba and Dedan are located on the African coast of the Red Sea. Tarsis is located by some in Spain, by others on the coast of present-day Turkey. They are seaports where trade is done. It is mainly the ships that transport the goods of different countries on and around the Mediterranean. In the book Ezekiel 27 we come across a list of cities and countries and the goods they import and export. Jerusalem is also mentioned. In itself, the merchants don't have much to do with war. War is unrest. Sometimes it can be 'good' for the market because certain goods – such as military equipment – are extremely in need. A need-oriented market drives up prices when certain goods become scarce due to war violence. Also in the book of Revelation, it is the merchants who observe the destruction of the great Babel from a distance. They are in shock especially because

they see their entire trade going to the Philistines. Revelation 18:11 *And the merchants of the earth will weep and grieve over her, because no one buys their wares anymore.* It's understandable that the trade is responding. The only question is what they intend to achieve with their comment. Do they welcome the war against Israel because they think they can take a leaf out of the spoils? 1 Maccabees 3:41 reinforces that impression: *When the merchants of the region came to the news, they went to the camp with a great deal of silver and gold as well as buoys to buy the Israelites as slaves.* The Syrian army also joined forces from Idumea and the land of the Philistines. Or do they make themselves heard – as being an important organization – to slow down Gog in his combativeness? The latter could just be the case. Large trade routes are populated by the armies from the North. No cozy people, soldiers armed to the teeth. Armed robberies are imminent. At the end of the day, this Gog is busy helping them to his end. Ezekiel 38:13 *Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarsis and all their young lions will say to you: Are you here to commit a robbery? Have you assembled your armed forces to rob loot, to carry silver and gold, to take cattle and property, to commit a great heist?* This brings us back to the question of the motive.

Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarsis will say to you: Are you here to commit a robbery?



People with Jewish backgrounds often hold influential positions.

It must now be said that the Jewish community in the countries they have emigrated to – both then and now – are not among the poorest sections of the population. On the contrary, in the field of trade and science and the leading positions in politics and literature, legal- and banking matters, people from Jewish backgrounds have great influence. It is perhaps jealousy that drive people to lose weight in the Jewish community. There may be a certain carelessness that the Jewish community exudes. Although, of course, there are also social cultural factors to be identified, it has – at the moment – all appearances that they are blessed. Isn't their carefreeness the human side of heavenly preservation? Does it bother the international community that these people (often) go well and that no one gets in their way or stumbles upon the God of Israel, who brings His people back into the land that He promised to the first Jew – Abraham – ? God wonders if it is necessary to incense Gog to war. That's necessary, for sure. We have heard that consideration and understood that carefully. But this time, the LORD is asking himself whether the carefree state of His people will elude the world ruler? No, stronger that carefree state – of the Jewish people who have returned from the peoples – will persuade Gog to ruthlessly destroy this People. Ezekiel 38:14 *Prophecy, man child, and say to Gog: So the Lord says: Will you not find out on that day, when My people Israel lives carefree?* The fact is that it is simply not possible for Israel to develop so favorably at times. It was in fact not necessary for God to give Gog a boost, the favorable position of that people Israel is sufficient to attempt to destroy this people completely. It is undeniably true that the people of Israel have now established themselves as a fairly permanent place in the heart of the Middle East. They founded their own State of Israel in 1948 with the permission of the League of Nations. They have also managed to end the wars that have been waged against them from the immediate vicinity – with God's help. With these wars and the

struggle, they have greatly expanded their territory. Jerusalem – as the eternal capital of Israel – also falls within their borders. Some major countries – including the US – have moved their embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel. Israel has the most advanced weapons systems. Nuclear weapons are also at their disposal. They also have a famous security service, Mossad. According to the LORD, the envy-inducing image that Israel conjures up is enough to get Gog moving. Ezekiel 38:15 *You will come from your hometown, from the far north, you and many peoples with you, all horsemen, a large crowd and a numerous army.* Gog doesn't seem to take seriously the fact that the people of Israel are someone's, Gods People. He is going to pay a high price. Thus the LORD says, "Will you not find out on that day, when My People Israel lives carefree?"

Thus the LORD says, Will you not find out on that day when My people Israel lives carefree?



Prophecies among other prophets about the war against the holy city at the end of time.

Ezekiel's prophecy about Gog and Magog and the final battle against Jerusalem and Israel's God does not stand alone. Other prophets also cared about this struggle, although they do so with their own words and their own accents. Because we compare Scripture with Scripture, we can only rejoice at the similarities in the Old Testament Biblical Future. With the prophet Joel we discover that the battle will take place in the valley of Josafat. Joel also foretold an earthquake even though he talks about the 'heaven and earth trembling'. Sefanja also foresees that God will bring the nations together in their struggle against Israel for the purpose that God can judge them. Zacharia talks about 'the press tubs that flood'. As in Revelation 14, the bloody battle with his many dead among God's enemies is depicted with the metaphor of the red wine in the wine press box. Zacharia hinted something about the earthquake that will hit Jerusalem, splitting the Mount of Olives in two. The second coming of the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Olives is foretold. The book of Revelation talks from different angles about the last phase in history, the end times. In Revelation 11, for example, we also witness the earthquake that precedes the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. The great final battle is already reported in Revelation in Revelation 13, but also further down the road – in Revelation 19 and 20 – the Lord returns to it.

Prophecies among other prophets about the war against the holy city at the end of time.

Joel 3:1-3

For behold, in those days and in that time, when I will bring a reversal into the imprisonment of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the pagan peoples and bring them down to the valley of Josafat. There I will pursue a lawsuit with them, because of My people and My property Israel, which they have scattered among the pagan peoples. They divided my country. They have cast fate upon My people.

Joel 3:12-17

Let the pagan peoples be raised and advance to the valley of Josafat, for there I will sit to try all the pagan peoples of all around! Put the sickle in, because the harvest is ripe. Come and descend, because the wine press is

	full. The press tubs are pouring over, because their evil is great. Crowds, crowds in the valley of the threshing sled, for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of the threshing sled. Sun and moon are shrouded in black and the stars have retracted their appearance. The LORD will roar like a lion from Sion, from Jerusalem He will make His voice sound, so that heaven and earth will trembling. But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a fortress for the Israelites. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your God, who dwells upon Sion, my holy mountain.
Zephaniah 3:8	Therefore, expect Me, the LORD speaks, on the day I will stand up to take loot, for My judgement is to gather the pagan peoples, to gather the kingdoms, to pour over them My anger, all my burning wrath. For by the fire of My after-zeal, all this land will be consumed.
Zechariah 14:1-5	Behold, there will come a day before the LORD when the spoils, upon you, will be divided into your midst. Then I will gather all the people of the pagan for the fight against Jerusalem. (..) Then the LORD will go out and fight against those pagan peoples, like the day he fought, on the day of battle. On that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem, to the east of it. Then the Mount of Olives will be split in two to the east and to the west. A very large valley will emerge, if one half of the mountain will recede to the north and the other half of it will move south. Then you will flee through the valley of My mountains, for the valley between the mountains will reach to Azal. Yes, you will flee, as you fled the earthquake in the days of Uzzia, the king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come: all the saints with You!
Revelation 11:13	And at that same hour, a major earthquake struck, and the tenth part of the city collapsed. And in that earthquake, 7,000 people of particular were killed. And the others became very fearful, and gave honor to the God of heaven.
Revelation 13:7	And the beast was given power to wage war against the saints and to overcome them, and he was given power over every tribe, language, and people.
Revelation 14:19,20	And the angel sent his sickle upon the earth and harvested the grapes from the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press box of the wrath of God. And the wine press box was entered outside the city, and blood came from the wine press box, up to the tomes of the horses, sixteen hundred stadies far.
Revelation 20:7-10	And when those thousand years have come to an end, Satan will be released from his prison. And he will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for war. And their number is like the sand of the sea. And they came up across the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the army place of the saints and the beloved city. But fire from God descended from heaven, and that devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the pool of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are already. And they will be tormented day and night in all eternity.

The final verdict.

It is clear that the destruction of the army of Gog has apocalyptic traits. The LORD, the God of Israel has held back for centuries, although Israel's neighbors have been so severely punished so

that their names have been removed from the list of nations. We don't know Edom or Moab or Ammon anymore. Tyrus and Sidon are also stripped of their former greatness. Although there is the rule – who comes to Israel, comes to God – the LORD must still have often spared the enemies of his people. In addition, according to internal information from the book of Revelation 20, Satan is released towards the end of time. When it colludes with the world ruler in a joint war against Jerusalem, the LORD's measure is full. Ezekiel 38:18 *On that day it will happen, on the day Gog comes over the land of Israel, the Lord LORD speaks that My grimness will rise in My nose.* The effects on the earth are also of that order that they transcend the usual weapons of God. It is a huge earthquake that will hit the land of Israel. It is clear that an earthquake affects not only the enemy, but also the friends of the country and Israel. That is also the case, only the focus is on what God does against the aggressor of His people and country. The Biblical data on the future – which the Bible entails before God intervenes saving from above – know on the one hand the salvation of the elect, but on the other hand the devastating destruction of all God's enemies, including Satan and his companions. The eyes this time are mainly focused on what God does to His adversaries. Ezekiel 38:19 *For in My after-zeal, in the fire of My resentment, I have spoken:* Indeed, on that day a great earthquake will strike the land of Israel! After that the final verdict. Not only the land of Israel is being hit, but all the earth. All living things on earth – the fish, the birds, the land animals and the people – will be given the fright of their lives. People will be looking for death. They just hope that the mountains that shake and fall over fall on them themselves so this is over. The things that one witnessed in the final judgment are apparently so terrifying that they don't want to go through that. Ezekiel 38:20,21 *The fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals of the field, all the crawling animals that crawl on the face of the earth, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, will trembling in front of me. The mountains will be overthrown, the mountain walls will collapse and all the walls will fall to the ground.*

The fish in the sea, the birds in the air the animals of the field.



God has a lawsuit against the nations.

Although the violence is worldwide, God is not done with Gog and the hellish army he has brought on his feet. God will create confusion so that one no longer trusts each other. So one's weapon will turn against the other. In total confusion, the army will be left behind. Ezekiel 38:21 *On all my mountains I will raise a sword against him, the Lord speaks. Everyone's sword will be against his brother.* In all kinds of Bible sections it is expressed that God has a lawsuit against the nations and that this is therefore a judgment that the highest Judge on earth imposes on the nations. God is not only the Judge who delivers a fair sentence but also executes the judgment. The verdict is noticeable, among other things, in the plague disease, but also in the precipitation – a rain of hail and brimstone – which has an unparalleled force that leaves nothing whole, while the brimstone evokes thoughts of hell. It really is the end, as the book of Revelation 20:9,10 also states: *And they came up across the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the army place of the*

saints and the beloved city. But fire from God descended from heaven, and that devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the pool of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are already. And they will be tormented day and night in all eternity. God here strikes the enemy of His people, the armies of the pagan peoples. The trial is nothing more and nothing less than 'the last judgment'. Ezekiel 38:22 *I will go to trial with him through plague and blood. I will rain an all-washing rain, and hailstones, fire and brimstone rain on him, on his troops and on the many peoples who are with him.* In the judgment that God has felled and executed, God raises His Name. "Justice at last" will make the believers think. Everything will be righteous by the salvation of the world. God's Son has suffered and died on the cross the honest judgment of this world. God has affirmed Him in His Work of Salvation with the resurrection from the dead and sitting on God's Right Hand. All people who have accepted the Lord Jesus and live through the atonement of their sins and the renewal of the Holy Spirit – and keep God's commandments – are saved. All those who have rejected God's offer of mercy are subject to judgment. Ezekiel 38:23 *So I will show My greatness and sanctify me and become known before the eyes of many pagan peoples. Then they will know that I am the LORD.* For us Christians from the nations, it may be useful to remember that the fullness of the nations has already been addressed in Revelation 7. The world population of Revelation 8 and the next no longer has convinced Christians. It turns out that, because even if God lets His punishments come over the world, there is actually none of the nations that are corrected by God. Revelation 9:20,21 *And the other people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands; they continued to worship the demons and the gold, silver, copper, stones and wooden idols, who cannot see, hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their sorcery, their fornication and the commission of theft.* When we notice that God leaves nothing and no one whole from the enemy peoples, that may be true; in fact, there are no more chosen Christians among them. That's different with the Jewish population. Neither are all convinced Messiah-Confessing Jews, but when God punishes the world with the great earthquake, there are not only many victims, but the people who survive in Jerusalem, convert to God. Revelation 11:13 *And at that same hour a great earthquake occurred, and the tenth part of the city collapsed. And in that earthquake, 7,000 people of particular were killed. And the others became very fearful, and gave honor to the God of heaven.*

On all my mountains I will raise a sword against him, the Lord speaks.



The final verdict.

Psalms 149:5-9

Let His favors stand up for that honor of joy, let them sing cheerfully on their sleeping places. God's hymns sound from their mouths, a double-edged sword is in their hand, to exact revenge on the pagan peoples, punishments over the nations, to bind their kings with shackles and their

considerable iron shackles, to accomplish the described right to them. That will be the glory of all His favors. Hallelujah!

Isaiah 66:14-16

Then the hand of the LORD will be known by His servants, but on His enemies He will be angry. For behold, the LORD will come into fire, and His chariots will come as a whirlwind, to assert in grimness His wrath, His punishment in flames of fire. For with fire and with His sword, the LORD will bring a trial with all flesh. Those who have been mortally wounded by the LORD will be numerous.

Jeremiah 25:30-31

And you must prophesy against them all these words, and say to them, "The LORD shall roar like a lion from the height, from His holy dwelling, make His voice sound." He will roar great against His place of residence, He will lift a cry of joy as of grape-worshippers against all the inhabitants of the earth. Terrible noise will come to the end of the earth, for the LORD has a trial with the nations; He'll go to trial with all the meat. The wicked have surrendered to the sword, the LORD speaks.

Ezekiel 38:22

I'll go to trial with him because of plague and blood. I will rain an all-washing rain, and hailstones, fire and brimstone rain on him, on his troops and on the many peoples who are with him.

Gog's war against the God of Israel.

God is not done with Gog, the enemy of Israel. God turns on Gog in the fight against Israel. This is not to hurt the people of Israel in one way or another, but precisely to show God's power – by defeating Gog – to everyone in an overwhelming way. Ezekiel 39:2 *I will turn you around, drag you, pull you up from the far north and take you to the mountains of Israel.* Once in Israel, God will disarm Gog's army. It doesn't look like there's an army from Israel involved. It is the battle of God against the enemy of His people, Gog. It is the LORD who shows His glory and great superiority. Ezekiel 39:3 *But I will knock your bow out of your left hand, and drop your arrows out of your right hand.* Not only will the LORD disarm the enemies of His people, but He will also kill them. They planned to inflict a devastating blow on God's people. The opposite develops in the time when they are on Israel's territory. Not Israel, but Gog's army is deeply humiliated. Not Gog sows death and destruction, but he himself is victimized. Not Israel but Gog is robbed of all his possessions. And then Gog's army also happens to be the worst – according to the Bible – that can happen to a human being. The soldiers' bodies are eaten by the birds of prey and the wild animals. Even for the idea of the people of that time, this means that the dead will never find peace again. Ezekiel 39:4 *On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops, and the peoples who are with you. I have given you food to all kinds of birds of prey and to the animals of the field.*



On the mountains of Israel you will fall.

The final battle.

It is remarkable that not only in the final battle as described in the book of Ezekiel, but also in the final battle as expressed in the book of Revelation mentions the birds of prey that the fallen soldiers are given to feed. Revelation 19:17,18 *And I saw one angel standing close to the sun, and he cried in loud voice to all the birds that flew high in the sky: Come and gather for the sacrament of the great God, to eat flesh of kings, and flesh of superiors over a thousand, and flesh of the powerful, and flesh of horses and of those who sit on it, and flesh of all the free people and of slaves, the small and the great.* Later in this same chapter of Ezekiel, it is mentioned that the people of Israel are making efforts to bury all those dead. Although there are the mountains of Israel – as a characterization of the land – the battle will take place on one of the plains that this country is rich. Ezekiel 39:5 *On the open field you will fall, for I have spoken it, the Lord speaks.* God not only deals with the armies of Gog but also with the peoples who stayed at home. Gog intended to cause a deadly unrest to the people of Israel, who lived reasonably carefree, but got their way home. Instead of Israel, their own lands and nations are destroyed by God with the fire of judgment. Ezekiel 39:6 *I will send fire into Magog and among those who inhabit the coastal lands without worries. Then they will know that I am the LORD.* We immediately hear one of the main motives of what the LORD was moving to do this. God in the past had to severely punish His own people for their disobedience and sin. The bad thing was that the peoples around Israel made their own judgment. This gave the peoples the idea that the God of Israel did not represent much. With their superiority, they celebrate the power of their gods. And that all because God had to punish Israel for their sins. It all rests on a nasty misconception, but God cannot deny that the punishment for Israel has nasty side effects. The people of Israel did not do well, but the peoples around Israel – also born from God's Power as Creator – are completely alienated from their origins. The realization – that the God of Israel was also their God – has completely subsided. They celebrate their power and the superiority of their gods over the people of God. They put God to the fore with their gods, who – for their realization – give them victory over Jerusalem and Judah and Israel. Anyway, this would be a definitive end to this. If the Gentiles still think that their gods or kings were great in power and overwhelming in strength, they will heal from their false assumptions with the destruction of Gog's army and home base. Then they will see who is the real God of this earth, the God of Israel. Ezekiel 39:7 *I will make my holy name known in the midst of My people Israel and no longer desecrate My holy name. Then the people of the pagans will know that I am the Lord, the Holy one in Israel.*

The inhabitants of the cities of Israel will leave the city, light a fire and the weapons....



Weapons like firewood.

God emphasizes once again that this final battle – in which the enemy of Israel will be destroyed – will certainly come even though the date is in the (distant) future. It is *the day of the Lord*, the day that God has also mentioned by other prophets. Ezekiel 39:8 *Behold, it comes and will happen, speaks the Lord. This is the day I talked about.* When we look further down the Bible, we see that

Gog's struggle against the people of God and the holy city of Jerusalem will indeed take place towards the end of time. Revelation 20 mentions it. Then the same names fall as Ezekiel mentions here: Gog and Magog. Revelation 20:7,8 *And when those thousand years have come to an end, Satan will be released from his prison. And he will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for war.* It is clear that there are similarities, but there are also differences. Thus, the end time enemy is expected by the book of Revelation from all corners of the earth, and the battle ends on intervention on God's part and the final judgment for the enemies of God. Ezekiel outlines the situation from the people of Israel who were at first in fear – because of the overwhelming armies of Gog – and then committed to removing the weapons – which are mostly made of wood – and burying the dead.

The final battle at the end of time and the new Jerusalem in Ezekiel and in Revelation 20.

The first and most important similarity to Revelation 20 is that of the name Gog and Magog and the war against Jerusalem and the final judgment of the powers and the people who stand up to God. Immediately after the revelation of Gog and Magog to Ezekiel, the Prophet receives the temple vision, which in turn bears great similarities to the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and 22. In the book of Revelation, between chapters 20 and 21/22, a cessation is assumed in time when the old dispensation is finally converted to the new dispensation. This is accompanied – at the last judgment – by the final removal of all the hostile elements on earth, the people and powers that stand up against the God of Israel. Then, in Revelation 21 and 22, the new world population – made up of the faithful people of old and new testaments who have received eternal life – descends with the New Jerusalem from heaven on earth. God Himself will live among the peoples. The question is how can the agreement of Revelation 20 and 21/22 with Ezekiel 38,39 and 40-48 be explained? There is only one explanation possible, namely that at the end of time the enmity against God and Israel will cumulate in a world-wide war against Jerusalem. This will happen at the end of history, which will be concluded with God's intervention and final judgment. Such a situation has not occurred until now. The end of Revelation – Revelation 20 to 22 – seems to complete Ezekiel's eschatology. Ezekiel's eschatology seems to focus on the struggle that will turn against the Jewish people worldwide towards the end of history and the restoration that God – as a people and physically – will bestow upon His people Israel. Then comes the new heaven and the new earth into view with the temple vision of Ezekiel 40-48 and Revelation 21 and 22. It may be good to compare the prophets with a similar eschatology as Ezekiel.

Then they will know that I am the LORD.



Similarities between the end of Ezekiel and that of the book of Revelation.

There is no denying that there are great similarities between the future expectations of the book of Ezekiel 34 to 48 and the fulfillment envisioned in the book of Revelation 20 to 22. First, there is the final battle of Gog and Magog against the People of Israel and God's judgment of the nations. This battle can be found in Ezekiel 38 and 39, but also in Revelation 20. After this final battle as described in Ezekiel and Revelation, the book of Ezekiel follows the vision of the temple and in Revelation the New Jerusalem. Now the case that there are great similarities between these two visions. First, the new temple from Ezekiel, but also the New Jerusalem from Revelation, is placed on a *high mountain* in the heart of the land of Israel. Secondly, there is *a similar river that produces life and originates from under the throne of God*. There is also talk in both places that the city has *twelve gates to the number of the tribes of Israel*.

End and new beginnings.



Similarities between the end of Ezekiel and that of the book of Revelation.

Gog en Magog

Ezekiel 38, 39:1-4

And you, child of man, prophesy to Gog, and say, "So the Lord LORD says, Behold, I am against you, Gog, chief of Mesech and Tubal! I will turn you around, drag you, pull you up from the far north and take you to the mountains of Israel, (..) On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops, and the peoples who are with you. I have given you food to all kinds of birds of prey and to the animals of the field. (..) I will send fire into Magog and among those who inhabit the coastal lands without worries. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Revelation 20

And when those thousand years have come to an end, Satan will be released from his prison. And he will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for war. And their number is like the sand of the sea. And they came up across the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the army place of the saints and the beloved city. But fire from God descended from heaven, and that devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the pool of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are already. And they will be tormented day and night in all eternity.

The LORD'S mountain.

Ezekiel 40:2

In visions of God, He brought me to the land of Israel. He puts me on a very high mountain, on the south side something like the building of a city.

Revelation 21:10

And He carried me away in the spirit on a great and high mountain and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, which descended from heaven, away from God.

The city with the twelve gates.

Ezekiel 48:31-34

The gates of the city will be according to the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates to the north: one the Ruben gate, one the Juda Gate and one the Levi Gate. And on the east side, the size is forty-five hundred, with three gates: one the Joseph's Gate, one the Benjamin gate and one the Dan gate. The south side: the size is forty-five hundred el, with three gates: one the Simeon gate, one the Issaschar gate and one the Zebulon gate. The west side: forty-five hundred el, with three corresponding gates: one the Gad gate, one the Aser gate and one the Naftali gate.

Revelation 21:12,13

She had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at those gates twelve angels. There were also names written on it, namely of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. Three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

The river of the water of life.

Ezekiel 47:12

And along the stream, along its banks, on this side and on the other side will emerge all kinds of fruit trees, the leaves of which will not wilt and from which the fruit will not run out. Each month they will produce new fruits, because the water in front of them flows from the sanctuary. Its fruit will serve as food and its leaf will be cured.

Revelation 22:1,2

And he showed me a pure river, of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and from the Lamb. In the middle of her street and on one side of the river and on the other side of the river was the Tree of Life, which produces twelve fruits – from month to month He gives His fruit. And the leaves of the tree are healing the pagan peoples.

The scavengers are their to finish Gog.

A similarity to the prophecies in the book of Revelation is also the arrival of the scavengers – birds and wild animals – in the army place of the defeated enemies. Revelation 19:17,18 *And I saw one angel standing close to the sun, and he cried in loud voice to all the birds that flew high in the sky: Come and gather for the sacrament of the great God, to eat flesh of kings, and flesh of superiors over a thousand, and flesh of the powerful, and flesh of horses and of those who sit on it, and flesh of all the free people and of slaves, the small and the great.* It is presented by the LORD in Ezekiel as a sacrificial meal. There's the meat. There are the carnivores – scavengers among the birds and the wild animals – who are served a meal by God. Ezekiel 39:17 *And you, child of man, so says the LORD Lord: Say to all kinds of birds and to all the animals of the field: Gather and gather, gather from all around, at My sacrifice, which I bring, a great sacrifice for you on the mountains of Israel, and eat flesh and drink blood.* The people of Israel ate the flesh of animals, of lambs and bucks and young bulls in the temple of the LORD. Since the names of these animals were sometimes also given to the greats of the earth, it is suggested that the birds and the wild animals feast on the flesh of sheep and goats and bulls; In reality it's soldier meat. But there are also high-ranking soldiers and princes. Ezekiel 39:18 *You will eat hero's flesh and drink the blood of the country's princes: from rams, lambs, goats, young bulls, all fattened cattle of Basan.* It will be an elaborate meal. The animals will eat themselves full of food. The 'work' is certainly not done in a day. It also takes days, if not weeks, or even months to defeat everything left of Gog's armies. There's food for months. During the daily burial of many soldiers the meal of the birds and the wild animals probably continues unabated. Ezekiel 39:19,20 *You will eat fat to saturation and drink blood to*

drunkenness, from My sacrifice that I have made for you. You will be saturated at My table with horses and horsemen, heroes and all combative men, speaks the LORD Lord. It is the LORD's point in making His Name great among the nations. It has stung God that He was so disdainfully spoken and thought of among the neighboring peoples of Israel. The peoples have also treated Israel particularly badly. There comes a time when God can fix this, and this is the moment. Ezekiel 39:21 I will show My glory among the pagan peoples. All the people of the Heathens will see my judgment that I have felled, and My hand, which I have placed upon them.

Thus the LORD says, Say to all kinds of birds and all the animals; Eat meat and drink blood.



Justice at last.

The Jews cannot assume in advance that God will be on their side. That has everything to do with the answer to the question "How do the people stand with their God?" But if God chops down the armies of Gog, the people of Israel – who were physically threatened with the enemy who had been approached within their own borders – will rejoice in the LORD and know that God is behind them. Ezekiel 39:22 *Then those who are from the house of Israel will know that I, the LORD, is their God, from that day and beyond.* Perhaps now it finally becomes to the Gentiles that it was because of their sins that God had abandoned His own people before. That argument was always laughed off up to that point. 'Yes yes, because of their fault, for sure. God just couldn't save His people. For that, His hand falls short,' the nations said. But in the decisive battle, the nations learn that the people who spoke of punishment and guilt are still vindicated by Israel. God is consistent in the way he goes with His people and the nations. It may take longer than we expected, but in the end the LORD is taking the case straight. Those times when the people took a hard line on Israel, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were exiled, God was punishing His people for their sins. Ezekiel 39:23,24 *Then the pagan peoples will know that those who are from the house of Israel have gone into exile for their iniquity. Because they were unfaithful to me, I hid my face from them, and gave them in the hand of their adversaries, so that they all fell by the sword.* In accordance with their inseparability and in accordance with their transgressions, I have acted with them, and I have hidden my face from them. The time for a fair verdict on Israel is over. The people of God have served their sentence, so to speak, and are now free again. Hopefully they have learned from it and are going into the future with the intention of doing it all differently and above all better. The realization of having acted culpably in the past is and remains part of the future that God offers to His people. The temple vision also has repercussions for, for example, the Levites Group, which has been restored by God because of the many abuses found among them. When God appoints the priests at the new temple – about which the following chapters are reported – they come from Zadok's family. That high priestly family apparently did well during the time God lived in the temple on earth. The monarch appointed over the people of Israel on the new earth is told that he is assigned a larger piece of territory, also to prevent him from enlarging his territory at the expense of a tribe or family. In many ways, the past seeps into the future. In this sense, the past is

fully involved when God is plotting the future for His people; repent of the sins of yesterday interferes with eternal gratitude for God's rescue. The song of God's people leads to thanksgiving and praise.

Then the house of Israel will know that I, the LORD, am their God, from that day on.



The return of Israel from the peoples to their own country.

In any case, the LORD's attitude towards His people – after the exile – has turned 180%. God really wants to represent a turnaround in the fate of His people. And when the LORD says "turnaround," He also means "turnaround." God is going to take His people back to the land He gave to their ancestors. Instead of punishing them, He is now going to take care of the people of Israel. The LORD does this for Israel, certainly, but also – and perhaps in the first place – for His own name. When the LORD says this, He means that He finds the strength and grace to give Israel a good future not in the people, but in Himself. So it is not because Israel is suddenly so good, but they owe it to God's grace, as we all do, by the way. Ezekiel 39:25 *Therefore, so says the Lord: I will now bring a reversal in the captivity of Jacob, I will take care of all the house of Israel, and I will take it for My holy name.* Meanwhile, God is sober in that Israel must take the loss – of its own country and freedom in exile – sportingly. After all, they lived in their country for centuries without any concern and then – not under pressure from enemies or anything like that – but by their own hands they went into error without any reason to do so. Every human being can feel that the LORD can still be particularly angry about it. Ezekiel 39:26 *They will have to bear their shame, and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward Me when they lived untroubled in their land, and there was no one to frighten them.* Because we live in grace time, the impression might be that God does not lift so heavily on our sins. However, the opposite is true. The judgment of God may be a kind of deferred judgment, but God's anger at our sins is particularly clear to God's Spirit. God does not want us to forget how much we have deviated from Him. It seems that the LORD is seeking our recognition of the judgments He has made on His people. We often pay only attention to the suffering of God's people. God Himself, however, does not lose sight of the sins of His people. But God's mercy wins it from judgment. It does something to the people of the other peoples when they see the Jews returning to their own country. The Jewish people have had a particularly hard time at times in the time of the diaspora, the global scattering. Every century there was time and time again the suddenly resurgent hatred against the Jews. Those people had to get rid of it in pogroms. In the ghettos, they sometimes waited and waited to see what would come over them. Certainly, the Jews also have freedom of assembly in all centuries of revival and in many countries, but WWII with Hitler in power suddenly showed a hostile face of Europe, which until that moment knew the Jewish community only out of personal hostile condemnation. Now it was one of the great European countries that proved capable of starting a world war, with the

destruction of the Jewish people as one of the spearheads. The anti-Semitism that reached its lowest under Hitler in the attempt to make all Jews disappear from the face of the earth cannot be traced back to a punishment of God. On the contrary, it is the hubris of the non-Jews who look down on the Jewish people; Something that the Apostle Paul has warned the Christian non-Jews from the beginning. Romans 11 This hubris marks the end of once Christian Europe, the breeding ground of the Christian faith. The end of God's turn to the nations means the beginning of God's renewed graceful turn to the Jewish community. After 1948 and the permission of the League of Nations, many people will have welcomed the foundation of the Jewish State and the return of many Jews from Europe and the whole world to their country of origin.

I will take care of the whole house of Israel and I will take it for My Holy Name.



Does the danger to Israel come from the Islamic corner?

It is above all the Islamic community – which has established its power in and around the Mediterranean – that must have great eyes of astonishment as the Jewish people resettled in the land that God had promised them and regained control of the city of Jerusalem. And all this while they – the Muslims – had appropriated the city of Jerusalem and the temple square centuries ago. With the construction of the Al-Aqsa mosque on the site of the Jewish temple – because of the supposed ascension of Muhammad in Jerusalem – they thought they had once and for all extended the promises of God to Abraham to themselves. They, the Arabs, were descendants of Ismael, the son of Hagar and Abraham. According to them, this was the ultimate proof that Allah was God and not the God of Israel. The Al-Aqsa Mosque tried to erase the traces of the God of Israel in the temple square. In vain, for now the Jewish people are the proud owner of the city of Jerusalem, including the temple square. According to the Bible, God chose the line Isaac and Jacob and Israel, and He had Ismael sent away. Historically, it seemed for a long time that the Arabs – read Islamists – had obliterated that shame. They were "the chosen people of God." At least that's how they behaved. But in 1948, God turned history in favor of His old people of Israel and allowed them to return to the land of promise and the city where He makes His Name live. *Ezekiel 39:27 When I bring them back from the nations and bring them together from the lands of their enemies, I will be sanctified by them before the eyes of many nations of nations.* It cannot be denied that the Arab people – read Islamic peoples – must bear with all eyes that the Jews have regained a foothold in their own country. Until now, this has never been accepted and has tried to reverse attacks and uprisings and wars, until now to no avail. At the moment, the Arab Spring – as this time was wrongly called – is on its way back and most countries and peoples are well cured of radical Islam. Libya and Tunis and Egypt and Syria are licking their wounds. Islam may be a little lower, although Turkey and Iran, think very differently. It is well known that the Jewish people feel

most threatened by Iran, with its development of nuclear weapons. Although Gog comes from the North – according to Ezekiel's lecture – but also encloses the Jewish land from the East and South sides, it could just be that God in Ezekiel is referring to a great war from the North, involving all the Islamic peoples that currently surround Israel. But there's a *but*. When it comes down to it, the Al-Aqmosk and the Dome of the Rock are an attack on Israel's faith. However, according to the Biblical Future Expectation, the aggression of the world's population will be directed against the Messiah Jesus Christ. The anti-Christ who will want to show in the temple that he is God is the anti-Christ. He is the person who will pretend to be Jesus Christ Jesus Himself. It is not clear what will raise global tensions and focus on Israel and Jerusalem. Revelation 11 makes it clear that Jerusalem is not truly an example of a holy life at that time. On the contrary, the terms fall from Sodom and the memory of the crucifixion of Christ passes. Revelation 11:8 *And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was also crucified.* But there is a group of Messiah professing Jews in Jerusalem in the end times. There is also the openness to conversion. The God of Israel is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christians of the nations are by the end of time have entered heaven. It is indeed remarkable that their entry into heaven is mentioned after God has shifted His choice from the nations to His old people. Revelation 7:9 Is it perhaps the general difficulty felt worldwide with God and the law and judgment? One thing is clear: One cannot become indifferent or neutral towards the Lord Jesus Christ. One is for or against Him. Or one accepts Him and goes through the atonement of sins and the Holy Spirit to live a new life according to God's commandments. Or people hate him. And that hatred is unstoppable at any given time.

The Al Aqmosk or the temple?



The return of the ancient people to God through the acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, we will realize that the prophecy in the book of Revelation, where there is talk of Gog and Magog – with the four corners of the earth – is more likely to see a global war break out against Jerusalem. Despite the fact that the LORD is aware of the hostile attitude of many peoples towards His own people, He speaks boldly of bringing back the Jews from all corners of the world. Ezekiel 39:28 *Then they will know that I, the LORD, am their God, because I led them into exile among the pagan peoples, but also collected them again in their land, and left none of them behind.* Hopefully, the return to the own land that God bestowed upon them goes hand in hand with the people's return to God through the acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear that God punished His people with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD for the rejection of God's Son, the Lord Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. Mark 13:1,2 *And when He left the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, look, what a stone and what a building! And Jesus replied to him: Do you see these great buildings? There will not be one stone left on the other stone*

that will not be broken down. The impression that some people give – that there is salvation for Jewish people outside the Lord Jesus – must be rejected. God does not punish His people with 2,000 years of exile from Jerusalem, and then – beyond Christ Jesus to – let them all in. God's goal will be to reflect and come to life through the centuries of banishment of land and people to find Messiah Jeshua who God has sent and to take the outstretched hand of God to salvation. Yet – even at the end of time – there will be no question of the entire Jewish people accepting the Lord Jesus. We know – also from the Revelation of John – that the Jerusalem of the end times is not really a city full of devotion to God. On the contrary, the city of Jerusalem of the end times is compared to Sodom. Revelation 11:8 *And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was also crucified.* However, we know that there are also many believers in the city of Jerusalem and that the final battle that will be accompanied by a huge earthquake will also bring many people to repentance in Jerusalem. Revelation 11:13 *And at that same hour a great earthquake occurred, and the tenth part of the city collapsed. And in that earthquake, 7,000 people of particular were killed. And the others became very fearful, and gave honor to the God of heaven.* While it is known to the nations that they will not take a step towards God by the end – despite all the misery that is poured out over them (Revelation 9:20) – it is known from the Jewish people of Jerusalem that a considerable number will give the honor to God. Ezekiel 39:29 *I will no longer hide my face from them when I have poured My Spirit over the house of Israel, the Lord speaks.*

I will no longer hide my face from them when I have poured my Spirit upon Israel, says the LORD.



Another Future Forecast?

It is known that it is precisely from Revelation 20 that another – so-called 'Biblical' – Future Expectation has been designed. The term is now on the millennial realm idea or the chiliasm. For many people, the first verses of Revelation 20 are the starting point of a Future expectation in which a so-called millennial empire is expected between the second coming of Christ and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth. During that empire, Christ would rule the earth in Jerusalem all over the world. Until that time, Satan would be bound and imprisoned so that he cannot do no harm. By the end of the time, Satan would be released for a short time, and then the world rulers would make Gog and Magog speak of themselves. The idea of the millennial empire is that the entire Bible is folded to support this story, which has a very small basis and these 6 verses from Revelation 20. In fact, however, the thousand years refers to the present time. The number of thousands refers to a long time in which the Lord Jesus rules. Meanwhile, the Lord Jesus – aided by the people of faith who participate in life in heaven after their death – reigns from heaven for some 2,000 years. The Lord Jesus has set himself with the Ascension on the

throne to God's right hand. In this day and age, all powers that rise up against God are laid as a footstool at the feet of the Lord. It is Psalm 110 of which we see the fulfillment. Psalm 110:1 *A psalm of David. The LORD has spoken to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I have made Your enemies into a footstool for Your feet.* It is this Psalm that indicates the framework within which the New Testament talks about the time between Ascension and Second Coming. So did Paul. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 *Then comes the end, when He has surrendered the kingship to God and the Father, when He has destroyed all dominion and all power. For He must be King until He has put all the enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. After all, all things He has subjected to His feet. However, when He says that all things are subject to Him, it is clear that He has subjected all of them to Him, excepted for Himself. And when all things are subject to Him, then the Son Himself will submit to Him who has subjected all things to Him, that God will be all in all.*

Put yourself on my right until I have laid down your enemies as a foot in front of your feet.

Psalm 110:1	A psalm of David. The LORD has spoken to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I have made Your enemies into a footstool for Your feet.
Mathew 22:44	The Lord has said to My Lord, "Sit on my right hand, until I have laid down your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
Mark 12:36	For David himself has said through the Holy Spirit, "The Lord has said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand until I have laid down your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
Luke 20:43	Until I have laid down your enemies as a footstool for your feet.
Acts 2:35	Until I have laid down your enemies as a footstool for your feet.
Acts 7:55,56	But he, full of the Holy Spirit, kept his eyes to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus, standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man, standing at the right hand of God.
Romans 8:34	Who is it that damns? Christ is the One Who has died, yes what is more, who is also cheerful, who is also on the right hand of God, who also pleads for us.
Ephesians 1:20	He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and put him on His right hand in the heavenly regions,
Colossians 3:1	If you are now resurrected with Christ, find the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God.
Hebrews 1:13	And to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit on my right hand, until I have laid down your enemies as a footstool for Your feet?"
Hebrews 10:13	He waits for the time when His enemies are made into a footstool for His feet.
Hebrews 12:2 8:1/10:12	While we keep an eye on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. He has endured the cross and despised the shame for the joy that had been given to Him, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God.
1 Peter 3:22	who is on the right hand of God, ascended to heaven, while the angels, powers, and powers are subject to Him.

The final battle preceding the breakthrough of God's Empire on the new earth.

In the Biblical Future Expectation that the LORD arouses with Ezekiel, the agreement stands out with Revelation 20 to 22. The names Gog and Magog that fall into Revelation 20 are the world leaders who mobilize the whole world against God and His people Israel. These names come from Ezekiel 38 and 39. There is nowhere in Ezekiel's Biblical Future forecast to mark a period of a thousand years during which the Shepherd reigns over this world in Jerusalem. The Shepherd's reign, The Son of David, is transposed to the moment when New Jerusalem descends to earth.



Christ at the right hand of God.

Satan is the evil genius behind the final battle.

So far, two books have been found from which God develops a Biblical Future Expectation: Daniel and Ezekiel. When we take a closer look at these two eschatology's, Daniel seems to focus more on the antichrist, while Ezekiel is more focused on the final battle and the new heaven and the new earth. For this reason too, there seems to be much to say that between Revelation 1 to 19 and 20 to 22 there is a seizure. Daniel's eschatology would then find its fulfillment in the first part of Revelation, while Ezekiel operates more from the second part – from Revelation 20. This is not about everything or nothing, but about more or less. For the final battle we also find verses – to name something – in Revelation 13:19 *And the beast was given power to wage war against the Saints and to overcome them, and he was given power over every tribe, language, and people.* The infamous episode of the scavengers called to clean up the slaughter among the enemy armies is found not only in Ezekiel 39:17-20 also in Revelation 19:17,18 *And I saw one angel standing close to the sun, and he cried in loud voice to all the birds that flew high in the sky: Come and gather for the sacrament of the great God, to eat flesh of kings, and flesh of superiors over a thousand, and flesh of the powerful, and flesh of horses and of those who sit on it, and flesh of all the love and of slaves, the small and the great.* The impression that Revelation 20 is about a new as yet unknown phase of history is certainly untrue as a number of things – see above – have already been mentioned and incorporated into the revelation. But will anyone say, "What about Satan? It is nevertheless said that he would not deceive the nations again until the thousand years had come to an end. And then he has to be released for a short time." Revelation 20:3 As far as Satan is concerned, we must distinguish between his latent false influence and the freedom and space he receives from God at the certain moments of history. For example, when we pay attention to the time when Lord Jesus was on earth, we do see a false latent influence of the evil; think of the people who were demonized and sought and found healing with Jesus. Satan is indeed present in a negative sense during the time during Jesus' performance. But this is not comparable to the moment when he gets all the space of God to do what he wants. At that moment – close to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus – the Lord speaks of "*the hour of the power of darkness.*" Luke 22:53 *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not extend your hands to Me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness.* Also in the end times, God will give Satan all the space to do what he wants for a short time, and that is not much good. Satan is the evil genius behind the final battle. In the short time assigned to him, he tries to do as much damage as possible to God and His

people. Then God intervenes from above and Satan – with all his followers – is finally thrown into hell from which they will never come out.

Jesus and Satan.



Judeo-Christian future expectation from Ezechiel.

D. Ezechiël 40-42

On the new earth. In the book of Ezekiel – from Ezekiel 40 – the contours of the city and the new temple are revealed. Ezekiel 40:2 *In visions of God, He brought me to the land of Israel. He put me on a very high mountain, on the south side something like the building of a city.* When the vision of the new temple is shown to Ezekiel, we see a virgin landscape with something Ezekiel reminds of a city. Up close, however, it turns out to be a temple complex. *The new temple of Ezekiel* is located on the new earth. To be precise on the mount of the LORD, Mount Moriah. Moriah was the place where Abraham had to sacrifice his son Izaak and where King David later bought the threshing floor from Ornan and sacrificed his beasts, when God had let go of His wrath. 2 Chronicles 3:1 *Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD, in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had determined, on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusiet.* Later, the name Sion somewhat supplanted the name Moriah.

The place where God lives on earth.

This is also the site of the current temple square, within the city of Jerusalem. When God allows the prophet to approach the place from the air, there is only a mountain to be seen with what looks like a city. This is the first thing God shows about the new earth: God's house on the Temple Mount. This is a strong match with what the LORD is showing to John about the new earth in the book of Revelation. There, the New Jerusalem descends on earth also on the Lord's mountain. Revelation 21:10 *And he led me away in spirit on a great and high mountain and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, which descended from heaven, away from God.* Biblical data keep us in that regard with both feet on the ground. There is a distinction between the new and the old earth. But there is also a strong similarity such as the place where God lives on earth. We must realize that a similar situation has already occurred. With the flood, a first judgment has already

passed over the whole earth, but after that life went on – changed – again. It is the Apostle Peter who makes the link with 'the world that was there' – who perished through the water – when he delivers the verdict that the present world will be perished by fire. 2 Peter 3:5-7 *For knowingly it is unknown to them that through the Word of God the heavens have long been there, as have the earth, which rises from water and is stuck in water. As a result, the world that was there at the time has perished, flooded by the water. But the heavens that are now there, and the earth, are preserved by the same Word as a treasure, and are kept from the fire until the day of judgment of the wicked people.* Even after the last judgment, the world will continue – restored and renewed. There will be discontinuity, but also things that remain the same. It's the same earth. The temple of God will stand on the temple mount, where in the time of King Solomon the temple also stood.

The Temple Mount, Mount Moria.



Continuity and discontinuity in the transition from the old to the new earth.

The Apostle Peter distinguishes between the world before and the world after the Flood. He talks about "the heaven and the earth that there is today" as if it were substantially different from the heaven and earth from before the Flood. It is undeniably true that things have changed by God after the Flood. The reason for the flood was "the uncontrollable violence on earth." Genesis 6:13 *Therefore, God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before My face, for the earth is filled with violence by them; And behold, I'm going to destroy them with the earth.* With the rule 'eye for an eye and tooth for tooth', the LORD created the so-called 'rule of law' after the Flood, complete with judges and the police and the judiciary. The rule of law was to ensure that the offender received an appropriate punishment. That should be the end of bloodshed. That's how the blood revenge ended. So there were more changes. For example, humans were allowed to eat animal meat. The LORD also pledged not to make any more interim judgments – such as the Flood. It is remarkable that Paul also considers our heaven and earth as second heaven and earth. In this line of thought, the coming sky and the new earth (Paradise) is the third heaven. Paul tells of a vision in which he had been taken to the third heaven and saw Paradise. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 *I know a man in Christ, fourteen years it has been – whether it happened in the body, I do not know; or outside the body, I do not know; God knows – that such a person was taken into third heaven ... and that he was absorbed into Paradise and heard unspeakable words that a man is not permitted to pronounce.* Paul has already seen the world to come.

Life on the new earth.



That is not given many people, but we know that John on Patmos also witnessed the New Jerusalem descending upon the new earth. On the new earth, not everything is new as many people think. It is still the same earth with the mountain where God lived and the land that belongs to Israel in this dispensation. That land will also be their property on the new earth. The people of the peoples will live in their own countries. Yet there is also discontinuity. So all the people who are part of the new world are new people with a completely new body. We will no longer be burdened with sin and death and the devil. Those three are no longer found on the new earth; They stay in hell where they'll never get away. However, there is a reminder of life in today's dispensation. For example, it is said by name that the sinful and wicked figures do not enter Jerusalem. Revelation 21:27 *All that is impure will not come, nor will anyone engage in horrors and lies, but only those who are written in the book of the lamb's life.* Apparently, the chosen ones – who are part of the new life – on the renewed earth retain a memory of 'how it used to be.' At the moment such verses act as a warning. At that time, it was memories that feed the gratitude, the joy, and the honor of God. We know that the water of the Dead Sea will become sweet and full of fish, but also that there will be some larger and smaller puddles on the shore that keep salty. Ezekiel 47:11 *But its marshes and its pools will not become healthy: they have been given away to the salt.* It's a reminder of the old days, and maybe useful.

The high mountain.

The high mountain is an indication of the place. We find that clue in Ezekiel but also in the book of Revelation. From the beginning in Revelation 21, there is talk of 'God's tent being with the people.' The tent of God is a reference to the temple being transferred to the earth from heaven. Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven say, Behold, the tent of God is with the people, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.* Now the LORD could choose a completely different place, but God does not. It is the place that the LORD has carefully chosen. According to several places in the book among others. Deuteronomy 16:6 *is the place that the Lord, your God, will choose to let His Name dwell there.* From the beginning it is clear that God wants to live in His beloved place; hamakom (Mokum) where the temple of the LORD has always stood in the center of His people Israel: On the mountain, which is called *the high mountain*. In the book of Revelation, the LORD makes it clear that He will live there forever. Revelation 21:11 *And He led me away in spirit on a great and high mountain and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, which descended from heaven, away from God.* Also in another respect, the agreement between Revelation 20 to 22 and the eschatology of Ezekiel is obvious. Revelation 20 speaks – like Ezekiel 38 and 39 – of the end of times with the actions of Gog and Magog but also in Revelation 21 – like Ezekiel 40 – of a new beginning through the new temple at the site of *the high mountain*.

God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



Ezekiel's temple vision.

Ezekiel is very visual. The LORD shows the Prophet the new temple and also notes that he must look carefully out of his eyes. Besides, he's got to listen carefully. In other words, he needs to open up his senses properly. Nevertheless, we have not escaped the fact that the first thing to see – four times in one verse – is mentioned. Ezekiel 40:4 *Then that Man spoke to me: Man child, see with your eyes, listen with your ears, and take to heart all that I will show you. You were brought here so I could show you this. Make everything you see known to the house of Israel.* 25 years after the beginning of Ezekiel's exile, he receives the temple vision of God. Ezekiel went into exile with King Jechonia. That was in 597 BC when the largest deportation to Babel became a reality. He received *the vision of the new temple* – 25 years later – to be precise in 572 BC. God gives the prophet a vision of the new temple. One of the most striking visions – which Ezekiel received earlier – was that of the demolition of the ancient temple and the departure of the LORD from Jerusalem. Ezekiel 11:22,23 *Then the cherubs raised their wings, and the wheels lifted at the same time as them. And the glory of the God of Israel was over them from above. Then the glory of the LORD rose from the middle of the city and remained on the mountain that lay east of the city.* As heavy as the judgment of Jerusalem falls on the Prophet and the exiles in Babel, it will have been so wonderful for the Prophet and the exiles to receive this vision of the new temple and to see with your own eyes that the LORD will re-live in His house in the future. The story of the new temple in Ezekiel 40-48 is an extraordinarily rejoicing signal from God's side about the coming restoration, God's living among His people in Jerusalem. It is noticeable that the name Jerusalem is nowhere to be seen. However, the prophet is brought to the land of Israel. So he's certainly not in any area anywhere on this earth. Although the name does not fall, by the words high mountain reference is made to the city of Jerusalem, in particular Mount Sion or temple mount. This mountain is called 'a very high mountain'. It is well known that the Temple Mount in the Bible is called the highest of all the mountains. That is not because this mountain rises head and shoulders above all other heights, but because God is high and nothing beats the glory of the LORD. In fact, Mount Sion is 744 meters high, 100 meters lower than the Mount of Olives which is on its east side and looks down on Jerusalem and the temple square. Nevertheless, Mount Sion – because God lives there – is the highest of all the mountains. On the south side, Ezekiel notices something resembling a city. Presumably he keeps the temple complex – as it will show in his eyes in chapters 40-48 – initially for an urban development. Ezekiel 40:2 *In visions of God, He*

brought me to the land of Israel. He put me on a very high mountain, on the south side something like the building of a city.



The new temple.

The Temple Mount is the highest of all the mountains.

Ezekiel 20:40

However, do not desecrate my holy Name with your gifts and your stink gods, for on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel, the Lord speaks, there all the house of Israel will serve me in the land, in its whole. There I will please them, and there I will ask your sacrifices, with the very best of all your sanctified gifts.

Isaiah 2:1-5
Micah 4:1ev

The word that Isaiah, Amoz's son, has seen about Judah and Jerusalem. It will come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house will be fixed as the highest of the mountains, and that it will be elevated above the hills, and that all the pagan peoples will flow there. Many nations will go and say, Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; then He will teach us about His ways, and we will follow His paths. For from Sion the law will come, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the pagans and many peoples. And they will turn their swords into plough shears and their spears into pruning knives. No people will raise the sword against another people. They will not learn more. House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Psalm 48:1-3

A song, a psalm, of the sons of Korach. The LORD is great and highly praised, in the city of our God, on His holy mountain. Beautiful in location, a joy for all the earth, Mount Zion on the north side is the city of the great King!

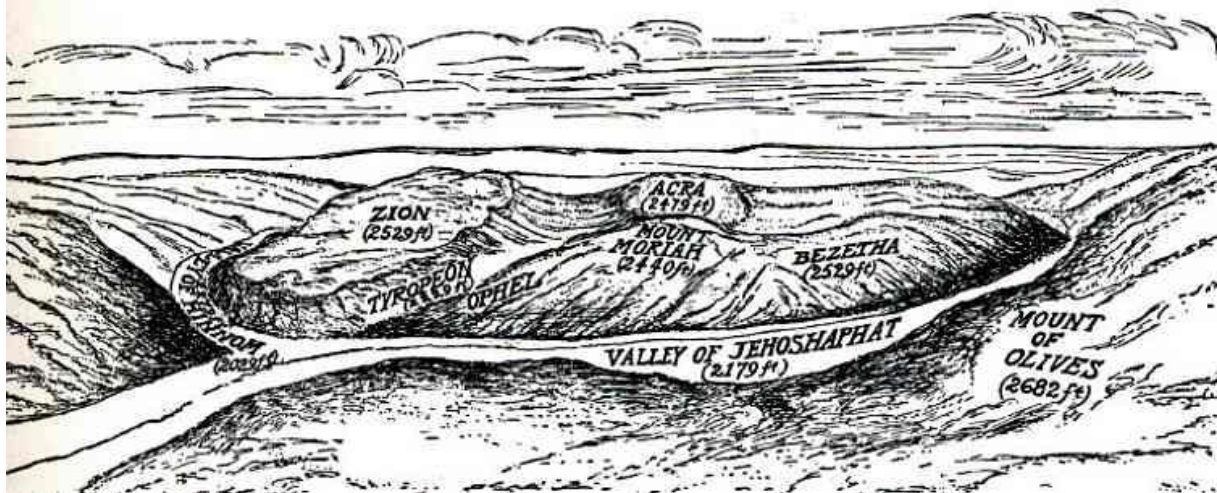
Psalm 68:17

Basan is a mighty mountain, Mount Basan is a mountain with many peaks. Why, mountains with all your peaks, do you look with envy at this mountain, which God has coveted as His dwelling? Yes, the LORD will live there forever.

Revelation 21:10

And he carried me away in the spirit on a great and high mountain and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, which descended from heaven, away from God.

Jerusalem mountains.



The entrance to the new temple.

There is a wall around the building complex. In the wall is – at least on three sides – a gate. In the North, the South and the East. There's a Man at the East Gate. Its appearance shines as copper. The glory of the LORD is more often experienced and described as 'shiny precious metal'. Ezekiel 1:4,27 and 8:2 The Man has measuring material in his hands. Ezekiel 40:3 *He took me there, and behold, a Man. His appearance was like the appearance of copper and in His hand was a linen cord and a measuring stick. And He was in the gate.* Not coincidentally, the translation writes 'the Man' with a capital letter. The Man addresses the prophet in the same way as God does, namely with the title: Human Child. Human child certainly has no derogatory intent, but it makes the distinction between God and man. The Man must be the Lord Jesus. He is often involved – as with the prophet Daniel and Zacharia and the book of Revelation – in revelations about the future of God's people. He is always dressed differently, but there are always reasons to believe that we are dealing with the Son of God in this person. That we think of the Lord Jesus stems from the fact that the Man is identified with the Son of Man, with whom the Lord Jesus identifies in the Gospels. It is noticeable that the Man – i.e. the Lord Jesus – moves among the people, while God the Father lives in the temple or moves on the throne of the cloud wagon, and that the Holy Spirit dwells in the people. What we see in the prophet Ezekiel, but also with Daniel and Zacharia, is that there is a certain 'division of roles' between God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While the Heavenly Father enthrones in the temple (or on the throne of the cloud wagon), the Lord Jesus is more the executor of God's plans, while the Holy Spirit represents God the Father and the Son in the hearts and minds of the faithful people. The Man encourages the prophet Ezekiel to use his eyes and ears well and to make everything known to the house of Israel. Ezekiel 40:4 *Then that Man spoke to me: Man child, see with your eyes, listen with your ears, and take to heart all that I will show you. You were brought here so I could show you this. Make everything you see known to the house of Israel.* God wants the people of Israel to hear this and see what Ezekiel sees and what he hears. It will encourage them enormously. God raises great expectations for the future of His people Israel. Ezekiel immediately uses his eyes good. He sees a wall around the entire complex. The Man has a measuring stick in the hand of just over six el. An el is about 50 cm. We have to add a hand width (10 cm) per el, makes $60\text{ cm} \times 6 = 3.60\text{ m}$. For convenience, we put on the size 1 el = 50 cm. We keep in mind that we have to imagine it a little bigger. The moment Ezekiel sees the measuring stick, the Man will measure. He measures the height and thickness of the wall. It turns out that the wall is as high as it is thick, namely good 3 m. Not very high. He probably

doesn't serve as protection against hostile elements. It's more like a confinement of the sacred.
 Ezekiel 40:5 *And behold, there was a wall on the outside of the house, which ran all the way around it. Now there was in that Man's hand a measuring stick of six el, per el an el and a hand width long. He measured the width of the structure: one bar, and the height: one bar.*

The Man in linen.

Ezekiel 40:3,4

Compare
 Ezekiel 9:2-11
 Ezekiel 10:2-7

He took me there, and behold, a Man. His appearance was like the appearance of copper and in His hand was a linen cord and a measuring stick. And he was in the gate. Then that Man spoke to me: Human child, see with your eyes, listen with your ears, and take to heart everything I will show you. You were brought here so I could show you this. Make everything you see known to the house of Israel.

Daniel 10:5,6
 Daniel 12:6,7

I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, there was a Man, dressed in linen, his hips girded with the fine gold from Ufaz. His body was like turquoise, His face as the appearance of lightning, His eyes like flares, His arms and His feet as the sheen of polished copper and the sound of His words as the sound of a crowd.

Zechariah 2:1,2

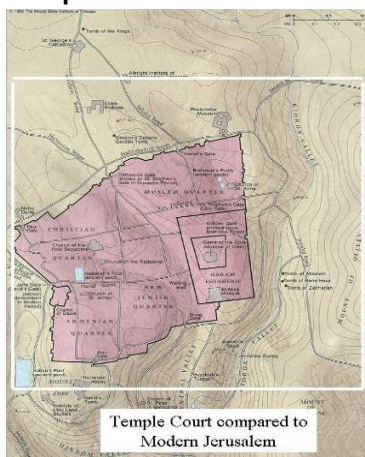
Compare
 Zechariah 1:8-10

I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, there was a Man with a measuring cord in His hand. Then I said, "Where are you going?" He said to me, I'm going to measure Jerusalem to see how big its width and how big its length will be.

Revelation 1:13-15

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, I saw someone who looked like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe down to his feet, and girded on the chest with a gold belt; and His head and hair were white, like white wool, like snow, and His eyes were like a flame, and His feet were like shining copper, made glowing in an oven, and His voice sounded like the sound of many waters.

Compare the outline of the new temple (white square) with the ancient temple in Jerusalem.



The East Gate. The Man is in front of the gate. To be precise, the East Gate. Ex Oriente Lux or 'From the east comes the Light', so goes the saying. The fact is that at this moment a gate is also visible on the east side of the temple complex in Jerusalem. It is the gate overlooking the Mount of Olives. That gate is closed.

The current closed East Gate and (a projection of) a new temple,



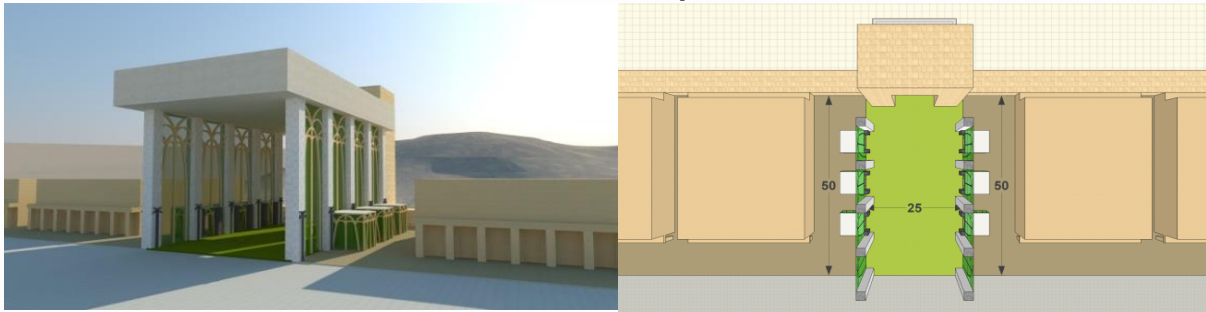
But also the existing temple in Ezekiel's time knew the entrance on the East Side. Indeed, when the LORD leaves the temple of Jerusalem – in the vision of Ezekiel – He also leaves the temple on the side of the East Gate. The new temple area is higher than the surrounding terrain. In front of the gate is a staircase with seven steps. People who have calculated it come at $7 \times 31.5 \text{ cm} = 2.20 \text{ m}$ high. The East Gate – or rather the gatehouse – is described in detail and in detail. The South Gate and the North Gate – as well as the three gates to the higher rectangular temple square – are identical. It is enough to describe one port carefully. If you look at the whole, you will see an – almost – symmetrical temple complex. The left half of the temple complex with walls and gates and squares is – without the sacrificial tables and priest's rooms – the right half. For the time being, the Man limits himself to the two thresholds of the East Gate, each of which is about 3 m wide. Ezekiel 40:6 *Then He came to the gate that looked east. He climbed its steps and measured the threshold of the gate: one bar wide. He also measured the other threshold: one bar wide.*

The East Gate is a gatehouse.

We have to imagine the gate as a *gatehouse*. Inside the gate, three spaces can be found on the left and right sides, presumably for guard posts. Ezekiel 40:7 *And each waiting room was one bar long and one bar wide, and there was five el between the waiting areas.* The gatehouse is probably quite high. The number falls from 60 el which would come to about 30 m height. Ezekiel 40:14 *So did He did with the wall posts: sixty el.* The roof of the gate measures 50 by 25 el, i.e. about 25 m by 12.5 m. Ezekiel 40:13 *Then He measured the gate, from the roof of one waiting room to the roof of the other waiting room: a width of twenty-five al; entrance was opposite entrance.* Palm trees are depicted on the high wall walls on the outside. There are also tall elongated windows on the side of the gate. Ezekiel 40:16 *Furthermore, windows with railings, all the way around the gate, were pointed inwards at the waiting areas and at the wall posts of it.* The same was true of the front halls. The windows were facing all the way inward, with date palms on the wall posts. Through the gate – of 50 el = 25 m – one enters the outer square of the temple complex. The distance to the gate that gives access to the inner courtyard of the temple is also 50 el = 25 m. Ezekiel 40:15 *And from the front of the gateway to the front of the front of the front hall of the inner gate it was fifty el.* We'll stay at the East Gate for a while. On the left and right sides of the East Gate there are – built against the wall in the extension – five spaces. In total – the same applies to the South Gate and the North Gate – there are $6 \times 5 \text{ spaces} = 30 \text{ spaces}$ on the outside square built on the inside of the wall that surrounds the complex. Sometimes these spaces are called 'restaurants', because it is assumed that they are intended for the families to eat the peace offerings. Ezekiel does not just go through the East Gate to the outer forecourt on his own. The Man takes the prophet inside through the East Gate to the outer forecourt. Ezekiel 40:17 *Then He brought me into the outer*

forecourt. And behold, there were rooms and there was a pavement made, all the way around the forecourt. Thirty rooms were attached to the pavement. The North Gate can be compared in all respects to the East Gate. Ezekiel 40:20-22 Ezekiel is taken by the Man through the Eastern Gate. He walks with the Man in the direction of the North Gate which they look at up close. He sees with his own eyes that it is a copy of the East Gate. The Man then takes him to the South Gate. Same story. Ezekiel 40:24 *Then He led me in the direction of the south. And behold, there was a gate in the direction of the south. He then measured the wall posts of it and its front hall: the same dimensions.*

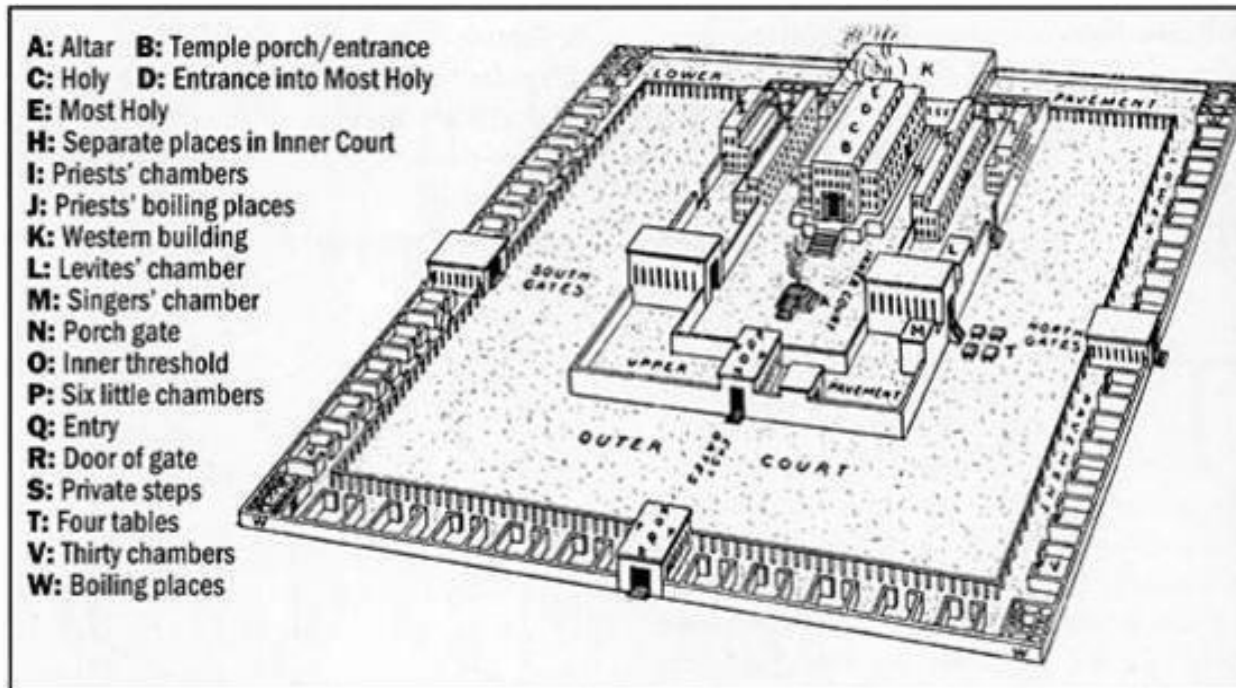
The East Gate (side and top view)



The inner East and North Gates.

Then they walk across the outer square again in the direction of the East Gate. When they stand in front of the inner East Gate, they climb the stairs leading to the inner forecourt or the temple square. Instead of the seven steps of the outside gate, there are now eight steps. The courtyard on which the temple was built is, therefore, well up two meters higher. The Eastern inner gate is identical to the outer Eastern Gate. Ezekiel 40:32 *Then He took me to the inner forecourt, in the direction of the east. He measured the gate: the same dimensions.* The inner North Gate same sheet and suit. But here are also some things that are different from the other gates. In and around the inner North Gate there are rooms and tables that serve to prepare and wash the sacrifices. For example, there was a space to wash off the sacrifices from the inner North Gate – i.e. on the inner forecourt. Ezekiel 40:38 *There was a room with an entrance at the wall posts of the gates. That's where the burnt offering would be washed off.* The slaughter tables were set up inside the inner North Gate. Ezekiel 40:39 *In the front hall of the gate were two tables on one side and two tables on the other, to slaughter the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the debt sacrifice on it.* Outside on the outer forecourt – in addition to the entrance to the inner North Gate – two tables for the slaughter of the sacrificial animals are also set up on both sides. Ezekiel 40:40 *There were two tables from outside on the side for who went up to the entrance of the north gate. On the other side that belonged to the front hall of the gate, there were also two tables.* Four tables inside the inner North Gate and four tables outside. The tables were made of stone. Ezekiel 40:41,42 *The house built on the courtyard has meat hooks for the sacrificial meat prepared on the table. Ezekiel 40:43 All around the house, hooks of one hand width were attached, and on the tables the flesh of the offering would come.* Just as the outer gates on the forecourt are surrounded by spaces built against the outside wall, so too is the interior space against the wall around the gates on both sides of a space. They are rooms for the singers Ezekiel 40:44 *On the outside of the inside gate were the rooms of the singers, in the inner forecourt, which was on the side of the north gate.* There is also a room for the priest on duty. The priests for which this house was built have tasks related to maintenance buildings and sacred objects. Ezekiel 44:45 *He spoke to me: This room, the front of which looks to the south, is for the priests who perform their duties for the benefit of the house.*

Tables for the inner North Gate and priest's houses aside from the gate.



Priests from the house of Zadok make the sacrifices.

There are also priests who have a special task of 'making sacrifices'. They are the priests from the house of Zadok, the son of Aaron. The line of lineage initially ran over the family of the High Priest Abiathar at the time of King David's time, but when he bet on the wrong horse at the turn of the throne, the king turned on him and the high priest Zadok was pushed forward. Across His family line, the line of the (high) priests continues into the future. Ezekiel 40:46 *The room with the front of the north is intended for the priests who perform their duties for the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who may approach from the Levites to the Lord to serve Him.* The inner forecourt was one hundred by a hundred el or 50 m by 50 m. In the middle of the square stood the altar in front of the temple of the LORD. Ezekiel 40:47 *Then He measured the forecourt: one hundred el long and one hundred el wide, a square. The altar was in front of the house.* The prophet Ezekiel is still at the side of the Man, who shows him the temple-complex. Although the Man with Ezekiel has made a number of circumferences, they are now approaching the temple itself. They are already located on the inner forecourt which is located eight steps above the outer forecourt. The temple itself is located on a square that is even higher, a space that can also be reached along the road of stairs from the inner square. Ezekiel 40:48 *Then he took me to the front hall of the house, and he measured a wall post of the front hall: five el on one side and five el on the other, and the width of the gate was three el on one side and three el on the other.* The Man takes Ezekiel down the stairs to the front hall of the temple itself. In front of the front hall there were two pillars in front of the front hall, as well as at the temple of Solomon, which possibly bore the roof of the front hall. At the time, they were pillars with names Jachin and Boaz. This time the names are not present. Ezekiel 40:49 *The front hall was twenty el long and eleven el wide, with the steps over which one went up. There were pillars at the wall posts, one on one side and one on the other.*

The temple of Ezekiel.

The walls of the temple may be there. They are six el – i.e. more than three meters – thick. Later we will hear of the presumed reason why the walls of the temple are so thick. The temple has a space on the inside that is 20 el wide everywhere – that is, a good ten meters. Further on, it

appears that access to the first room – the Holy One – also has doors, but these are not yet described. Ezekiel 41:1 *He brought me to the temple and measured the wall posts: six el wide on one side and six el wide on the other, the width of the tent.* Ezekiel is talking about the width of the tent. He uses the word temple in alternation of *the house* and *the tent*. A varied use of words is enjoyable for the reader, but at the same time it draws the history of the temple, which began with the tent or in other words the tabernacle in the desert.

The tabernacle.



In the Sinai desert, the LORD commissioned a tabernacle to be built in the heavenly example. Exodus 25:8,9 *And they must make me a sanctuary so that I may dwell in their midst. According to everything I will show you, a design of the tabernacle and a design of all its objects, that's how you have to make it.* Indeed, from the book of Hebrews we learn that there is a tabernacle in heaven as well. Hebrews 9:11 *But then Christ appeared, the High Priest of the Future Good of Salvation. He has gone through the multiple and more perfect tabernacle, which is not made with hands, that is: which is not of this creation.*

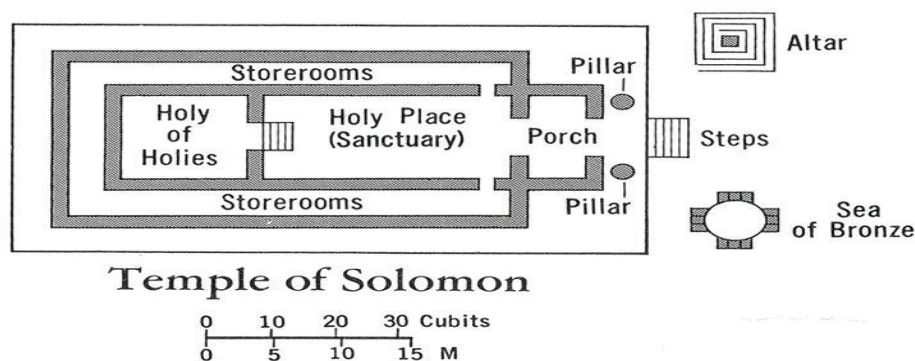
The temple was initially a tent, the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was a travel temple for the LORD. One could take the tabernacle apart and put it together. The LORD initially lived – like the Israelites – in a tent although it was a special tent. It is fair to say that the tabernacle was not twenty but ten el – five meters – wide. It was the temple that King Solomon built, which is more comparable to the new temple of Ezekiel, which was also twenty el wide on the inside. 1 Kings 6:3 *And the house that the King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty el in its height, twenty el in its width and thirty el in its height.* We can safely say that the new temple that God shows to Ezekiel bears many similarities to *the temple of Solomon*, as the first temple is often called. After the grand entrance to the front hall, the Man with Ezekiel approaches the door that gives access to the Holy. The width of the entrance to the Holy is ten el; that's five meters. With the two and a half meters – five el – on side walls on both sides of the door we do indeed arrive at twenty el or a width of ten meters. The first room, the Sacred is forty el long and – as mentioned twenty el wide – so about 10 by 20 meters. Ezekiel 41:2 *The width of the entrance was ten el. And the sides of the entrance: five el on one side and five el on the other. He measured the length of it: forty el, and the width: twenty el.* The Man walks through the Holy to the next entrance that gives access to the Most Holy place. The wall is a lot less thick namely two el, so a good meter. The entrance is six el, a hefty three meters with on either side the walls to the wall, both seven el. Taken together, the entrance and side walls form $6\text{ el} + 7\text{ el} + 7\text{ el} = 20\text{ el}$, about ten meters. Ezekiel 41:3 *Then He went in and measured the wall post of the entrance: two el.*

The entrance was six el and the width of the entrance seven el. Then the Man who leads the prophet around steps inside the Most Holy Place. Some say that Ezekiel is left behind and the Most Holy Place does not enter, but there is no indication that the prophet is left behind. He is not only a prophet, but also from a priestly house, and perhaps more importantly in this respect: God has not yet moved into the temple. We'll witness that later. The space of the Most Holy Place is 20 el by 20 el = ten by ten meters. Now the Man speaks to the prophet. He says, "This is the Most Holy Place." Ezekiel 41:4 Furthermore, He measured its length: twenty el, and the width: twenty el before the temple. Then He said to me, "This is the Most Holy Place."

Comparison with the temple of Solomon.

The basic shape of the new temple of Ezekiel is very similar to the map of the Temple of Solomon, but there are certainly differences.



Solomon temple.

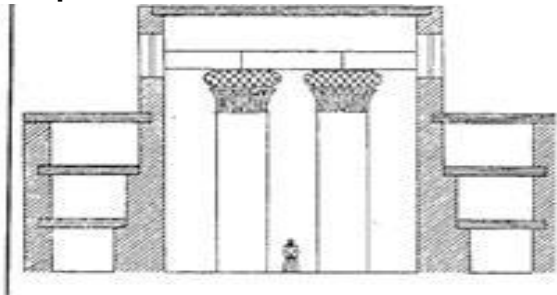
The storerooms or apartments – around the temple – will be discussed further down the road. The altar of the new temple is located centrally on the square in front of the temple. The Bronze Sea is missing from the temple of Ezekiel. The bronze Sea and the altar are located at the temple of Solomon to the left and right of the entrance. At the new temple, the pillars appear to be more in front of the front hall as bearers of the roof of the front hall, while those of Solomon were detached. The new temple – like Solomon's, by the way – has three entrances. The special thing about the entrances to the new temple is that they taper. The first entrance is 14 el, seven meters wide. The second entrance – which opens access to the Saint – is ten, five meters. The third entrance – which gives access to the Holy of Saints – is 6 el or 3 meters wide. For example, there is a narrowing from 14 el to 10 el to 6 el. The symbolism is clear. We are approaching the Most Holy, the Most Holy God of Israel.

The map of the new temple.

Below is a map of the New Temple. We see the altar in the courtyard in front of the temple. The pillars are interwoven with the front hall from which the roof is worn. Entrances narrow as they gain access to the Most Holy Place. Those who watch closely note that buildings have been installed all around the outside of the temple – on the North, West and South sides. This construction is also there at the temple of Solomon. On the West side is a large building between the temple and the Western wall, the perimeter of which is reported. After the interior of the temple is described, Ezekiel turns and with it the eye turns to the outside. The temple has been converted with a kind of apartment building – three high – on the North, West and South sides. That was also the case with the temple of Solomon. At the temple of Solomon, the thick exterior wall of the temple on the outside jumps in twice deep to create a niche in the wall. 1 Kings 6:5,6 *And all around against the wall of the house he built an extension, against the walls of the house*

around, both of the great hall and of the inner sanctum. So he made side rooms all around. The lower floor of this extension was five el in its width, the middle was six el in its width, and the third was seven el in its width, because he had made to the house all around on the outside deepening, without intervening in the walls of the house. It is remarkable that the book of Kings – as far as the attachment of the apartments to the building of the temple is concerned – also tells how this works. In this way, nothing of the sacred character of the temple is dismissed. In this way, the temple wall on the outside could be a carrier of the floor of the first and – higher – of the floor of the second floor. That floor rested after a few meters on an exterior wall that was also built around the temple. This exterior wall also had indenting sections. Thus, the outer wall of the temple and that outer wall formed, as it were, a staircase of three steps that were coming apart. On these steps the floor of the floor of 'the apartment complex' could be laid. In this way it is easy to understand that the top floor was the widest. The second floor was less wide and the bottom floor was the narrowest. The outer wall does not extend in this way either – as some interpretations want – outwards. At the temple of Solomon there are storage rooms – as far as 'the apartment building' is concerned. It is not clear in advance whether the apartments built against the new temple are intended for habitation or the storage of goods.

Temple and exterior wall as bearers of the apartments, three high.



The conversion of the temple.

Ezekiel is still trying to incorporate the side rooms that are built three-high against the outer wall of the temple. There were a total of thirty – what we would call – apartments or – if indeed, storage space – storage spaces. Ezekiel 41:6 *And the side rooms were side departures above side departures, three high, thirty times.* There were all around niches in the wall that belonged to the house, intended as support, because there should be no support in the wall of the house. Here and there seems to be the suggestion that the direct exterior wall of the temple was not used anywhere to turn on or attach a floor to it. At the same time, however, there are niches and it is suggested that the rooms in the house – this time the apartment complex – are becoming more and more spacious upwards. The latter assumes that the thick temple wall – on the outside – has become a carrier by narrowing it upwards – like the three steps of a staircase. Ezekiel 41:7 *The house was widening upwards and moving up to the side rooms.* Yes, there was an intercourse at the top of the temple, all around the temple. As a result, the house became wider upwards, and so one went up from the bottom to the top floor through the middle. Ezekiel no longer looks up at the apartments. His attention is now drawn by the foundation on which the apartment building was built and the wall that surrounds the whole. The wall appears to be six el = three meters thick. Ezekiel 41:8 *I saw an elevation all the way around the house, the foundations of the side rooms: a full bar, a connection of six el.* Like the temple, the apartments are built on the elevated temple platform, which is ten steps above the inner forecourt. It is suggested that there was a space between what the translation calls 'the side rooms'. That could well and probably is necessary if

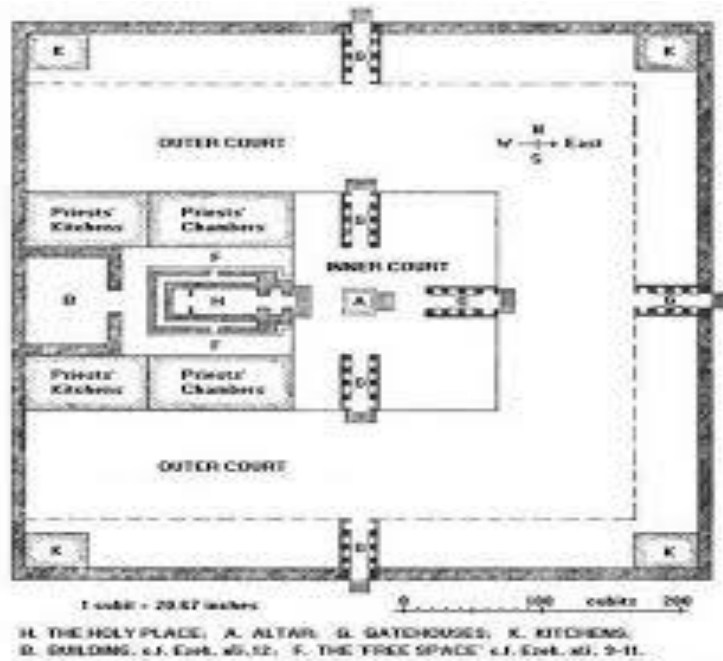
the windows in the temple wall are to make sense and let light through. Because until now there is no mention of a seven-armed candlestick or candlestick, the great assumption is indeed that there are elongated high windows connecting the temple to the outside world, so that the light receives access to the Holy and the Most Holy Place. Looks like there's a narrow road that runs down the side rooms and the temple. The road is five el = two and a half meters wide. Ezekiel 41:9 *The width of the wall that belonged to the side rooms outside was five el, and there was an open space between the side rooms that belonged to the house.* Between the side rooms that are called 'rooms' here, a space of twenty el = ten meters would have been. Again in favor of the light in the temple, presumably. Ezekiel 41:10 *Between the rooms was around the house, all around, a width of twenty el.* A balustrade of five el = two and a half meters would connect each floor, as shown in the image above. All exits of the side rooms are designed to this end. Ezekiel 41:11 *The entrances to the side rooms ended up in the open space: one entrance to the north and one entrance to the south. The width of the area of the open space was all around five el.*

The outside of the temple is formed – on the North, West and South sides – by a three-stored apartment complex built against the temple wall.



The building behind the temple on the West side.

Then the Man and the Prophet must have walked to the back of the temple complex. Behind the temple – on the West side – there is another building. The function is unknown. It is quite large for an 'outbuilding'. The width is seventy el = about thirty-five meters and the length is ninety el. That's forty-five meters. This building is probably not at the same height as the temple. It seems that the plateau on which the temple was built is called 'the cordoned off part'. The width of the wall of the building behind the temple is five, two and a half meters. Ezekiel 41:12 *As far as the structure that lay before the cordoned-off section, the side in the direction of the west, the width was seventy el. As for the wall of the structure, the width all around it was five el and its length was ninety.* On the map of Ezekiel's temple, this by-space is often drawn. The temple – or rather the temple complex complete with side spaces and surrounded area – is measured. The length and width are 100 el; Fifty meters in the square. Ezekiel 41:13,14 *He measured the house: the length was one hundred. The cordoned-off part, the structure and its walls: the length was one hundred el, the width of the front of the house and of the cordoned-off part to the east: one hundred el.* It comes out to the same size when it measures the circumference of the structure behind it, namely one hundred al; fifty meters measured from the western wall to the wall or rather the galleries at the rear of the temple. Ezekiel 41:15 *He also measured the length of the structure before the cordoned-off section that lay behind it, with the galleries on one side and on the other: a hundred el.*



Map of the temple of Ezekiel.

The interior and exterior walls decorated with cherubs and date palms.

After the Man shows Ezekiel the inside and outside of the temple building and the building built behind it, we get information about the decoration of the buildings. From the ground to the ceiling, the walls are shot with wood. This is told in so many words from the galleries of the outer rooms but also from the inside of the temple and the spaces the Holy and the Most Holy Place. Ezekiel 41:15-17 *The interior of the temple, the front halls of the forecourt, the thresholds, the windows with railings and the galleries around those three opposite the threshold, had all around a wooden shell. From the ground to the windows – and the windows were covered up above the entrance and up to the inner and outer house, and all around against the wall were panels, inside and out.* The walls are not only covered from head to toe with wood, but in the wood are also images made of cherubs and date palms. Not coincidentally, cherubs are applied as decoration. It is the cherubs that carry and propel the lord God's cloud wagon. The cherubs are the direct servants of God, who surround God's glory. The cherubs have four faces: a beef, a human, a hawk and a lion's head. Ezekiel 1:10 *Their face resembled the face of a man, all four of them on the head of a lion, all four from the left on the head of a cow, and all four had the head of an eagle.* Because the cloud wagon on which the LORD God is enthroned can move in any direction, a different face of the cherub comes first in every other direction. Because a wall is one-dimensional, at most two faces of a cherub can be depicted. The LORD has chosen the face of a man who is turned to one palm and the mouth of a lion that is towards the other palm. Alternately, palms and cherubs are visible. The date palm stands for fertility and life. Ezekiel 41:18-20 *There were cherubs and date palms made, one date palm between two cherubs. A cherub had two faces, namely a human face to the date palm on one side and the head of a young lion towards the date palm on the other, made all the way around throughout the house.* The cherubs and the date palms were made from the ground up above the entrance, and on the wall of the temple. Also, the cherubs are a reminder of the two cherubs that stood on the lord's ark on the atoning cover with the wings spread as a symbol of the Holiness of the space in which God was located, the Most Holy Place.

The cherubs on the cloud wagon, as throne of God and the new temple.



Square doors form the entrance.

We had already understood that the entrances get a little narrower each time. The first door is still 14 el – 7 meters wide – the entrance to the Saint is 10 el, five meters and the access to the Holy of Saints is 6 el, three meters. The doorframe is square. So successively fourteen by fourteen el and ten by ten el and six by six el. Ezekiel 41:21 *The temple had doorposts in the square. As for the front of the sanctuary, its appearance was as the other looked.* Although doors were attached to the doorposts, which may often have been closed, the ample access – when the doors were open – also gave access to the light. In the meantime, we are outside again and our eyes are on the doors that give access to the front hall. These doors, too, appear to be decorated with images of cherubs and date palms, similar to the images on the walls. The front hall is covered with a wooden roof, presumably supported by the two high pillars.

The entrance of the temple.



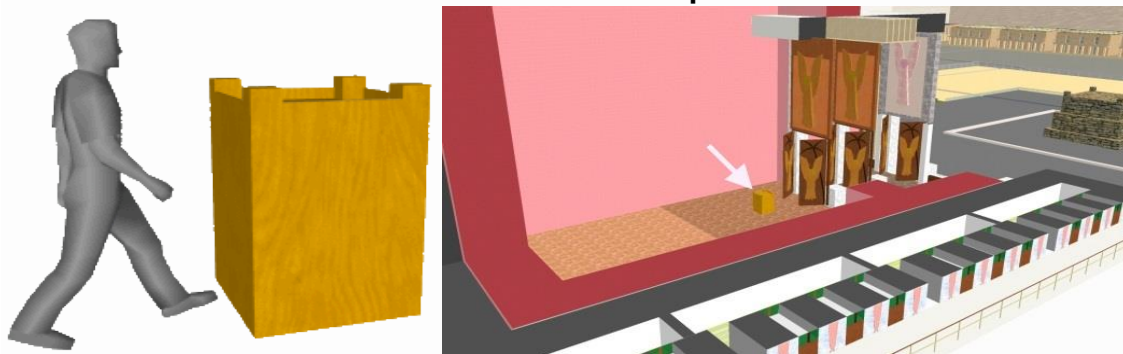
Ezekiel 41:25 *And on the temple doors, cherubs and date palms were made, as were made on the walls. There was a wooden roof outside at the front of the front hall.* Finally, something is said about the walls of the front hall and the side rooms. It turns out there are windows in it, at least openings that let in the light and air. They may be equipped with bars, but the light and the sky have also been thought of. Ezekiel 41:26 *There were windows with railings and date palms on one side and on the other, on the walls of the front hall, the side rooms of the house and the roofs.*

The wooden altar.

In the middle of the Holy place – close to the entrance to the Holy place – stands a wooden altar. It is the place of the incense altar but whether on this wooden altar is also sacrificed or incense burned is a big question, because it is entirely made of wood. The Bible does not mention that the top is covered with this or that metal. It would not only beautify the altar, especially if it were

gold, but it is also necessary to make fire on the altar without damaging the altar itself. Moments later, the altar is mentioned *table*. The sizes do not correspond to the table of tone loaves, which were normally also found in the Holy space, but also the sizes of the original incense altar deviate. However, there are corners on which some suggest that these will be the small horns that were also attached to the original incense altar. The moment when Ezekiel witnesses the presence of this altar is special because the Man who leads him around points to the wooden altar and speaks to him and says, 'This is the table that will be in front of the LORD'. Ezekiel 41:22 *The height of the wooden altar was three el and its length two el. And the corners on it, the length of it and the sidewalls of it, were made of wood. Then He spoke to me, "This is the table that will be in front of the Lord.* It is particularly a wooden altar as the only object in the large space of the Saint of 40 by 20 el (20 by 10 meters). The whole looks modest, if not reduced to the simplicity of the essence.

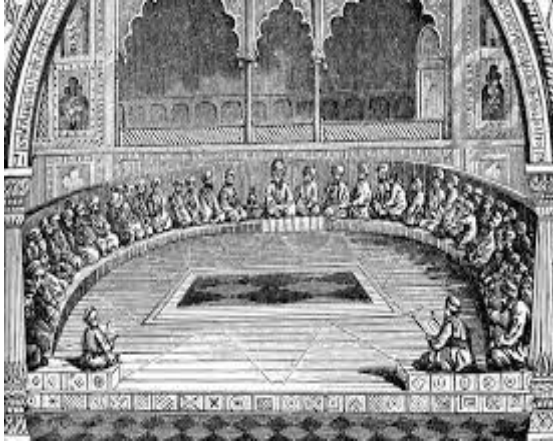
The wooden altar in a cutout of the temple of Ezekiel.



Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Temple of God.

Christ is not yet there whether the first thing He is said refers to the sacrifice He was about to make. It is John the Baptist who gives Christ this meaning. John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him, and he said, "See the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world!* In the New Testament, we witness a dormant conflict between the Lord Jesus and the Sanhedrin. The high priest is in charge of the Sanhedrin. That year, Kajafas was the high priest. John 18:13,14 The Sanhedrin is also called the Jewish Council. This Council consists of seventy people who represent the spiritual currents of the time, such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We know some members of the Sanhedrin. We know that Joseph of Arimathea was a member and also Nicodemus, who had a conversation with Jesus one night. Mark 15:43/John 3:1 For the conviction of the twelve-year-old Jesus, His Father lived in the temple. Luke 2:41-51 Jesus was truly a man on a mission. Especially the vendors in the temple had to pay the dissed. They seized *the temple square for the nations* with their trade. Jesus drove the merchants off the square to make room for the prayer for which this space was actually intended. This action made the Lord not popular with the high priest and the temple leader. To clarify the significance of the Lord to the people, He compares himself to the temple at the beginning of His action. John 2:19-21 *Jesus answered and said to them, "Tear down this temple, and in three days I will resurrect it."* The Jews would say, *"Forty-six years has been built on this temple, and you will resurrect it in three days?" But He spoke of the temple of His body.* It is precisely in His dying and resurrection that God in Christ would lay the foundations of His home in the atonement of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. That the Lord has struck a sensitive chord here is clear, because at the time when they are making accusations against Him, this is one of the harshest: *"What Jesus had said about the temple."* Matthew 26:61 *But finally came two false witnesses, who said, "This one said, I can tear down the temple of God and build it up in three days."* It was at one point Christ or the temple.

The Sanhedrin.



Jesus for the Sanhedrin.



"Jesus before the Sanhedrin," a painting by Jacques Tissot

Christ has become the bearer of the temple.

It is clear that the Lord Jesus – with His conciliatory suffering and dying – has become the bearer of the temple. The fact is that the blood of the sacrificial animals has never been enough to truly bring about reconciliation. The blood of the sacrificial animals has always referred to "the blood of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world," i.e. the crucifix death of the Lord Jesus. Just as the gold in the state vault guarantees the value of the paper money, so Christ's dying and resurrection guarantees the value of sacrifice in the temple. Christ is – according to the Hebrew writer – *the new and living way to God*. Hebrews 10:19-22 *Because we now, brethren, have boldness to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, along a new and living way, which He has consecrated before us by the predicament, which is by His flesh, and because we have a great Priest about the house of God, let us approach him with a true heart, in full certainty of faith, now that our hearts have been cleansed of a bad conscience and our bodies have been washed with clean water.* Also in heaven, Christ is believed with a reference to His sacrifice for mankind. Revelation 5:9 *And they sang a new song and said, You are worthy to take the scroll and open his seals, for You are slaughtered and have bought us for God with Your blood, from every tribe, language, people, and nation.* Although Christ has become the bearer of the temple service in His conciliatory suffering and dying, God continued to dwell in heaven and on the earth in the temple, and the temple service also had its usual progress for the Christian Jews.

God also lives in a temple after Christ's work of salvation in heaven and on earth.

Revelation 7:15

Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them.

Revelation 11:1,2

And I was given a measuring stick that looked like a staff. And the angel had come to stand there and said, "Rise up and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship in it." But leave out the outer forecourt of the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

Revelation 11:19

And the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant became visible in His temple. And there were lightning bolts, voices, thunder, an earthquake and large hail.

Revelation 13:6

And it opened its mouth to slander God, to slander His Name, and His tent and those who dwell in heaven.

Revelation 14:15,17	And another angel came from the temple and cried in a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud: Send Your sickle and mow, for the hour to mow has come for You, because the harvest of the earth has become fully ripe. And another angel came from the temple, which is in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.
Revelation 15:5,6,8	And then I saw, and behold, the temple of the tent of testimony in heaven was opened. And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues, came from the temple, dressed in immaculate and shiny linen, and girded around the chest with gold belts. And the temple was filled with smoke because of the glory of God, and because of His power. And no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels had come to an end.
Revelation 16:1,17	And I heard a loud voice from the temple say to the seven angels: Go and pour the bowls of the wrath of God over the earth. And the seventh angel poured his bowl over the sky. And there was a loud voice coming from the temple in heaven, from the throne, saying, "It has passed."
Revelation 21:3	And I heard a loud voice from heaven say, Behold, the tent of God is with the people, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

The Apostle Paul goes to the temple in Jerusalem and sacrifices there.

We see the Apostle Paul in Act 21 with people for whom he has made a vow in the temple to make a sacrifice. The Christians of the peoples may have different rules, but it is clear to the Christians of the Jews that the temple service – even after the Ascension of Jesus Christ – continued. Acts 21:23-25 *Therefore do as we tell you. We have four men who made a vow. Take it with you, clean it together with them and pay for them the cost of the sacrifices, so that they can shave their heads and all know that nothing is true of what they have been told about you, but that you walk in such a way that you also observe the law yourself. But as for the Gentiles who believe, we have written and accepted that they should not observe anything like this, except that they must wait for idol sacrifices, for blood, for the suffocated and fornication.* Here the apostle did it possible to accommodate the leaders in Jerusalem, but he himself has chosen the vow before, shaving off the hair and making the sacrifice. Act 18:18,21 *And when Paul had remained there for many days, he said goodbye to the brethren and left from there by ship, in the company of Priscilla and Aquila, to Syria, after shaved his head in Kenchreeën. He had made a vow. (..) But he said goodbye to them and said, I must certainly celebrate the coming feast in Jerusalem, but I will return to you, God willing. And he sailed out of Ephesus.* Paul did not turn his back to the temple, on the contrary. He felt close to God. Paul later even received a special revelation NB in the temple. Acts 22:17,18 *And it happened to me, when I had returned to Jerusalem and prayed in the temple, that I became in spirit, and that I saw Him and he said to me, Hurry and leave Jerusalem as a matter of urgency, for they will not take your testimony of Me.* Paul wasn't the only one. All apostles – read Jewish Christians – continued to have a very special connection with the temple, the house where God lived. Acts 3:31 *Peter now and John went to the temple together during the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.* As far as we know, the Christians of the nations have not developed any particular affection with the temple in Jerusalem. According to James, the Christians of the nations do not have to sacrifice in the temple.

Christ and the temple.



In the New Testament, we witness a spiritualization of the temple service.

What is Ezekiel's new temple? Is it a building of remembrance – for the people on the new earth – in which the essence of the approach to God is depicted along the way of sacrifice. It could just be because in Ezekiel 41 there are all the terms given to the temple: tent, house and temple. Also, the absence of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Saints and the seven-armed candlestick and the table with the tonal loaves in the Holy – all normally covered with gold – may point in the direction of the spiritualization of worship. Some Psalms – but certainly also the New Testament – know the wording of faith with concepts derived from the temple. Psalm 141:2 *Leave my raised hands as the evening sacrifice*. The Lord Jesus also seems to say to the Samaritan woman that access to God – at least for the believers of the nations – is directly through prayer and the holy Spirit. John 3:20-23 *Our fathers have worshipped on this mountain, and you are told that Jerusalem is the place where one should worship. Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the time comes when you will not worship the Father on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you don't know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the time comes and is now that the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks who so worship him*. One thing is undeniable: God the LORD will make dwelling later in the vision to Ezekiel in this temple on the new earth. Although there is also spiritualization in the New Testament, terms derived from temple construction are still used. Thus, the church of Christ is compared to the temple of the LORD, while Christ is the foundation and cornerstone of it. 1 Corinthians 3:11 *For no one can lay a foundation other than what has been laid, that is Jesus Christ*. Paul considers himself the architect of the church. He is extraordinarily capable of turning the Christian community into a spiritual home in which the LORD wants to live. 1 Corinthians 3:10 *In accordance with the grace of God given to me, I have laid the foundation as a wise master builder, and another has built upon it. However, everyone should watch over how he builds on it*. The Apostle Peter joins the metaphor of the temple. According to Peter, the church members are the living stones with which God builds His house. 1 Peter 2:1-5 *Then lay down all evil, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil. And long fervently as newborn children, for the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow up as a result, if you have at least tasted that the Lord is good, and come to Him as a living stone, which has been rejected by the people, but chosen by God and precious, then you yourself, as living stones, are built into a spiritual house, to a holy priesthood, to make spiritual sacrifices, which are gracefully welcomed by Jesus Christ*. Peter remains within this image for a while when He further extends Christ as the rejected Cornerstone to God's people and the priestly/royal character of the faithful. The impression is established that according to the New Testament, the church and the believer have taken over the function of the temple. They are the temple of the LORD, at least of the Holy

Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If one destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and this temple is you.*

The Christian church and the faithful are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

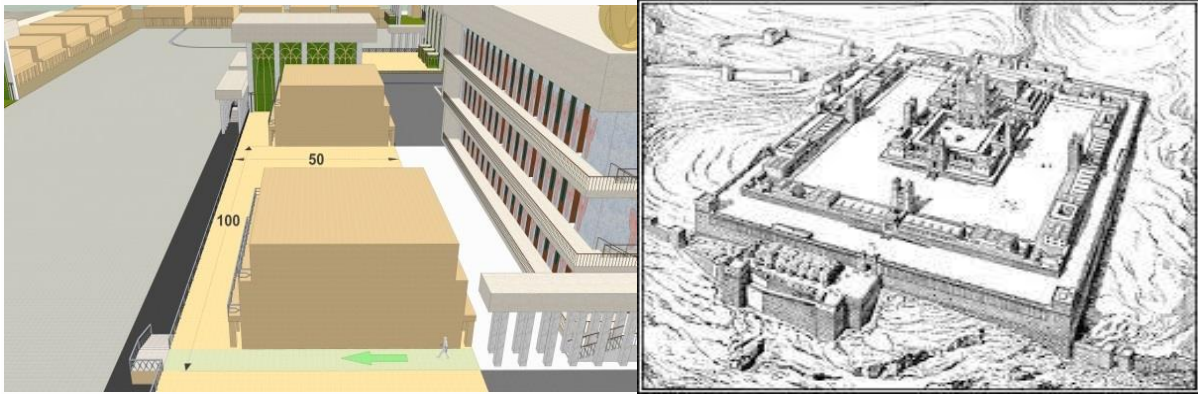


Continuity and discontinuity in the transition from this world to the next world.

The temple on the Lord's mountain on the new earth – as a place where God dwells – is an example of the continuity that is involved in the transition of this earth to the coming. It is the same mountain on the same (renewed) earth with a similar temple to Solomon's. The idea is that God the Father lives in the temple on earth and that the Lord Jesus Christ rules the earth as king and moves over the earth as a visible and tangible man. The Holy Spirit lives in all believers all over the earth divided into all the nations that the world is rich in. Because we are already called "a new creation," i.e. the people who live through the atonement of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we will think and act on the new earth in the same way as we do now. Notable change is our body that is no longer stamped by sin and death, but by the Holy Spirit. All men who share the new world have shown the faith, obedience, and perseverance – by God's grace – that they are worthy to enter into God's Kingdom. Therefore, on the new earth, there will still be a life through the Spirit and by God's grace. Our hearts will be focused on Jerusalem where God lives. With a certain regularity, all men will meet God in Jerusalem and explore His will. As nations, we will no longer wage war, but turn our swords into plough shears. Isaiah 2:1-5 In spite of it, there will be – as now – tensions, interests and conflicts that must be resolved. Although we are all perfect – by God's grace and Spirit – the personal life and coexistence of the nations is exciting at times. The honor and praise and thanks to God is etched in our hearts. Through God, we live with each other. We live together in honor of God. In all things, there is a lasting reminder of how God has delivered us from our loss and guilt. That may become clear from heaven as John describes it in his book of Revelation. People of faith who may enter God's Kingdom have immediately passed to heaven with their dying. For these people – and hopefully we will be there – there will be no second selection, with the result that the transition to the new heaven and the new earth is only a matter of time. In heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ can be seen to have sacrificed His life as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. As a man, Christ bears the scars of crucifixion in his hands, feet and silk. John describes him as the Lamb of God "that stands as a slaughter." Revelation 5:6 *And I saw, and see, in the midst of the throne and of the four animals, and among the elders stood a Lamb as a slaughter.* In those words are both the death and the resurrection of Christ. Christ is surrounded in heaven for His loving suffering and dying with songs and prayers. Revelation 5:12-14 *And they said in a loud voice: The Lamb That is sex is worth receiving the power, and wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and thanksgiving. And every creature that is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and on the sea, and all that is in it, I heard it say, To Him who sits on the throne, and to*

the Lamb be the thanksgiving, the honor, the glory, and the strength in all eternity. And the four animals said, "Amen." And the twenty-four elders cast themselves down and worshipped Him who lives in all eternity. On the new earth, God the Father, The Spirit and Christ, the Son will, among other things, keep the hymn going through the temple – complete with sacrifices to God – in memory of the suffering and salvation of Jesus Christ.

The priest's quarters at the temple.



The house for priests in the courtyard on the road along the outdoor square. Ezekiel is located at the end of the previous chapter in the square in front of the temple on the inner forecourt. Everything the Man designates and describes is there, it is visible and tangible to the prophet. They walk up a flight of stairs and down a flight of stairs. They're walking through a gate. This time probably through the North Gate which leads from the courtyard to the outside square. When he arrived, He moves in the direction of the West. There are two priests' buildings that we are now going to describe. They are located at the height of the courtyard and are built on the road on the edge of the outdoor square which is eight steps lower than the courtyard. Ezekiel 42:1 *He brought me out, to the outer forecourt, the road in the direction of the north. He took me to the rooms opposite the cordoned-off section and which were opposite the structure to the north.* The length of the building in which the priest's rooms are located is one hundred el = 50 meters. Soon we will see that there were probably two of these kind of apartment complexes on the North and south side of the temple. The width or depth is 50 el – 25 meters. Ezekiel 42:2 *forward a length of one hundred el, the entrance to the north; and the width was fifty el.*

The buildings of priests in the courtyard on the north side of the temple.

Between those buildings and the temple complex is a road of 20 el wide = 10 meters. On the other side lies the pavement of the outer forecourt. The building intended for the priests turns out to be a three-tiered building, i.e. with three galleries. The fact that God chooses a kind of apartment building is a sign that He wants to realize as many rooms for the priests as possible in a confined space. Apparently there are quite a few priests who can still be housed in the courtyard in this resourceful way. Ezekiel 42:3 *Opposite the twenty el that had the inner forecourt, and opposite the pavement that had the outer forecourt, lay in three floors gallery on gallery.* In the direction of the North and the outer forecourt a road in front of the building runs past. The road is 10 el = 5 meters wide. There would be a road 1 el wide inwards. This is possibly the space that is located between the carrier of the first gallery on the ground floor. Ezekiel 42:4 *Before the rooms was a corridor of ten el wide. Inward there was a road of an el wide, and its entrances were to the north.* The rooms of the priests have a balcony or perhaps better a gallery on the outside along the rooms, as the upper floors of flats also have this with us on the side of the front door.

God has chosen to solve the architectural problems in this way, by letting each floor jump in a bit. Ezekiel 42:5 *The upper rooms were shorter, because the galleries took up more space than those of the lower and middle of the building.* The same would apply to the south side of the temple building. There, too, there would be two apartment complexes for the priests who served in the temple. Ezekiel 42:12 *Like the entrances to the chambers that were in the direction of the south, there was an entrance at the beginning of a road, namely from the road along the protective wall, in the direction of the east, when one enters.*

The priest's quarters viewed from the north-east.



Dining rooms for the priests.

One thing is clear, the LORD does not limit itself – when showing the New Temple – to the buildings. However tangible the buildings are – and the symbolism of the Holy and the ascension of degree of Holiness in the rapprochement with God – even for the metaphor of the temple, the priests and the Presence of the Lord Himself would be greatly missed. The temple cannot do without the Presence of God and people. We are pleased to greet the houses intended for the future priests, because – that may be clear – the buildings are already there, but the LORD and the priests are still missing. But they are counted on, because that is what the Man tells Ezekiel. Suddenly we become aware that the Guide of the Prophet Ezekiel is now being spoken again. The first purpose of the room for the priest is made clear. It is primarily the spaces within which the priests of the sacred sacrifices – with which they honor God on behalf of the people and make visible the atonement for the sins of the people – will eat. The books of Levi and Numeri have similar precepts about the food given to the priests on behalf of God as part of the sacrifices made. For example, there is the grain sacrifice and the sin offering and the debt sacrifice to be eaten by the priest. Ezekiel 42:13 *Then He said to me, "The chambers of the north and the chambers of the south, which lie before the deposited part, are holy chambers, where the priests approaching the LORD will eat the most sacred offerings." There they must lay down the most sacred offerings, the grain sacrifice, the sin offering, and the sacrifice of guilt, for that place is sacred.*

The dressing rooms for the priests.

The priests' houses – at least the rooms where they eat – also serve as a dressing room for another part. With the priest's clothes they wear at their service – at the sacrifice or in the temple – they are not allowed to go among the common people. They have – arriving at the priest's room – left the height of the temple site, but the courtyard is also sacred and is unlikely to be accessed by people other than priests and other persons who enjoy special permission to do so. So when a priest intends to go to the outer forecourt, he must dress up. His holy priest's clothes must remain in the dressing room arranged for the priests. There is also his clothes in which he can go among the ordinary people. Ezekiel 42:14 *When the priests have come in, they may no*

longer go from the sanctuary to the outer forecourt, but they must lay down there their garments in which they have served, for it is sacred. Then they must change their clothes and may come close to the place that is for the people. The outer forecourt is for the ordinary people as well as the spaces that are built against the outside wall and which are described by some researchers as 'restaurants'.

The priest's rooms as seen from the outer forecourt of the people.



The space with the outer wall that separates the sacred from the profane.

'Measuring is knowing', so the saying goes. It is undeniably true. If we did not measure and we – as far as the temple of Ezekiel is concerned – had no idea of the dimensions, we would not know where we stand. The tour started at the foot of the East Gate. Where the guide started with Ezekiel, he now takes him again. New information makes us aware that there is a large area around the temple complex on all sides, bounded by a wall. Outside the wall – where the outer East and North and South gates give access to the temple complex and more importantly to God who makes dwelling in the midst of His people – there appears to be a spacious area that in turn is also bordered by a wall. Ezekiel 42:15 *When He completed the measuring of the interior of the house, He brought me out through the gate that looked east, and measured it all around.* It is noticeable that the Man measures the outside wall with the measuring stick also translated with the measuring cane. From that measuring stick we know that it is 6 el plus a hand width for each el. In fact, the measuring stick is well three meters. Ezekiel 40:5 The Man measures the east side and comes to 500 measuring slats of 6 el = 3000 el = 1500 meters. Ezekiel 42:16 *He measured the east side with the measuring stick: five hundred slats, measured all around with the measuring stick. He measured the terrain within which the temple complex lay on four sides.* Ezekiel saw that large area and comes to the conclusion that the area – within which the temple complex seemed almost small – increases its greatness and sacred character. Because that is the intention of that broad border that is drawn around the temple complex by the surrounding wall. In this way, the dividing line between the profane and the sacred is determined. Ezekiel 42:20 *On the four sides He measured the temple grounds. There was a wall, all around, with a length of five hundred el and a width of five hundred el, to distinguish between the sacred and the unholy.* When we project the large area onto the city of Jerusalem with the temple square, we see the size of both the area and the temple complex that Ezekiel was shown. See above.

The area around the temple complex.



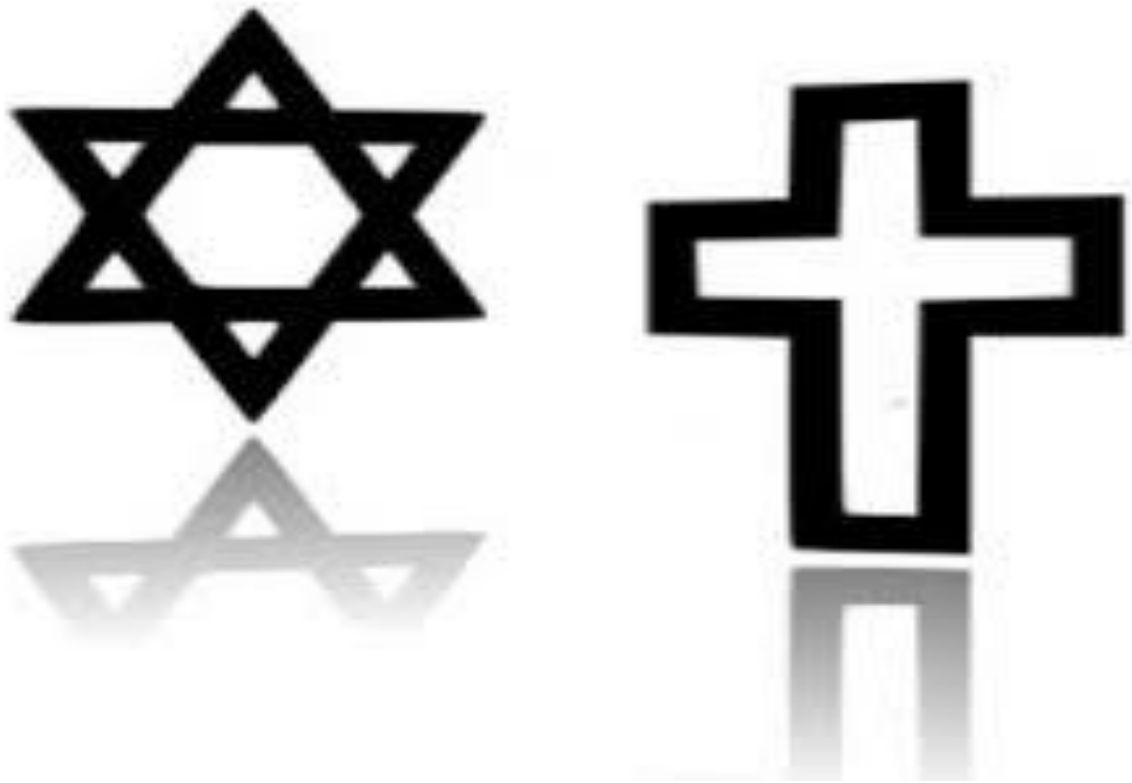
God lives on the new earth in this temple on Mount Zion.

In the previous Bible section – where we have recorded a number of expectations for the future – God has already made this commitment. Ezekiel 37:26-28 *I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an eternal covenant with them, I will give them a place and make them numerous, and I will put My sanctuary in their midst for eternity. My tabernacle will be with them, I will be a God to them, and they will be a people to me. Then the people of the pagans will know that I am the LORD who canonizes Israel, when My sanctuary will be in their midst forever.* This promise for the future was made after the promise of the Shepherd (Ezekiel 34) and the atonement of sins and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36) and the resurrection from the dead (Ezekiel 37).

Presumably we – Christians from the nations – have been given the impression that the Lord Jesus Christ has replaced the place and meaning of the temple. That impression is right in itself. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who, through the sacrifice of His life, has not only paid the high price for the debt of the world, but also bestows the Holy Spirit on every believer. Through these two promises, the church and the individual believer can be compared to a temple in which God, the Holy Spirit dwells. 1 Corinthians 3:16 *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?* This is what the Apostle Paul asks the church of Corinth. Later, he asks the members of the congregation personally for the same question. 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you and which you have received from God, and that you are not your own? After all, you are expensively purchased. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your mind, who are God's.* We, as believers – from the Jewish people and the heathen peoples – have received the Holy Spirit as a kind of advance/collateral from heaven. Ephesians 1:13,14 *In Him, when you came to faith, you were also sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, which is the collateral of our inheritance, to the salvation that was shared with us, to the praise of His glory.* Is it too far fetched to note here that we are called 'temple of the Holy Spirit', while there are still God the Father and God the Son. We will have to practice ourselves with the idea that the LORD God will dwell upon the new earth in the temple in the midst of His people Israel and thus live among the nations. It may become clear from the New Testament that the Jewish community also receives the fruits of the lord Jesus' work of salvation. In fact, even the Jewish community after the year 30 cannot be saved outside of Christ. The Lord Jesus is a bearer of the temple event. Nevertheless, the sacrificial service at the new temple also

reveals on the new earth how God has opened the way to His heart in the Son. It helps when we consider that God will switch back to the Jewish people by the end of time.

Christian-Jews and Christians from the nations.



The rebuilding of the temple.

God will bring the Jewish people back to their land. That has already happened in 1948. The Jewish people will most likely – how we do not see this in his work yet – build a temple. Revelation 11. That is the premise of the end time. According to Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:4) and the Lord Jesus (Mark 13:14), the antichrist in the temple will show that he is "god." For the Jewish people – even for the Christians of the Jews – the temple has never lost its function. After the Ascension of Christ, we often meet the religious Jews in the temple. Acts 3:9 Paul also maintained a special bond with God in the temple in Jerusalem. Furthermore, we will realize that God in heaven also lives in a temple – after Christ's Ascension. Revelation 15:8 *And the temple was filled with smoke because of the glory of God, and because of His power. And no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels had come to an end.* When we think of this, it will not be strange that with the New Jerusalem, God's temple or tent on earth is also his sanctuary, in which He will dwell among His people. Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven say, Behold, the tent of God is with the people, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

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