

Understanding Ezekiel



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Contents

<u>CHAPTER 1</u> FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES.....	1
<u>CHAPTER 2</u> ISRAEL AND THE TEMPLE	2
<u>CHAPTER 3</u> MESSAGE #1: RESTORATION OF THE LAND	6
<u>CHAPTER 4</u> MESSAGE #2: RESTORATION OF THE PEOPLE	8
<u>CHAPTER 5</u> VISION #1: RESURRECTION.....	11
<u>CHAPTER 6</u> MESSAGE #3: RESTORATION OF THE KINGDOM	14
<u>CHAPTER 7</u> MESSAGE #4: GOG / FINAL CONFLICT	16
<u>CHAPTER 8</u> MESSAGE #5: FINAL CONFLICT AFTERMATH	23
<u>CHAPTER 9</u> VISION #2: TEMPLE TOUR.....	25
<u>CHAPTER 10</u> MESSAGE #6: DIVIDING THE LAND.....	32
<u>CHAPTER 11</u> CONCLUSION AND CHARTS	37

Chapter 1

Foundational Principles

The section of Ezekiel covering the end times begins in chapter 36 and goes to the end of the book, chapter 48. For chapters 36 through 39 the focus is on the nation of Israel. But in chapter 40 through the end of the book, the focus shifts to the future temple.

As we begin to look at the end times prophecies in Ezekiel chapters 36 through 48, it will be important to rearticulate our principles of interpretation. The first principle is the idea of progressive revelation. Progressive revelation teaches that there has been an unfolding of information and knowledge about God's plans for the future over time. Therefore, the book of Revelation contains the most concise and clear teaching on the end times. All other prophetic scriptures should be integrated into our understanding of Revelation.

Another important principle is that chapter and verse numbering in the Bible is a later addition made to the text to enhance readability and aid in referencing scripture. In terms of Ezekiel, chapters 36 through 48 contain a series of prophetic messages where chapter divisions should be ignored. These communications from God will come in the form of either text (spoken or written) or interactive vision (audio, visual, with interaction). Each message/vision needs to be understood on its own. These messages are of widely varying length. I will number them accordingly. Each message will be then related to our understanding of the timeline in the book of Revelation. Whether the messages follow a timeline in relation to each other will be a subject of discovery.

Some of the messages are just messages, but the interactive visions include the presence of a guide. These visions are interactive visions such as John experienced in the book of Revelation.

We also need to be sensitive to long-term events. Long-term events are prevalent in the book of Revelation. I would expect that long-term events will also be common in the book of Ezekiel.

Chapter 2

Israel and the Temple

Past History of Israel and the Temple

Before we get into the text of Ezekiel, we have to review the history of Israel and the temple. There have been three exiles of Israel from the land of Palestine. Since the prophecies of Ezekiel speak of restoration for Israel, we need to examine the text carefully to identify which exile is in view.

Israel began as a nation around 1020 BC when the twelve tribes elected a king, Saul, to rule over them. Prior to that they had been ruled by judges that God would raise up when needed. Jerusalem was made the capital of the new nation. David and Solomon, David's son, ruled afterward and this period is known as the United Monarchy. Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem on a hill called mount Zion. The hill was considered holy to the Israelites and to God as recorded in the Bible.

After the death of Solomon around 930 BC, the nation split into two kingdoms. The ten northern tribes elected their own king and made their capital Samaria. The three southern tribes, Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites, became the Southern Kingdom with Jerusalem as their capital. Since the tribe of Levi was appointed by God to be priests, they did not own any land. The tribe of Judah soon came to dominate the Southern Kingdom and thus Judah and Southern Kingdom became synonymous.

Idolatry and following foreign gods became a rampant problem in Israel. God allowed a pagan and cruel nation of Assyria to absorb the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC. This attack was part of the expansion of the Assyrian empire. God miraculously spared the Southern Kingdom from conquest by Assyria. Much of the population of the Northern Kingdoms were deported into exile and other peoples brought in by the Assyrians. The Southern Kingdom continued to last until 586 BC.

Due to continued apostasy in Judah, God allowed the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem in 586 BC. The Babylonians destroyed the First Temple which had been built by Solomon. There were several deportations at this time to Babylon. Ezekiel was one of those deported. He was a priest, a Levite, and lived from around 622 to 570 BC. As a Levite, his supreme interest would have been in the future of the temple in Jerusalem.

After 70 years in exile, Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon and soon allowed the Jews who had been deported to return to Palestine. The second temple was built in Jerusalem in 516 BC after the death of Ezekiel. Jewish society was ruled by the Persians for the next two hundred years.

Chapter 2 – Israel and the Temple

The Grecian, Alexander the Great, conquered the region in 332 BC. The Greeks were very diligent in spreading Greek culture throughout their empire. Greek became the trade language throughout Palestine and throughout the Mediterranean region. After the death of Alexander, Israel was ruled by the Ptolemies in Egypt, and later by the Seleucids in Syria.

But the Maccabean revolt occurred in 167 BC and Israel achieved a measure of independence. The Maccabees (Hasmoneans) ruled as an independent Jewish kingdom until Rome took control in 63 BC. Then Judea became a Roman province. The Second Temple was expanded and improved during this period by Herod the Great. It was during this period that Jesus Christ was born and lived.

The Jewish nation eventually rebelled against Rome and the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Due to the rebellion, most of the Jews were expelled from Palestine to other nations.

The Jews were then dispersed throughout the world for the next 1800 years. Despite this dispersion, the Jews retained their cultural identity. After the persecution of the Jews by Nazi Germany and the end of World War II, many Jews were allowed to return to Palestine. In 1948, Israel once again became a nation. They have not rebuilt their temple. But they did resurrect their dead language Hebrew. About 25% of the Israelis attend synagogue every week. This can be considered a partial return as many Jews continue to live outside of Israel.

Future History of Israel and the Temple

At the start of the end-times, Israel will exist in the land and rebuild their temple. The temple building project may be kept secret so as not to arouse opposition. The prophecy of Daniel 9:27 seems to imply that the site of the temple will be mount Zion where the current Muslim Dome of the Rock building stands. But I do not think this is mandatory. God can make holy any site he likes. Israel will be threatened by many nations and forces around them.

Shortly before or after the rapture, a European leader (the antichrist) will make a seven-year peace agreement with Israel that allows NATO peace-keeping forces to flood Israel and provide peace and safety. The antichrist will be a friend to Israel during this period. This security will allow the start of temple worship and sacrifices in the Third Temple. God will anoint 144,000 messianic Jews to minister during this time. In addition, two witnesses will arise and prophesy in Jerusalem. But the antichrist will have the two witnesses killed.

After three and a half years, the antichrist will enter the temple in Jerusalem and defile it. He will declare himself God and abolish the temple sacrifices and ministry. He will divide the land and parcel it out to his supporters. This will be a time of great tribulation in Israel. Antichrist will create and rule the last world empire. Other nations will oppose him and Palestine will become a war zone. Jews will flee to the desert to

Chapter 2 – Israel and the Temple

escape the war. At the end, Jerusalem will be under siege and ready to fall. It is unknown if the defiled Third Temple is destroyed, but I presume it will be.

Jesus Christ returns with heavenly armies from outer space. He makes war against the military forces attacking Israel. This is the war of Armageddon. The armies in Israel are decimated and Israel is saved. Israel sees the crucified Jesus and repents, accepting him as their savior.

Jesus will do several things upon his return destroying the invading militaries. First, Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan will be judged and removed from the earth. Second, there will be a judgment of the living who remain on earth. Third, there will be a resurrection of the end-time saints. This will include the resurrection of all Old Testament saints. Finally, Jesus will institute some new feasts and festivals. The Temple ministry will continue either in the Third Temple or a new Fourth Temple.

A thousand-year reign of Jesus will commence. The nations will come to Jerusalem yearly (as the peoples of the earth rebuild). There will be judgments on nations that disobey. Israel though we thrive and finally be safe and secure.

Timeline for Israel and the Temple

Ezekiel's messages are prophetic and therefore we are only interested in the times after 570 BC.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
570-550 BC	Exile in Babylon	None	Various	Destroyed
550-332	Ruled by Persia Jews return to Israel	Low level conflict	Renewed spirit	Second Temple built in 516 BC
332-167	Ruled by Greece	Oppression	Various	Temple ministry
167-63	Independent Nation	Low level conflict	Renewed spirit	Temple ministry
63 BC–70 AD	Ruled by Rome	Oppression	Various	Expanded Temple ministry
70 AD – 1945	Diaspora	None	Various	Destroyed
1945-1968	Jews return to Israel	Low level conflict	Various	Destroyed
1968-now	Independent Nation	Wars / High level conflict	Various Secular state	Destroyed
F1	Independent Nation	High level conflict	Various	Third Temple built
F2	Independent Nation	Safe	Various	Temple ministry
F3	Ruled by Antichrist	Wars / Extremely High level conflict	Various	Temple defiled

Chapter 2 – Israel and the Temple

F4	Ruled by Jesus	Safe	Repentant	Temple ministry
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Chapter 3

Message #1:

Restoration of the Land

*“Son of man, **prophesy to Israel’s mountains.** Give them this message: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Your enemies have taunted you, saying, ‘**Aha! Now the ancient heights belong to us!**’ Therefore, son of man, give the mountains of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: **Your enemies have attacked you from all directions, making you the property of many nations and the object of much mocking and slander.** Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. He speaks to the hills and mountains, ravines and valleys, and to ruined wastes and long-deserted cities that have been destroyed and mocked by the surrounding nations. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **My jealous anger burns against these nations, especially Edom, because they have shown utter contempt for me by gleefully taking my land for themselves as plunder.**” (Eze 36:1-5)*

The first message is given to the land, the mountains in particular. The text uses the past tense. Enemies surround Israel and taunt them. The land is ruined and the cities are gone and destroyed. Edom has taken possession of much of the land. This condition fits the times after the Babylonian conquest and other periods in Israel’s past and future.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
570-550 BC	Exile in Babylon	None	Various	Destroyed

*“Therefore, prophesy to the hills and mountains, the ravines and valleys of Israel. This is that the Sovereign LORD says: **I am furious that you have suffered shame before the surrounding nations.** Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I have taken a solemn oath that those nations will soon have their own shame to endure. But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit for my people—for they will be coming home again soon! See, I care about you, and I will pay attention to you. Your ground will be plowed and your crops planted. I will greatly increase the population of Israel, and the ruined cities will be rebuilt and filled with people. I will increase not only the people, but also your animals. O mountains of Israel, I will bring people to live on you once again. I will make you even more prosperous than you were before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I will cause my people to walk on you once again, and you will be their territory. You will never again rob them of their children.**” (Eze 36:6-12)*

Chapter 3 – Message #1: Restoration of the Land

There has been a tense change in the text from past tense to the future tense. In the future, the land will become fruitful and the population will greatly increase. Cities will be rebuilt and animals will multiply. The economy will prosper.

This prophecy has been partially fulfilled. Israel once again is a nation. The nation is fruitful and prosperous. The population has greatly increased. But Israel has not turned to their Messiah Jesus. This prophecy is therefore a long-term event that has not been fully fulfilled yet. No mention is made of a temple.

Time	National State	Land	Safety	Spiritual State
1945-1968	Jews return to Israel	Becomes fruitful	Low level conflict	Various
1968-now	Independent Nation	Increase in population Prosperous	Wars / High level conflict	Various Secular state
F4	Ruled by Jesus	Terraformed	Safe	Repentant

*“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **The other nations taunt you, saying, ‘Israel is a land that devours its own people and robs them of their children!’ But you will never again devour your people or rob them of their children,** says the Sovereign LORD. **I will not let you hear those other nations insult you, and you will no longer be mocked by them. You will not be a land that causes its nation to fall,** says the Sovereign LORD.”*
(Eze 36:13-15)

This is an odd promise that the land will protect Israel. This appears to be an end-time promise. Israel will not be destroyed again. The nations will gather against Israel in the end-times, but Israel will be saved by the second coming of Jesus.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
1945-1968	Jews return to Israel	Low level conflict	Various	Destroyed
1968-now	Independent Nation	Wars / High level conflict	Various Secular state	Destroyed
F1	Independent Nation	High level conflict	Various	Third Temple built
F2	Independent Nation	Safe	Various	Temple ministry
F3	Ruled by Antichrist	Wars / Extremely High level conflict	Various	Temple defiled
F4	Ruled by Jesus	Safe	Repentant	Temple ministry

Chapter 4

Message #2:

Restoration of the People

*“Then this further message came to me from the LORD: ‘Son of man, **when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by the evil way they lived. To me their conduct was as unclean as a woman’s menstrual cloth. They polluted the land with murder and the worship of idols, so I poured out my fury on them. I scattered them to many lands to punish them for the evil way they had lived. But when they were scattered among the nations, they brought shame on my holy name. For the nations said, “These are the people of the LORD, but he couldn’t keep them safe in his own land!” Then I was concerned for my holy name, on which my people brought shame among the nations.”**’ (Eze 36:16-21)*

This message comes in two parts. The first message is from the past. Israel before the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions was characterized by homicides and idolatry. The Assyrian and Babylonian conquests brought an end to the idolatry among the Jews. But the conquests and captivities then resulted in dishonor of God’s name. The Jews were to be scattered among the nations for their evil behavior. This long stretch of time is from the diaspora caused by the war between the Jews and Rome until after World War II.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
570-550 BC	Exile in Babylon	None	Various	Destroyed
550-332	Ruled by Persia Jews return to Israel	Low level conflict	Renewed spirit	Second Temple built in 516 BC
332-167	Ruled by Greece	Oppression	Various	Temple ministry
167-63	Independent Nation	Low level conflict	Renewed spirit	Temple ministry
63 BC–70 AD	Ruled by Rome	Oppression	Various	Expanded Temple ministry
70 AD – 1945	Diaspora	None	Various	Destroyed

*Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: ‘**I am bringing you back, but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. I will show how holy my great name is—the name on which you brought shame among the***

Chapter 4 – Message #2: Restoration of the People

nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD. For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.” (Eze 36:22-24)

God will then bring the Jews back from the lands where they were scattered. BUT this return will not be because they deserve it. This partial return began around 1945 and has continued until now. This return will reveal God’s holiness. Notice that it is the nations that will appreciate Israel’s return (not the Jews themselves). This period covers the time from 1945 to the second coming of Jesus.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
1945-1968	Jews return to Israel	Low level conflict	Various	Destroyed
1968-now	Independent Nation	Wars / High level conflict	Various Secular state	Destroyed
F1	Independent Nation	High level conflict	Various	Third Temple built
F2	Independent Nation	Safe	Various	Temple ministry
F3	Ruled by Antichrist	Wars / Extremely High level conflict	Various	Temple defiled
F4	Ruled by Jesus	Safe	Repentant	Temple ministry

*“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. **Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols.** And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. **And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.** “And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. **I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior.** I will give you good crops of grain, and I will send no more famines on the land. **I will give you great harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its famines.** Then you will remember your past sins and despise yourselves for all the detestable things you did. But remember, says the Sovereign LORD, **I am not doing this because you deserve it.** O my people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done!’ ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **When I cleanse you from your sins, I will repopulate your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt.** The fields that used to lie empty and desolate in plain view of everyone will again be farmed. And when I bring you back, people will say, ‘**This former wasteland is now like the Garden of Eden! The abandoned and ruined cities now have strong walls and are filled with people!**’ Then the surrounding nations that survive will know that **I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted the wasteland.** For I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I say. “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I am ready to hear Israel’s prayers and to increase their numbers like a flock.** They will be as numerous as the sacred flocks that fill Jerusalem’s streets at*

Chapter 4 – Message #2: Restoration of the People

the time of her festivals. The ruined cities will be crowded with people once more, and everyone will know that I am the LORD.” (Eze 36:25-38)

This final portion of the message covers the time of return of Jesus until the end of the millennium. It begins with a spiritual revolution as the Jews realize that Jesus is their promised Messiah. Most of the population in Israel will be saved. This spiritual transformation begins with a cleansing of their hearts, putting aside their sinful behavior. They will begin to truly follow the Law that was given through Moses and live in the expanded land of Israel.

After the second coming of Jesus, the earth will be wrecked from the wars and calamities. It will need extensive terraforming to again support a large population. This reclamation project will include Israel which experienced the greatest warfare with the battle of Armageddon. Jesus and others will work to restore the agricultural land. They will also work to rebuild the population centers. Finally, the farm animals will make a comeback. The land will be like the garden of Eden.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
F4	Ruled by Jesus	Safe	Repentant	Temple ministry

Chapter 5

Vision #1:

Resurrection

"The LORD took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the LORD to a valley filled with bones." (Eze 37:1)

We now have a huge shift in the method of communication God is using with Ezekiel. In the prior messages, God is giving messages in human language to Ezekiel in some fashion. However, this event is different. Ezekiel experiences an interactive vision such as John experienced in the book of Revelation (and John, James, and Peter at the transfiguration). He is transported in time and space to a valley filled with bones. What we have is a parable story not far different from reality.

*"He led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. Then he asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones become living people again?' 'O Sovereign LORD,' I replied, 'you alone know the answer to that.' Then he said to me, 'Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again!** I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. **I will put breath into you, and you will come to life.** Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"' So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons. Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again."' So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. **They all came to life** and stood up on their feet—a great army." (Eze 37:2-10)*

What we have is a picture of the resurrection of Old Testament Saints (and possibly messianic Jews from the end-times). The graphic picture of them physically coming together is most likely figurative. The resurrection itself may involve cloned bodies.

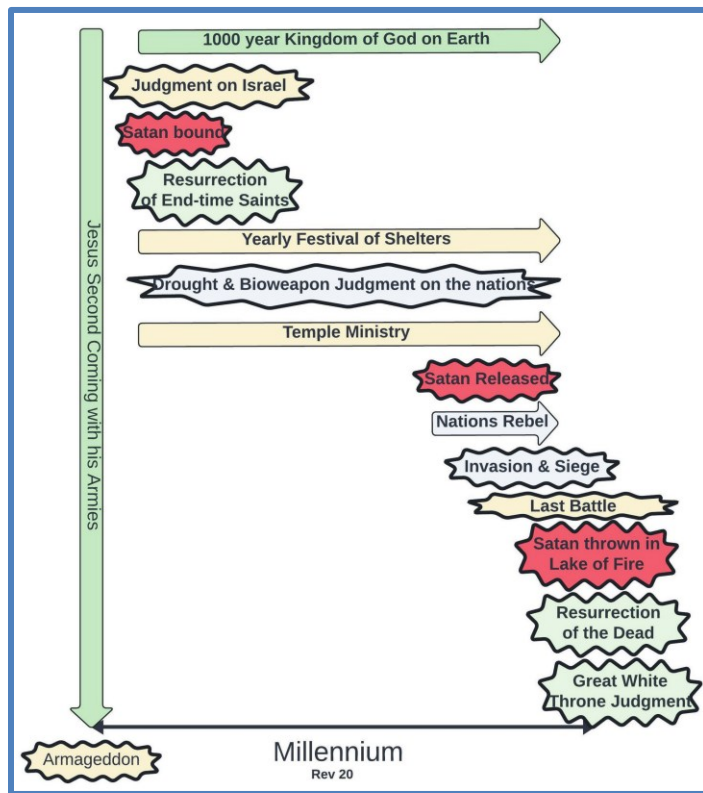
*"Then he said to me, "Son of man, **these bones represent the people of Israel.** They are saying, "We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished." Therefore, prophesy to them and say, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, **I will open your graves** of exile and cause you to rise again. **Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel.** When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD. I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to*

Chapter 5 – Vision #1: Resurrection

your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the LORD has spoken!” (Eze 37:2-14)

The Lord explains the symbols in the parable story. The bones represent the dead Old Testaments saints of the Jews. The valley represents the land of Israel. The Jews have a connection to the land that Gentiles do not. This resurrection of Old Testament saints will coincide with Israel’s repentance and turning to Jesus as their messiah.

But when will this resurrection occur? Below is a timeline of the millennium as specified in the book of Revelation; chapter 20. Matthew 24 and 25 add some additional details such as there will be a judgment of the living when Jesus returns to earth.



*“Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the first resurrection.** (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) **Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.**” (Rev 20:4-6)*

The second death at the end of the thousand years appears from scripture to consist only of the final judgment of the damned before they are cast in the lake of fire. There is no indication that anyone will be justified from this final resurrection and judgment. Of interest is that no one in scripture is judged while they are dead. It requires a resurrection prior to judgment.

We can now refine our historical and future events table for Israel.

Chapter 5 – Vision #1: Resurrection

Time	Event	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
F3	Armageddon	Ruled by Antichrist	High level conflict	Various	Temple defiled
F4-a	Judgment of the Living		Safe	Repentant	
F4-a	Resurrection of OT saints		Safe	Repentant	
F4-b	Millennium	Rebuilding and Restoration Kingdom ruled by Jesus	Safe	Cleansed	Temple ministry

The resurrection of Old Testament saints with their connection to the land will cause a huge societal disruption. For those who are Marvel fans, Thanos removed from existence half of the population of the universe. But after six years, the Avengers were able to restore those missing people. They called the event the “Blip”. The return of half the population of earth after being gone for six years caused huge disruptions for earth’s governments to contend with. The disruptions caused by the “blip” will be similar to the disruptions caused by the resurrection of Old Testament saints. The government of Jesus will have a lot on its plate dealing with the fallout. (The future of New Testament saints is connected to the New Jerusalem and perhaps other parts of the earth (and galaxy)).

Chapter 6

Message #3:

Restoration of the Kingdom

*"Again a message came to me from the LORD: 'Son of man, take a piece of wood and carve on it these words: **"This represents Judah and its allied tribes."** Then take another piece and carve these words on it: **"This represents Ephraim and the northern tribes of Israel."** Now hold them together in your hand as if they were one piece of wood. When your people ask you what your actions mean, say to them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I will take Ephraim and the northern tribes and join them to Judah. I will make them one piece of wood in my hand.**" Then hold out the pieces of wood you have inscribed, so the people can see them.'" (Eze 37:15-20)*

We have left the interactive vision of the valley of bones, and God gives additional messages concerning Israel's future. In this message, God emphasizes that he is going to make the nation whole again including all the tribes. At the time of Ezekiel, the northern and southern tribes have been separated for hundreds of years. In the future, the division will be gone, and they will be one people.

*"And give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: **I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will bring them home to their own land from the places where they have been scattered. I will unify them into one nation on the mountains of Israel. One king will rule them all; no longer will they be divided into two nations or into two kingdoms. They will never again pollute themselves with their idols and vile images and rebellion, for I will save them from their sinful apostasy. I will cleanse them. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God.**" (Eze 37:21-23)*

This is another message of Israel's return to Israel and their restoration. Again, this is a long term event. But we learn some new details. In addition to being one nation, they will put aside their "idols". We need to consider the idea that these may be high-tech idols in the end-times. They will also put aside "vile images". This may be a reference to the AI generated porn that will seduce the world in the end-times. They will put aside "rebellion" which may be a reference to rejecting the antichrist after the antichrist defiles the temple.

*"**My servant David will be their king, and they will have only one shepherd. They will obey my regulations and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave my servant Jacob, the land where their ancestors lived. They and their children and their grandchildren after them will live there forever, generation after generation. And my servant David will be their prince forever.**" (Eze 37:24-25)*

The text says the "David" will be their king. Since we can assume that the Old Testament king David will be resurrected with other OT saints, this may literally be true.

Chapter 6 – Message #3: Restoration of the Kingdom

After the second coming of Jesus, the destruction of the armies attacking Jerusalem, the resurrection of OT saints, the judgment of the living, and the wedding feast event, Jesus may return to the New Jerusalem, and rule earth via his proxy, king David in Israel. Since we think of the millennium as being the kingdom of heaven on earth, we mistakenly think there will be one king. In ancient times, there were many kings over different regions. From this ancient perspective, there will be many kings on the earth during the millennium. David will be king over Israel.

*“And I will **make a covenant of peace with them**, an everlasting covenant. **I will give them their land and increase their numbers**, and **I will put my Temple among them forever**. **I will make my home among them**. **I will be their God**, and they will be my people. And **when my Temple is among them forever**, **the nations will know that I am the LORD, who makes Israel holy.**” (Eze 37:26-28)*

The antichrist made a seven-year peace agreement with Israel (which he broke after 3 and a half years). But God will make an everlasting peace agreement with Israel after the second coming. The text says “he will put his Temple” among them. This may be a reference to a new temple to be built in Israel. The defilement of the old temple by antichrist may lead to it being torn down or abandoned. The Temple is an important facet of the end-times.

Time		National State		Security		Spiritual State		Temple State	
1945-1968		Jews return to Israel		Low level conflict		Various		Destroyed	
1968-now		Independent Nation		Wars / High level conflict		Various Secular state		Destroyed	
F1		Independent Nation		High level conflict		Various		Third Temple built	
F2		Independent Nation		Safe		Various		Temple ministry	
F3		Ruled by Antichrist		Wars / Extremely High level conflict		Various		Temple defiled	
F3	Armageddon	Ruled by Antichrist			High level conflict		Various		Temple defiled
F4-a	Judgment of the Living					Safe	Repentant		
F4-a	Resurrection of OT saints					Safe	Repentant		
F4-c	King David over Israel King Jesus over world			Safe		Cleansed		NEW Temple	

Chapter 7

Message #4:

Gog / Final Conflict

*"This is another message that came to me from the LORD: 'Son of man, **turn and face Gog of the land of Magog, the prince who rules over the nations of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.**'"* (Eze 38:1-2)

Chapters 38 and 39 consist of a series of messages against Gog. Gog is the leader of a nation, the land of Magog. Sometimes the people of the land of Magog are called by the name Magog. It is likely that Gog will be a proxy of Satan in the same way that antichrist is a proxy of Satan. Satan in his war against humankind works through human proxies. We see this repeatedly in scripture.

*"Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: Gog, I am your enemy! **I will turn you around and put hooks in your jaws to lead you out with your whole army**—your horses and charioteers in full armor and a great horde armed with shields and swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will join you, too, with all their weapons. **Gomer and all its armies will also join you, along with the armies of Beth-togarmah from the distant north, and many others.**"* (Eze 38:3-6)

Gog will be the leader of an alliance of nations including Iran, African nations and nations to the north. Gomer may be a nation or the leader of a nation. It is likely that the weapons of war will not be horses, shields, and swords, but high-tech weapons. I understand the horses, shields, and swords to be metaphorical for the high-tech weapons in actual use. Ezekiel, like John, the author of Revelation, did not possess the vocabulary to describe modern warfare.

*"**Get ready; be prepared! Keep all the armies around you mobilized and take command of them.**"* (Eze 38:7)

Strangely enough, God tells them to get ready. Keeping an army mobilized indicates that these are part-time soldiers.

*"**A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be enjoying peace after recovering from war and after its people have returned from many lands to the mountains of Israel.**"* (Eze 38:8)

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

The prophecy is for a long time in the future. The only time Israel will be enjoying peace after recovering from war will be during the millennium. It is during this time that there will be a full return of the Jews to the land. Currently Israel's population represents a partial return to the land. Most Jews still live outside of Israel.

Time	National State	Security	Spiritual State	Temple State
F3	Armageddon	High level conflict	Various	Temple defiled
F4-a	Judgment of the Living	Safe	Repentant	
F4-a	Resurrection of OT saints	Safe	Repentant	
F4-c	King David over Israel King Jesus over world	Safe	Cleansed	NEW Temple

*“You and all your allies—a **vast and awesome army**—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a cloud.” (Eze 38:9)*

The national boundaries of Israel will be much larger in the Millennium than it is now. According to Ezekiel 47 and 48, the land boundaries during the Millennial Kingdom will be the Mediterranean Sea on the west, near Damascus in the north, the Jordan river on the east, and near Kadesh in the Sinai. The land may actually be larger to the north based on the Abrahamic covenant. A cloud covering the size of Israel in the Millennium will have to consist of millions of soldiers. It is likely that the population of the earth at the end of the Millennium will likely be over 20 billion people (including the resurrected OT saints.)

*“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: At that time **evil thoughts will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme.** You will say, ‘**Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwallled villages!** I will march against her and destroy these people who live in such confidence!’” (Eze 38:10-11)*

These evil thoughts and plans will undoubtedly originate from Satan at the end of the millennium. At this point, we need to consider the relevant verses from Revelation.

*“When the thousand years come to an end, Satan will be let out of his prison. He will go out to deceive the nations—called Gog and Magog—in every corner of the earth. He will **gather them together for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the seashore.** And I saw them as **they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God’s people and the beloved city.** But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them. Then the devil, who had deceived them, was **thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet.** There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Rev 20:7-10)*

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

Satan will be released from the bottomless pit and will once again become active on earth. He will devise a plan to attack the “beloved city” (Jerusalem). This final human conflict may include nearly a billion soldiers. It will be the largest war in human history.

*“I will go to those **formerly desolate cities that are now filled with people who have returned from exile in many nations**. I will capture vast amounts of plunder, for the people are **rich with livestock** and other possessions now. They think the whole world revolves around them!” (Eze 38:12)*

The description here describes long term events. The cities in Israel will be destroyed during the war campaigns of Armageddon. These cities will be re-populated. There will also be a return of all the Jews to the land. According to Ezekiel 36:11, the livestock will be restored. This restoration will take a thousand years.

*“But Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish will ask, ‘Do you really think the armies you have gathered can rob them of silver and gold? Do you think you can drive away their livestock and seize their goods and carry off plunder?’ “Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: When my people are living in peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself. **You will come from your homeland in the distant north with your vast cavalry and your mighty army**, and you will attack my people Israel, covering their land like a cloud. **At that time in the distant future**, I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and **my holiness will be displayed by what happens** to you, Gog. Then all the nations will know that I am the LORD.” (Eze 38:13-16)*

The nation which Gog represents will originate in the distant north. Today that country is Russia, but it seems likely that nation boundaries will be different during the Millennium. The prelude to the war is briefly described by John in Revelation 20.

*“He will **gather them together for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the seashore**. And I saw them as **they went up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded God’s people and the beloved city**.” (Rev 20:8-9)*

*“This is what the Sovereign LORD asks: **Are you the one I was talking about long ago**, when I announced through Israel’s prophets that in the future I would bring you against my people?” (Eze 38:17)*

I do not know what OT prophecy this is referring to. It may be that this prophecy is not part of the Old Testament.

*“But this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **When Gog invades the land of Israel, my fury will boil over!** In my jealousy and blazing anger, **I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day**. **All living things**—the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the*

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

*animals of the field, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and **all the people on earth—will quake in terror at my presence.***” (Eze 38:18-20)

This invasion of Israel will be met by a world-wide earthquake. We know that earthquakes will be a feature of end-times before the second coming of Jesus. Could this description match the earthquake events in the book of Revelation?

*“I will summon the sword against you on all the hills of Israel, says the Sovereign LORD. Your men will turn their swords against each other. **I will punish you and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur!**”* (Eze 38:21-22)

After the earthquakes, there will be infighting and disease. Finally, there will be extreme storms, fire, and burning sulfur. Revelation describes fire from heaven coming down on the army. Ezekiel’s description is more expansive with torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur.

*But **fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them.** Then **the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet.** There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (Rev 20:9b-10)

The burning sulfur according to John is associated with the lake of fire.

*“**In this way, I will show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD.**”* (Eze 38:23)

Finally, God’s greatness will be displayed in his ability to wage war on these invading armies. The world’s population will know that God is present and make known who he is in this special way.

Analysis

So, the progression described by Ezekiel is

- 1) Gog’s armies invade Israel
- 2) World-wide earthquake
- 3) Armies experience infighting
- 4) Armies afflicted with diseases (biological warfare)
- 5) Extreme storms including hailstones
- 6) Fire and burning sulfur
- 7) World’s reaction will be to know God

In the book of Revelation, two great earthquakes are described. The first description is at the end of Revelation 6 prior to the rapture.

*“I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, **and there was a great earthquake.** The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. Then **the***

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

*stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. The sky was rolled up like a scroll, and **all of the mountains and islands were moved from their places. Then everyone**—the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person—**all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.** And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. **For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to survive?**” (Rev 6:12-17)*

This description is of the cosmic disruption before the Day of the Lord. There is no description of armies invading Israel, meteors falling or fire from heaven. This passage in Revelation covers a different event.

The second description of a great earthquake in the book of Revelation occurs immediately prior to the second coming of Jesus. It is described in two passages.

*“**The nations were filled with wrath, but now the time of your wrath has come. It is time to judge the dead and reward your servants the prophets, as well as your holy people, and all who fear your name, from the least to the greatest. It is time to destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth.** Then, in heaven, the Temple of God was opened and the Ark of his covenant could be seen inside the Temple. **Lightning flashed, thunder crashed and roared, and there was an earthquake and a terrible hailstorm.**” (Rev 11:18-19)*

*“**Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth.** The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of Babylon’s sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. And **every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.**” (Rev 17:18-21)*

Both these passages describe the same event and time period, in my understanding of end-time events. This time period shares more in common with the description in Ezekiel. There are invading armies in Israel and great earthquakes, but there are also many differences. These differences are highlighted in the following table.

	Ezekiel’s Description	Revelation Description at Second Coming	Comments
1	Gog’s armies invade Israel from the north	Antichrist occupying Israel Invading armies from the East	Gog will invade to plunder Israel. Armies from the East will invade to attack Antichrist Partial Agreement
2	World-wide earthquake	World-wide earthquake	High Agreement

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

3	Infighting among armies	Armies band together to resist the second coming of Jesus	No Agreement
4	Armies afflicted with diseases (biological warfare)	No mention	No Agreement
5	Extreme storm including hailstones	Extreme storm including hailstones	High Agreement
6	Fire and burning sulfur	Fire from heaven, no sulfur mentioned	Partial Agreement
7	World's reaction will be to know God	World's reaction will be to curse God	No Agreement

I leave it to the reader to decide for themselves whether they feel these descriptions can be made to match the same event. Revelation also states that the armies in Israel will be destroyed by “the sword” in the mouth of Jesus. Whereas Ezekiel states that the armies will be destroyed by “fire from heaven”. Due to the metaphorical language employed here, I do not know how to evaluate how similar these descriptions are.

Conclusion

The understanding that the author prefers is that this passage describes the events at the end of the Millennium after the release of Satan.

	Ezekiel's Description	Revelation Description at End of Millennium	Comments
1	Gog's armies invade Israel from the north	Gog's armies invade Israel	High Agreement
2	World-wide earthquake	No mention	No Agreement
3	Infighting among armies	No mention	No Agreement
4	Armies afflicted with diseases (biological warfare)	(See below)	Partial Agreement (See below)
5	Extreme storm including hailstones	No mention	No Agreement

Chapter 7 – Message #4: Gog / Final Conflict

6	Fire and burning sulfur	Fire from heaven, no sulfur mentioned	High Agreement
7	World's reaction will be to know God	World's reaction will be to know God	High Agreement

Most of the “No agreement” items above are due to “no mention” rather than lack of agreement.

The use of biological weapons by God is mentioned during the Millennium by the prophet Zechariah. The plague in addition to causing necrosis causes neighbors to fight against each other. This behavior also occurs among Gog's invading armies.

“And the LORD will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day they will be terrified, stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will fight their neighbors hand to hand. Judah, too, will be fighting at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the neighboring nations will be captured—great quantities of gold and silver and fine clothing. This same plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the other animals in the enemy camps. In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. Any nation in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will have no rain. If the people of Egypt refuse to attend the festival, the LORD will punish them with the same plague that he sends on the other nations who refuse to go.” (Zech 14:12-18)

Chapter 8

Message #5:

Final Conflict Aftermath

*“Son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am your enemy, O Gog, ruler of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. **I will turn you around and drive you toward the mountains of Israel, bringing you from the distant north.** I will knock the bow from your left hand and the arrows from your right hand, and I will leave you helpless. **You and your army and your allies will all die on the mountains.** I will feed you to the vultures and wild animals. You will fall in the open fields, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD. And **I will rain down fire on Magog and on all your allies** who live safely on the coasts. Then they will know that I am the LORD. In this way, I will make known my holy name among my people of Israel. I will not let anyone bring shame on it. And the nations, too, will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. That **day of judgment will come**, says the Sovereign LORD. Everything will happen just as I have declared it.” (Eze 39:1-8)*

The paragraph above is a restatement and summarization of the previous message concerning Gog in chapter 38. Ezekiel will now add additional details to the previous message.

*“Then the people in the towns of Israel will go out and pick up your small and large shields, bows and arrows, javelins and spears, and they will use them for fuel. **There will be enough to last them seven years!** They won’t need to cut wood from the fields or forests, for these weapons will give them all the fuel they need. They will plunder those who planned to plunder them, and they will rob those who planned to rob them, says the Sovereign LORD. And I will make a vast graveyard for Gog and his hordes in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the way of those who travel there, and they will change the name of the place to the Valley of Gog’s Hordes. **It will take seven months for the people of Israel to bury the bodies and cleanse the land.** Everyone in Israel will help, for it will be a glorious victory for Israel when I demonstrate my glory on that day, says the Sovereign LORD. After seven months, teams of men will be appointed to search the land for skeletons to bury, so the land will be made clean again. Whenever bones are found, a marker will be set up so the burial crews will take them to be buried in the Valley of Gog’s Hordes. (There will be a town there named Hamonah, which means ‘horde.’) **And so the land will finally be cleansed.**” (Eze 39:9-16)*

The resources plundered from the invading armies will last seven years. Those who came to plunder Israel will themselves be plundered. The cleansing of the earth from the dead will take seven months. This signals the end of the curse in preparation for the new heavens and new earth.

Chapter 8 – Message #5: Final Conflict Aftermath

*“And now, son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call all the birds and wild animals. Say to them: **Gather together for my great sacrificial feast.** Come from far and near to the mountains of Israel, and there eat flesh and drink blood! Eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of princes as though they were rams, lambs, goats, and bulls—all fattened animals from Bashan! Gorge yourselves with flesh until you are glutted; drink blood until you are drunk. This is the sacrificial feast I have prepared for you. Feast at my banquet table—feast on horses and charioteers, on mighty men and all kinds of valiant warriors, says the Sovereign LORD. **In this way, I will demonstrate my glory to the nations. Everyone will see the punishment I have inflicted on them and the power of my fist when I strike. And from that time on the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.**” (Eze 39:17-22)*

This final human conflict will likely include a billion soldiers. This passage though sounds more similar to the aftermath of Armageddon, rather than the final rebellion at the end of the Millennium. There is not very much information in the book of Revelation about world conditions at the end of the Millennium. We know that there will be a final world conflict instigated by Satan, but we do not know what sort of misinformation and deception will be propagated by Satan to cause Israel to doubt their God.

*“The nations will then know why Israel was sent away to exile—it was punishment for sin, for they were unfaithful to their God. **Therefore, I turned away from them and let their enemies destroy them. I turned my face away and punished them** because of their defilement and their sins. So now, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will end the captivity of my people; I will have mercy on all Israel, for I jealously guard my holy reputation! **They will accept responsibility for their past shame and unfaithfulness after they come home to live in peace in their own land, with no one to bother them. When I bring them home from the lands of their enemies, I will display my holiness among them for all the nations to see.** Then my people will know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them away to exile and brought them home again. **I will leave none of my people behind.** And I will never again turn my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit upon the people of Israel. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!” (Eze 39:23-29)*

This is background information regarding Israel’s acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah and subsequent cleansing as they return to dwell peacefully in the land. Ezekiel is tying together Israel’s current situation in exile to their glorious future in a full return to land. Currently many Jews still reside outside of Israel, but God will cause ALL of them to return in order to dwell safely in the land.

Chapter 9

Vision #2:

Temple Tour

*“On April 28, during the twenty-fifth year of our captivity—fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem—the **LORD took hold of me. In a vision from God he took me to the land of Israel and set me down on a very high mountain.** From there I could see toward the south what appeared to be a city.” (Eze 40:1-2)*

Transitions between messages and visions, signal changes in the timeline. At the end of this document, I will present charts of the timelines with the passages of Ezekiel. We now have an interactive vision such as other prophets experienced. It will include a temple tour of the last earthly temple that exists on earth. If you read the description of the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation, the temple described in the last chapters of Ezekiel bares a close resemblance to the New Jerusalem at a much smaller scale. According to Revelation, there will be no temple in the new heavens and earth, so this must the last temple.

*“I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”
(Rev 21:22)*

This temple is unlikely to be the temple that antichrist defiles in the end-times, but a later temple built for the Millennium.

*“As he brought me nearer, I saw a man whose face shone like bronze standing beside a gateway entrance. **He was holding in his hand a linen measuring cord and a measuring rod.** He said to me, “**Son of man, watch and listen.** Pay close attention to everything I show you. **You have been brought here so I can show you many things.** Then you will return to the people of Israel **and tell them everything you have seen.**”
(Eze 40:3-4)*

I do not know if the man with the bronze face is human or not. The bronze may be some type of helmet covering the face or robot. The prophet John in Revelation was also told to measure the temple. This seems like a strange activity of some unknown importance. Note that Ezekiel was told to “watch and listen”, messages came (in whatever fashion) through only one sense, but this tour includes both audio and video.

The final nine chapters of Ezekiel are very long and mostly consist of descriptions of the millennial temple which are not of prophetic interest. These chapters describe the physical dimensions of the temple and architecture. I will skip most of it and only comment on particular portions.

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

*“After this, the man brought me back around to the east gateway. **Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel appeared from the east.** The sound of his coming was like the roar of rushing waters, and the whole landscape shone with his glory. **This vision was just like the others I had seen, first by the Kebar River and then when he came to destroy Jerusalem.** I fell face down on the ground. **And the glory of the LORD came into the Temple through the east gateway.** Then the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner courtyard, and **the glory of the LORD filled the Temple.** And I heard someone speaking to me from within the Temple, **while the man who had been measuring stood beside me.** The LORD said to me, ‘Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place where I will rest my feet. **I will live here forever among the people of Israel.** They and their kings will not defile my holy name any longer by their adulterous worship of other gods or by honoring the relics of their kings who have died. They put their idol altars right next to mine with only a wall between them and me. They defiled my holy name by such detestable sin, so I consumed them in my anger. Now let them stop worshiping other gods and honoring the relics of their kings, and I will live among them forever. Son of man, describe to the people of Israel the Temple I have shown you, so they will be ashamed of all their sins. Let them study its plan, and they will be ashamed of what they have done. Describe to them all the specifications of the Temple—including its entrances and exits—and everything else about it. Tell them about its decrees and laws. Write down all these specifications and decrees as they watch so they will be sure to remember and follow them. And this is **the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness! The entire top of the mountain where the Temple is built is holy.** Yes, this is the basic law of the Temple.” (Eze 43:1-12)*

This passage describes the glory of the Lord returning to the future Millennial temple. In the first chapters of Ezekiel, the glory of the Lord departing the temple is described. The interactive vision is similar to other visions Ezekiel has seen, video and audio. The man who was measuring was first described in chapter 40. When the Lord is described as living here forever, this is not Jesus, but God the Father as a spirit being residing here. The temple will never be defiled with idols or other sinful practices.

The land where the temple is built shall be made holy. This may have some significance to the prophecy of Daniel 9:27.

*“**A period of seventy sets of seven has been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place.**” (Dan 9:24)*

Israel has 70 sevens or 490 years to 1) finish their rebellion, 2) put an end to their sin, 3) atone for their guilt, 4) bring in everlasting righteousness, 5) confirm the prophetic vision, and 6) anoint the Most Holy Place. Many students of prophecy believe that the temple must be built on mount Zion where the Muslim shrine the “Dome of the Rock” currently resides to fulfill Daniel’s prophecy. But from Ezekiel we learn that God can make holy **whatever land the temple resides on.**

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

*“Then he said to me, “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **These will be the regulations for the burning of offerings and the sprinkling of blood when the altar is built.** At that time, **the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok**, who minister before me, are to be **given a young bull for a sin offering**, says the Sovereign LORD. You will take some of its blood and smear it on the four horns of the altar, the four corners of the upper ledge, and the curb that runs around that ledge. This will cleanse and make atonement for the altar. Then take the young bull for the sin offering and burn it at the appointed place outside the Temple area. On the second day, sacrifice as a sin offering a young male goat that has no physical defects. Then cleanse and make atonement for the altar again, just as you did with the young bull. When you have finished the cleansing ceremony, offer another young bull that has no defects and a perfect ram from the flock. You are to present them to the LORD, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to the LORD. Every day for seven days a male goat, a young bull, and a ram from the flock will be sacrificed as a sin offering. None of these animals may have physical defects of any kind. Do this each day for seven days to cleanse and make atonement for the altar, thus setting it apart for holy use. On the eighth day, and on each day afterward, the priests will sacrifice on the altar the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the people. **Then I will accept you.** I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!” (Eze 43:18-27)*

Part of the temple ministry will include animal sacrifices. Since we know that Jesus’ offering for sin is for all time, we need to think of these offerings as memorial in nature. These would be thought of like communion in Protestant churches, a remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice and provision. The Levites were one of the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Levi, the third son of Jacob and Leah. The Levites were divided into three major families, corresponding to the three sons of Levi: Gershonites, Kohathites, and the Merarites. The **Levites from Zadok** were a distinguished priestly lineage within the Kohathite branch of the Levites, specifically from the family of Aaron. Zadok was a high priest during the reigns of King David and King Solomon, and his descendants held a special status in the Israelite priesthood. The interesting thing is that the Levites (priests) and the High Priest Joseph Caiaphas were Sadducees and responsible for condemning and crucifying Jesus. The forgiveness and restoration of the Levites is guaranteed in the Millennial temple.

Chapter 44 continues with the temple tour focusing on the functions in the new temple including rules about allowing foreigners in the temple. The functioning of the temple must not be farmed out to foreign workers.

*“**Only the prince himself** may sit inside this gateway to feast in the LORD’s presence. But he may come and go only through the entry room of the gateway.” (Eze 44:3)*

Again, there is mention of the prince who will have special access to the temple. We saw before that this prince is identified as the resurrected King David from the Old Testament.

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

In chapter 45, the temple tour describes the division of the land among the tribes and the land parcel for the temple. I find many of these details interesting so I will comment on them.

“When you divide the land among the tribes of Israel, you must set aside a section for the LORD as his holy portion. This piece of land will be 8 miles long and 6 miles wide. The entire area will be holy.” (Eze 45:1)

How Israelis entering the Millennium will be identified by tribe is not explained in scripture. Since there will be a judgment of the living at the start of the Millennium, it may be that God identifies them at that time, since all genealogical data was destroyed during the diaspora after the Roman legions’ destruction of Jerusalem. Or it could be done simply by the geographic area where they live. Resurrected Old Testament saints will already know which tribe they belong to. There will need to be a complete reapportioning of land ownerships and rights performed.

A 48 square mile area will be set aside for the Lord and declared holy. This is a large area. The great size would make it hard to hide in today’s world. This is another reason to think that this is a description of the Millennial temple, not the temple antichrist will defile.

“A section of this land, measuring 875 feet by 875 feet, will be set aside for the Temple. An additional strip of land 87 feet wide is to be left empty all around it. Within the larger sacred area, measure out a portion of land 8 miles long and 3 miles wide. Within it the sanctuary of the Most Holy Place will be located. This area will be holy, set aside for the priests who minister to the LORD in the sanctuary. They will use it for their homes, and my Temple will be located within it. The strip of sacred land next to it, also 8 miles long and 3 miles wide, will be a living area for the Levites who work at the Temple. It will be their possession and a place for their towns. Adjacent to the larger sacred area will be a section of land 8 miles long and 1 miles wide. This will be set aside for a city where anyone in Israel can live.” (Eze 45:2-6)

Modern cities are circular as they start out from a city center and grow outward. Geographical formations like rivers can affect this growth. In this case, the land apportioned is in rectangles; long and skinny. The Levites will live in one of these strips as they do not have land apportioned to them as the other eleven tribes have. Many of these Levites will be resurrected priests from Israel’s history. Since idolatry was a severe problem among them, maybe that is why God mentions it prominently later in this passage.

“Two special sections of land will be set apart for the prince. One section will share a border with the east side of the sacred lands and city, and the second section will share a border on the west side. Then the far eastern and western borders of the prince’s lands will line up with the eastern and western boundaries of the tribal areas. These sections of land will be the prince’s allotment. Then my princes will no longer oppress and rob my people; they will assign the rest of the land to the people, giving an allotment to

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

*each tribe. For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘Enough, you princes of Israel! Stop your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. **Quit robbing and cheating my people out of their land.** Stop expelling them from their homes’, says the Sovereign LORD.” (Eze 45:7-9)*

Again, the prince who will have lands set apart for him is mentioned. Then God mentions “my princes”. These government leaders will be responsible to assign land ownership rights. Again, land ownership will be a huge headache to deal with after the resurrection of Old Testament saints and the re-apportionment of tribal lands and boundaries.

The rest of chapter 45 deals with taxation (it is not a tithe) and the functioning of the temple dealing with sacrifices and yearly festivals.

“During the seven days of the Festival of Shelters, which occurs every year in early autumn, the prince will provide these same sacrifices for the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering, along with the required olive oil.” (Eze 45:25)

According to the prophet Zechariah, the Festival of Shelters will become a world-wide event in which people will pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate it with Israel.

*“In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague **will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.** Any nation in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, will have no rain. If the people of Egypt refuse to attend the festival, the LORD will punish them with the same plague that he sends on the other nations who refuse to go. **Egypt and the other nations will all be punished if they don’t go to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.**” (Zec 14:16-19)*

Chapter 46 continues with stipulations about religious days, the temple sacrifices, and the conduct of the prince.

The first half of chapter 47 concludes the temple tour with a description of the river flowing from the temple. These rivers are mentioned in other portions of scripture and so are of big interest.

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

“In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple.” (Eze 47:1a)

This is the last mention of the tour guide leading Ezekiel around. It may be that the remaining parts of Ezekiel are part of the vision, but the content is delivered more in the style of the messages. There is no need for seeing and listening in the final portion of Ezekiel.

“In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side.” (Eze 47:1)

The land portion that contains the temple will have a stream flowing from it toward the east. The source of this water will probably be the Mediterranean Sea or possibly the Red Sea. This could be accomplished by technological means rather than a miracle.

*“The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. **There I could see the water flowing out through the south side of the east gateway.** Measuring as he went, he took me along the stream for 1,750 feet and then led me across. **The water was up to my ankles.** He measured off another 1,750 feet and led me across again. **This time the water was up to my knees.** After another 1,750 feet, **it was up to my waist.** Then he measured another 1,750 feet, and the river **was too deep to walk across.** It was deep enough to swim in, but too deep to walk through. He asked me, ‘Have you been watching, son of man?’ Then he led me back along the riverbank.”* (Eze 47:2-6)

In ancient times this phenomenon of raising waters would have been seen as a miracle. But we can now easily accomplish this through pumps and piping.

*“When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of **many trees growing on both sides of the river.** Then he said to me, ‘This river flows east through the desert **into the valley of the Dead Sea. The waters of this stream will make the salty waters of the Dead Sea fresh and pure.** There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. **Life will flourish wherever this water flows.** Fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea. All the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim, the shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. **Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean. But the marshes and swamps will not be purified; they will still be salty. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river.** The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. **There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple.** The fruit will be for food and **the leaves for healing.**”* (Eze 47:7-12)

The stream will become a river that will flow down to the Dead Sea and revitalize it. It will not flow into the Jordan River. The Dead Sea will become a freshwater lake again. Some marshy areas around the Dead Sea will remain salty. Trees will flourish along the sides of the river. These trees will be new species. They will produce fruit for eating, but their leaves will have potent medicinal properties.

Chapter 9 – Vision #2: Temple Tour

The prophet Zechariah adds additional information that in addition to the stream/river to the east, there will be a stream/river that flows to the west into the Mediterranean Sea. These rivers will not be seasonal, but flow throughout the year.

*“On that day **life-giving waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously in both summer and winter.**” (Zech 14:8)*

The book of Revelation also foretells a later form of this river after the creation of the new heavens and earth.

*“Then the angel showed me **a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.**” (Rev 22:1-2)*

Chapter 10

Message #6:

Dividing the Land

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **'Divide the land in this way for the twelve tribes of Israel:** The descendants of Joseph will be given two shares of land. Otherwise each tribe will receive an equal share. I took a solemn oath and swore that I would give this land to your ancestors, and it will now come to you as your possession. These are the boundaries of the land: The northern border will run from the Mediterranean toward Hethlon, then on through Lebo-hamath to Zedad; then it will run to Berothah and Sibram, which are on the border between Damascus and Hamath, and finally to Hazer-hatticon, on the border of Hauran. So the northern border will run from the Mediterranean to Hazar-enan, on the border between Hamath to the north and Damascus to the south. The eastern border starts at a point between Hauran and Damascus and runs south along the Jordan River between Israel and Gilead, past the Dead Sea and as far south as Tamar. This will be the eastern border. The southern border will go west from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh and then follow the course of the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean. This will be the southern border. On the west side, the Mediterranean itself will be your border from the southern border to the point where the northern border begins, opposite Lebo-hamath. Divide the land within these boundaries among the tribes of Israel. Distribute the land as an allotment for yourselves and for the foreigners who have joined you and are raising their families among you. They will be like native-born Israelites to you and will receive an allotment among the tribes. **These foreigners are to be given land within the territory of the tribe with whom they now live.** I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!" (Eze 47:13-23)*

As mentioned before, the appearance of the resurrected Old Testament saints and the current Palestinians will result in a huge problem concerning who owns the land. The resolution will be a completely new division of the land. Israel's national boundaries will be expanded to include parts of the Sinai, Lebanon, and Syria. God states that foreigners (non-Jews) will also be given land on which to live thus solving the current Palestinian problem.

Ezekiel continues in chapter 48 to describe the division of the land entering into the Millennium.

*"Here is the list of the tribes of Israel and the territory each is to receive. The territory of **Dan** is in the extreme north. Its boundary line follows the Hethlon road to Lebo-hamath and then runs on to Hazar-enan on the border of Damascus, with Hamath to the north. Dan's territory extends all the way across the land of Israel from east to west. **Asher's** territory lies south of Dan's and also extends from east to west. **Naphtali's** land lies south of Asher's, also extending from east to west. Then comes **Manasseh** south of*

Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts

*Naphtali, and its territory also extends from east to west. South of Manasseh is **Ephraim**, and then **Reuben**, and then **Judah**, all of whose boundaries extend from east to west. South of Judah is **the land set aside for a special purpose**. It will be 8 miles wide and will extend as far east and west as the tribal territories, with the Temple at the center. The area set aside for the LORD 's Temple will be 8 miles long and 6 miles wide. For the priests there will be a strip of land measuring 8 miles long by 3 miles wide, with the LORD 's Temple at the center. This area is set aside for the ordained priests, the descendants of Zadok who served me faithfully and did not go astray with the people of Israel and the rest of the Levites. It will be their special portion when the land is distributed, the most sacred land of all. Next to the priests' territory will lie the land where the other Levites will live. The land allotted to the Levites will be the same size and shape as that belonging to the priests—8 miles long and 3 miles wide. Together these portions of land will measure 8 miles long by 6 miles wide. **None of this special land may ever be sold or traded or used by others, for it belongs to the LORD; it is set apart as holy**. An additional strip of land 8 miles long by 1 miles wide, south of the sacred Temple area, will be allotted for public use—homes, pasturelands, and common lands, with a city at the center. The city will measure 1 miles on each side—north, south, east, and west. **Open lands will surround the city for 150 yards in every direction**. Outside the city there will be a farming area that stretches 3 miles to the east and 3 miles to the west along the border of the sacred area. **This farmland will produce food for the people working in the city**. Those who come from the various tribes to work in the city may farm it. This entire area—including the sacred lands and the city—is a square that measures 8 miles on each side. The areas that remain, to the east and to the west of the sacred lands and the city, will belong to the prince. Each of these areas will be 8 miles wide, extending in opposite directions to the eastern and western borders of Israel, with the sacred lands and the sanctuary of the Temple in the center. So the prince's land will include everything between the territories allotted to Judah and Benjamin, except for the areas set aside for the sacred lands and the city. These are the territories allotted to the rest of the tribes. **Benjamin's** territory lies just south of the prince's lands, and it extends across the entire land of Israel from east to west. South of Benjamin's territory lies that of **Simeon**, also extending across the land from east to west. Next is the territory of **Issachar** with the same eastern and western boundaries. Then comes the territory of **Zebulun**, which also extends across the land from east to west. The territory of **Gad** is just south of Zebulun with the same borders to the east and west. The southern border of Gad runs from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh and then follows the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean. **These are the allotments that will be set aside for each tribe's exclusive possession**. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!" (Eze 48:1-29)*

This description includes the holy portion of land with seven tribes above it and five tribes below it. It also includes a city with some urban planning for open spaces as well as farmland to help support the population.

***"These will be the exits to the city:** On the north wall, **which is 1 miles long**, there will be three gates, each one named after a tribe of Israel. The first will be named for Reuben, the second for Judah, and the third for Levi. On the east wall, **also 1 miles long**, the*

Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts

*gates will be named for Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. The south wall, **also 1 miles long**, will have gates named for Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun. And on the west wall, **also 1 miles long**, the gates will be named for Gad, Asher, and Naphtali. **The distance around the entire city will be 6 miles.** And from that day **the name of the city** will be **'The LORD Is There.'**" (Eze 48:30-35)*

The city will be squarish with walls a mile long on each side, but the distance around the city will be six miles rather than four miles. The extra distance may be due to geographical features such as rivers and mountains. The name of city will be "The LORD is There". This name may be pronounced in different ways depending on the language it derives from (modern Hebrew?).

The following two maps show interpretations of the description of this land division.

Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts



This map interpretation is interesting because of rigid horizontal line boundaries for each tribe. Even though Ephraim and Reuben receive much greater areas of land, most of this land is currently desert.

Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts



This map interpretation includes a detail of the holy portion with the temple.

Chapter 11

Conclusion and Charts

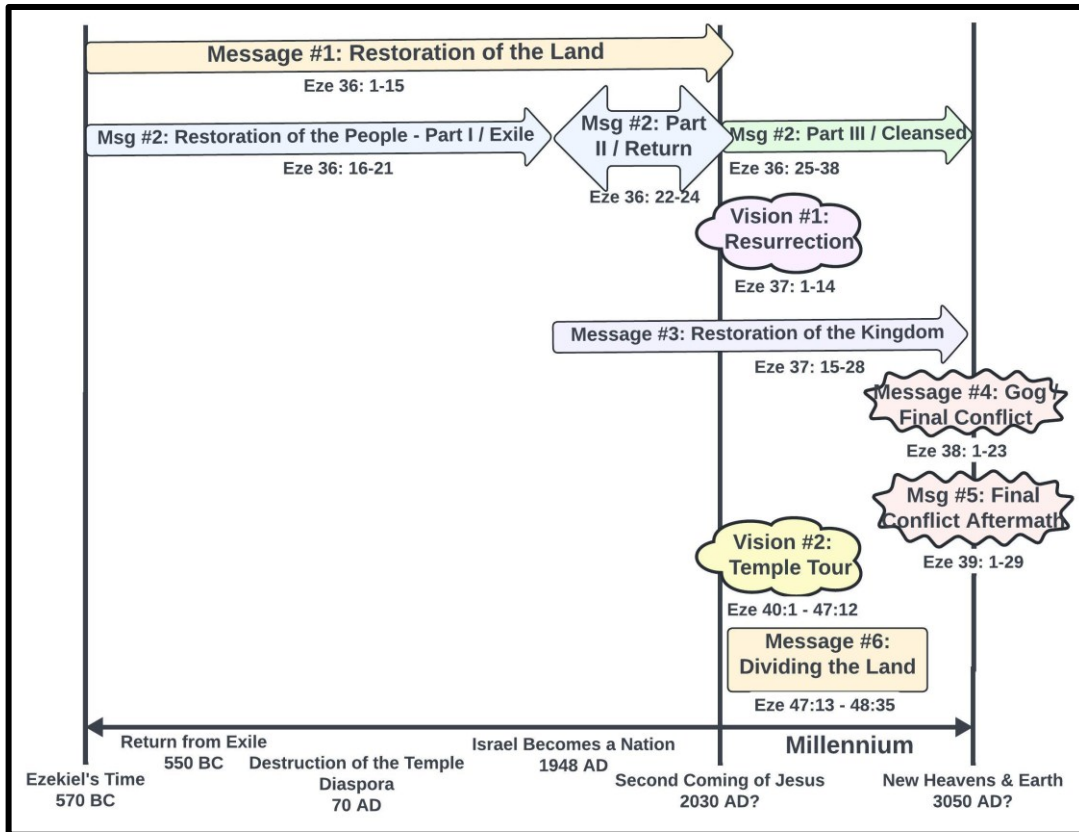
The theme of the prophetic chapters 36 through 48 in Ezekiel is restoration. There are four elements that need to be restored: the land, the people, the kingdom, and the temple. In Ezekiel's time, the land had been conquered, the people deported, the kingdom abolished, and the temple destroyed. His prophecies foretell a restoration of all four things. But the plan and timing to restore each element is different, but related. For instance, for the temple to be restored, the land has to first be occupied by the people. Each of the messages/visions deals with the restoration of each element. The land will need to be restored first, but it is also defiled by all the dead corpses after the final conflict at the end of the Millennium. Therefore, the restoration of the land has to begin first, but is also the last to be restored or cleansed after the final conflict.

	Initial State 570 BC						Final State
Land	Conquered	Acquired 550 BC	Conquered 63 BC	Lost 73 AD	Acquired 1948		Cleansed 3060 AD?
People	Exiled	Returned 550 BC	Oppression 63 BC	Dispersed 135 AD	Partial 1945	Fully Returned 2050 AD?	
Kingdom	Abolished	Partial 175 BC	Oppressed 63 BC	Lost ---	Partial 1968	Restored 2040 AD?	
Temple	Destroyed	Rebuilt 516 BC	Expanded 20 BC	Destroyed 70 AD	Rebuilt/Defiled 2030 AD?	New Temple 2050 AD?	

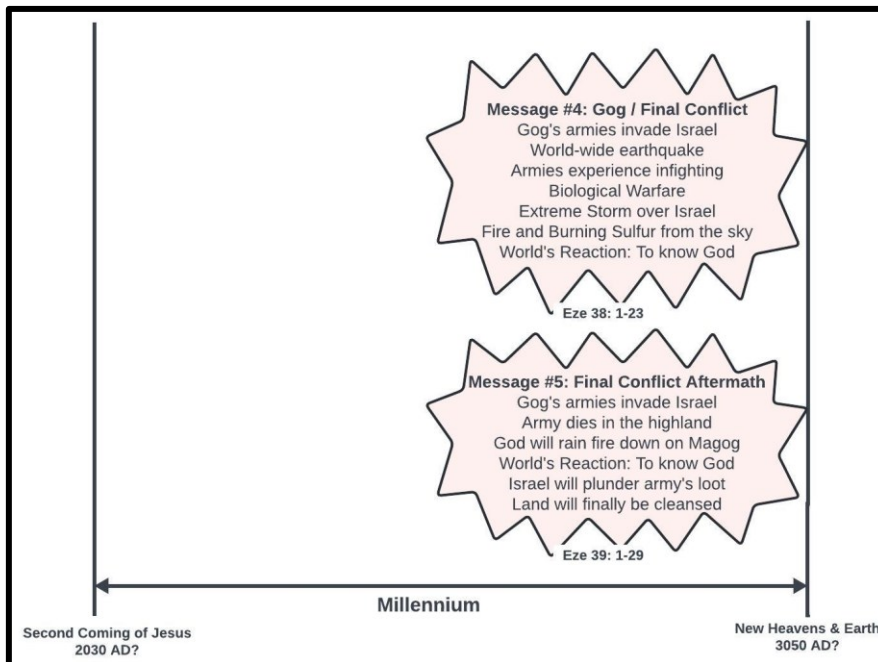
As seen in the chart above, the land, people, kingdom, and temple each have their own timeline as to their state and the timing of their restoration.

Below is a chart of the messages and visions regarding the time periods they describe. These messages/visions describe conditions over long periods of time.

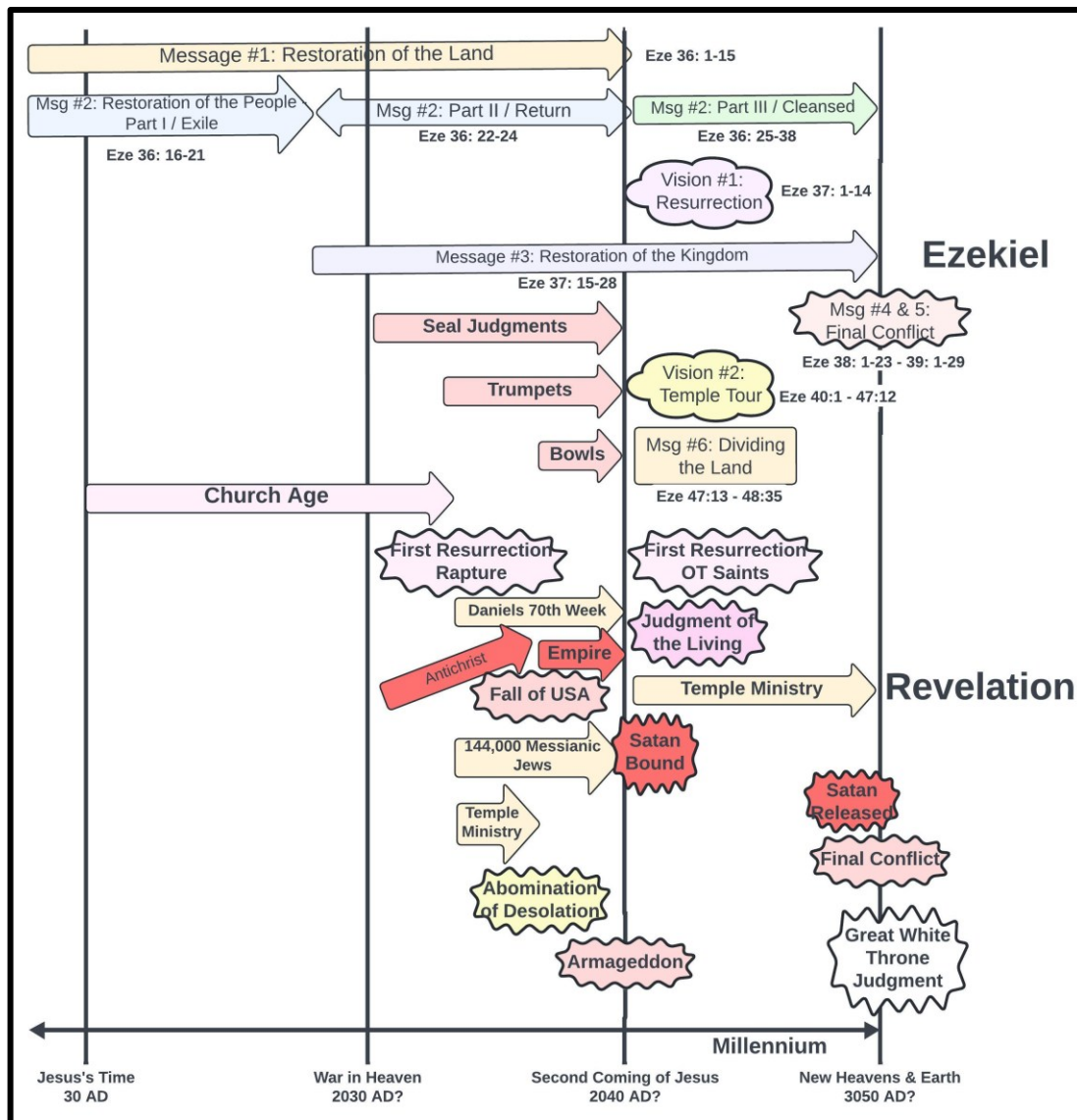
Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts



The chart below describes messages 4 and 5 in more detail.



Chapter 11 – Conclusion and Charts



This chart with events from Ezekiel and Revelation is interleaved into a timeline. The chart is quite busy. Areas of overlap between Ezekiel and Revelation include the resurrection of OT saints, the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, the temple ministry, and the final conflict at the end of the Millennium.