

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Explained

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Ezekiel 36:24-28 Explained

1. The particular Scripture under consideration is Eze. 36:24-28.
 - a. The questions are. Who are taken from among the heathen, the 144,000 or the ancient Jews?
 - b. When are they carried into their own lands? Did it happen in the past, seventy years after the Babylonian exile, or is it to happen in the future?
 - c. What is the clean water that is poured on the people?
 - d. Is the “new heart” and “new spirit” the spiritual restoration that was given to the returnees from Babylonian Exile? or are the 144,000 only given the Righteousness of Christ only in Palestine?

2. Here is the position of the Davidians.

“Since all of this takes place when God gathers His people from among the heathen, then no one can dodge the fact that unless we go into the land where the cleansing will take place, we will not be cleansed and we will not receive the new heart and God’s Spirit. After we have been taken from among the heathen, God will sprinkle clean water upon us to cleanse us. By this we are to understand that until God gathers us from among the heathen we cannot be clean.” **V. T. Houteff, The Symbolic Code, pg. 22.**

“When the saints get to the Promised Land, then the sin-indulgent heart, the stony heart, is taken away and a heart of righteous desires, a fleshly heart, is given. No longer will God’s people fight temptations from within in order to do righteousness. To them, in the period of the fleshly heart, it will be natural to do righteousness whereas now during the period of the stony heart it is natural to do unrighteousness.” **V. T. Houteff, Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, Nos. 41, 42, pg. 36.**

“None of the living can actually be cleansed from all their marks of sin while among the Gentile nations, you see. They must first be separated from the hypocrites and Gentiles, then brought into their own land, there to be sprinkled with clean water, cleansed from all their filthiness and from all their idols, when they get to their own land, not before. Even a new heart is to be given them there, and a new spirit also. Thus will the Lord cause them to walk in His statutes and keep His judgements forevermore. Thus shall they return and dwell in the land of their fathers. Palestine, and thus shall they be God’s people

eternally. These things, you see, are premillennial.” V. T. Houteff, **Vol. 2, Nos. 31,32,33,34, pg. 13.**

3. A summary point from the Davidian’s position on Eze. 36:24-28 is the following.
 - a. God’s people (the 144,000) is to be literally carried into the literal land of Palestine, called Israel today to be given a new heart and spirit and thus be cleansed.
 - b. No cleansing from sin, no new heart, no new spirit, no Holy Spirit is to be given to them until they go to Palestine.
 - c. They must be removed from the Gentiles, carried to Palestine, receive sprinkled water, then be cleansed, not before.
4. The following chart shows the real Biblical teaching of the Scripture.
5. The Babylonian captivity starts with the exile of Daniel and others in the first attack by Babylon. This dates from 606 B.C.B. (Dan. 1:1, 2; 2 Kn. 24:1-4; 2 Chr. 36:5-7). See, **Prophet and Kings, pg. 428.**

“When, early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar for the first time besieged and captured Jerusalem, and carried away Daniel and his companions, with others specially chosen for service in the court of Babylon, the faith of the Hebrew captives was tried to the utmost.” **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 428.**
6. There was a second attack by Babylon upon Judah, in which Jehoiachin and others were carried captive in Babylon. (2 Chr. 36:9, 10; 2 Kn. 24:8-16). See, Prophet and Kings, pg. 438.

“Jehoiachin [also known as Jeconiah, and Coniah], the son of Jehoiakim, occupied the throne only three months and ten days, when he surrendered to the Chaldean armies which, because of the rebellion of Judah's ruler, were once more besieging the fated city. On this occasion Nebuchadnezzar "carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land," several thousand in number, together with "craftsmen and smiths a thousand." With these the king of Babylon took "all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house." 2 Kings 24:15, 16, 13.” **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 438.**
7. In the third attack Judah was completely destroyed, Jerusalem and the temple burnt, the walls broken down. A third captivity of people was taken to Babylon and the land was left desolated. (2 Kn. 24:17-20; 2 Kn. 25:1-11). See, Prophet and Kings, pg. 458,459.

“If Zedekiah had stood up bravely and declared that he believed the words of the prophet, already half fulfilled, what desolation might have been averted! He should have said, I

will obey the Lord, and save the city from utter ruin. I dare not disregard the commands of God because of the fear or favour of man. I love the truth, I hate sin, and I will follow the counsel of the Mighty One of Israel. Then the people would have respected his courageous spirit, and those who were wavering between faith and unbelief would have taken a firm stand for the right. The very fearlessness and justice of this course would have inspired his subjects with admiration and loyalty. He would have had ample support, and Judah would have been spared the untold woe of carnage and famine and fire. The weakness of Zedekiah was a sin for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. The king was led away from Jerusalem a captive, his eyes were put out, and after arriving in Babylon he perished miserably. The beautiful temple that for more than four centuries had crowned the summit of Mount Zion was not spared by the Chaldeans. "They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof." 2 Chronicles 36:19." **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 458,458.**

8. The three prophets of the last days of Judah were:
 - i. Daniel.
 - ii. Ezekiel.
 - iii. Jeremiah.
9. Here is an account of the incidents of these prophets and where they were stationed in those days.
 - a. Daniel was taken captive into Babylon in the first attack upon Judah by Babylon. This began the 70 years exile in 606 B.C.B. Daniel was God's prophet in the courts of Babylon.
 - b. Ezekiel was taken captive into Babylon in the second attack upon Judah by Babylon. He was God's prophet for the Jewish exiles in Babylon.
 - c. Jeremiah was God's prophet in Judah during the first, second and third attacks by Babylon. He was later forcefully taken into Egypt by fleeing military men and others.
10. The reoccurring themes of the book of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are the following:
 - a. The sins of Judah caused God to send judgements upon them, even to the point of exile in Babylon.
 - b. The Jews were to be exile in Babylon for 70 years.

- c. The Jews were to be restored back into their own land in Judah at the end of the exile.
11. The Babylonian captivity was to last for 70 years only. This was found in Jeremiah. (Jer. 25:1, 9-12; Jer. 29:10-14).
 12. Daniel searched and later found out the 70 years exile prophecy in Jeremiah. (Dan. 9:1, 2).
 13. However, there are many other prophecies of the return of the captives out of Babylon back into their own land as found in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They are written in different ways. We are using Scriptures as used by Mrs. White to show the return of the exiles.
 - a. The following texts shows; a return of Jews to their land from Babylonian captivity and the reception of a change. They must first be brought back to the land, and then God reconverts them through the “clean water” truth to serve Him.
 - b. The following Scriptures are types of Eze. 36:24-28, that all have the same theme of return to their own land and receive truth and instruction from God for reconversion that they may serve God.
 14. This Scripture shows a return to the land of Palestine from Babylonian captivity to be sanctified and serve God. (Jer. 32:36-44).
 - a. Here is how Mrs. White explains the text.

“Nebuchadnezzar's armies were about to take the walls of Zion by storm. Thousands were perishing in a last desperate defense of the city. Many thousands more were dying of hunger and disease. The fate of Jerusalem was already sealed. The besieging towers of the enemy's forces were already overlooking the walls. “Behold the mounts,” the prophet continued in his prayer to God; “they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, Thou seest it. And Thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.” Verses 24, 25. The prayer of the prophet was graciously answered. “The word of the Lord unto Jeremiah” in that hour of distress, when the faith of the messenger of truth was being tried as by fire, was: “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?” Verses 26, 27. The city was soon to fall into the hand of the Chaldeans; its gates and palaces were to be set on fire and burned; but, notwithstanding the fact that destruction was imminent and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were to be

carried away captive, nevertheless the eternal purpose of Jehovah for Israel was yet to be fulfilled. In further answer to the prayer of His servant, the Lord declared concerning those upon whom His chastisements were falling: “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul. “For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.” Verses 37-44. **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 471,472.**

15. In another way God presents the return to Palestine and the blessings He gives to the Jews that keep the Faith. (Jer. 31:1, 6-10).

a. Mrs. White certainly explains this text.

“Thus was the church of God comforted in one of the darkest hours of her long conflict with the forces of evil. Satan had seemingly triumphed in his efforts to destroy Israel; but the Lord was overruling the events of the present, and during the years that were to follow, His people were to have opportunity to redeem the past. His message to the church was: “Fear thou not, O My servant Jacob; . . . neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee.” “I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.” Jeremiah 30:10, 11, 17. In the glad day of restoration the tribes of divided Israel were to be reunited as one people. The Lord was to be acknowledged as ruler over “all the families of Israel.” “They shall be My people.” He declared. “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the

blind and the lame; . . . they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born.” Jeremiah 31:1, 7-9. Humbled in the sight of the nations, those who once had been recognized as favored of Heaven above all other peoples of the earth were to learn in exile the lesson of obedience so necessary for their future happiness. Until they had learned this lesson, God could not do for them all that He desired to do. “I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished,” He declared in explanation of His purpose to chastise them for their spiritual good. Jeremiah 30:11. Yet those who had been the object of His tender love were not forever set aside; before all the nations of earth He would demonstrate His plan to bring victory out of apparent defeat, to save rather than to destroy.” **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 474-475.**

16. Again, it is both Judah and Israel that shall return to their land as one nation out of Babylonian captivity. God will cleanse them from their sins in their land. (Jer. 33:1-14).
 - a. Mrs. White also explains this text.

“In confirmation of these assurances of deliverance and restoration, “the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, “Thus saith the Lord the Maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; the Lord is His name; Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword; . . . Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities. . . . And it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. “Thus saith the Lord; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, . . . the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth forever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all

the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down. In the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.” Jeremiah 33:1-14. **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 473-475.**

17. The return to their land is from captivity in Babylon. (Jer. 30:10, 11, 16-19).

a. Here is Mrs. White explaining this fact.

“Thus was the church of God comforted in one of the darkest hours of her long conflict with the forces of evil. Satan had seemingly triumphed in his efforts to destroy Israel; but the Lord was overruling the events of the present, and during the years that were to follow, His people were to have opportunity to redeem the past. His message to the church was: “Fear thou not, O My servant Jacob; . . . neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee.” “I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.” Jeremiah 30:10, 11, 17. In the glad day of restoration the tribes of divided Israel were to be reunited as one people. The Lord was to be acknowledged as ruler over “all the families of Israel.” “They shall be My people.” He declared. “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame; . . . they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born.” Jeremiah 31:1, 7-9. Humbled in the sight of the nations, those who once had been recognized as favored of Heaven above all other peoples of the earth were to learn in exile the lesson of obedience so necessary for their future happiness. Until they had learned this lesson, God could not do for them all that He desired to do. “I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished,” He declared in explanation of His purpose to chastise them for their spiritual good.” Jeremiah 30:11.” **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 474-475.**

18. Here is the return to Judah promised again. (Jer. 31:10-14, 23-28).

- a. Mrs. White also shows this.

“Humbled in the sight of the nations, those who once had been recognized as favored of Heaven above all other peoples of the earth were to learn in exile the lesson of obedience so necessary for their future happiness. Until they had learned this lesson, God could not do for them all that He desired to do. “I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished,” He declared in explanation of His purpose to chastise them for their spiritual good. Jeremiah 30:11. Yet those who had been the object of His tender love were not forever set aside; before all the nations of earth He would demonstrate His plan to bring victory out of apparent defeat, to save rather than to destroy. To the prophet was given the message: “He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. . . . I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord.” “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:10-14, 23-25, 31-34. **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 475-476.**

19. The restatement of the covenant as the “new covenant” which is a change of heart is also promised to the returnees. (Jer. 31:31-34).

- a. So also says Mrs. White.

“Yet those who had been the object of His tender love were not forever set aside; before all the nations of earth He would demonstrate His plan to bring victory out of apparent defeat, to save rather than to destroy. To the prophet was given the message: “He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. . . . I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord.” “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:10-14, 23-25, 31-34. **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 475-476.**

20. Again, the Israelites were to be restored to their folds, not from Egypt, but from Babylon in the north to their own land. (Jer. 23:3-8).
- a. Mrs. White explains this same fact.

“The children of Judah were numbered among those of whom God had declared, “Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:6. Never did Jeremiah in his ministry lose sight of the vital importance of heart holiness in the varied relationships of life, and especially in the service of the most high God. Plainly he foresaw the downfall of the kingdom and a scattering of the inhabitants of Judah among the nations; but with the eye of faith he looked beyond all this to the times of restoration. Ringing in his ears was the divine

promise: “I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds. . . . Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**” Jeremiah 23:3-6. Thus prophecies of oncoming judgment were mingled with promises of final and glorious deliverance. Those who should choose to make their peace with God and live holy lives amid the prevailing apostasy, would receive strength for every trial and be enabled to witness for Him with mighty power. And in the ages to come the deliverance wrought in their behalf would exceed in fame that wrought for the children of Israel at the time of the Exodus. The days were coming, the Lord declared through His prophet, when “they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” Verses 7, 8. Such were the wonderful prophecies uttered by Jeremiah during the closing years of the history of the kingdom of Judah, when the Babylonians were coming unto universal rule, and were even then bringing their besieging armies against the walls of Zion. Like sweetest music these promises of deliverance fell upon the ears of those who were steadfast in their worship of Jehovah. In the homes of the high and the lowly, where the counsels of a covenant-keeping God were still held in reverence, the words of the prophet were repeated again and again. Even the children were mightily stirred, and upon their young and receptive minds lasting impressions were made.” **Ellen G. White, Prophet and Kings, pg. 426-427.**

21. Again, restoration into their own land from the 70 years of Babylonian captivity is seen. (Jer. 29:14; 10-13).

a. Here is how Sis. White presents it.

“In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf; for inseparably linked with the prophecy outlining the manner of Babylon's capture and fall were the words: “Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” “I have raised him up in

righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 44:28; 45:13. Nor were these the only prophecies upon which the exiles had opportunity to base their hope of speedy deliverance. The writings of Jeremiah were within their reach, and in these was plainly set forth the length of time that should elapse before the restoration of Israel from Babylon. “When seventy years are accomplished,” the Lord had foretold through His messenger, “I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.” Jeremiah 25:12. Favor would be shown the remnant of Judah, in answer to fervent prayer. “I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.” Jeremiah 29:14. Often had Daniel and his companions gone over these and similar prophecies outlining God's purpose for His people. And now, as the rapid course of events betokened the mighty hand of God at work among the nations, Daniel gave special thought to the promises made to Israel. His faith in the prophetic word led him to enter into experiences foretold by the sacred writers. “After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon,” the Lord had declared, “I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return. . . . I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” Verses 10-13. **Ibid. pg. 552-553.**

22. This same theme of restoration to their own land from Babylonian captivity is presented in various ways in the book of Ezekiel.
- a. Ezekiel presents this restoration in a number of ways. The valley of bones symbolism is an example. (Eze. 37:1-14).
 - b. The two sticks into one nation back into their own land is another symbolism. (Eze. 37:15-22).
 - c. The restoration of Israel as sheep is another symbol. (Eze. 34:11-15).
 - d. The prophecy of Ezekiel 36:24-28 is just a part of the reoccurring theme of coming out of Babylonian captivity and being restored into their own land as seen also in Jeremiah. (Eze. 36:22-35).

23. All the prophecies of return and restoration in so many Scriptures is also explained by Mrs. White in the following Scriptures. She rightfully points to the time of that return and restoration as beginning in the time of Cyrus the Persian. (Isa. 44:28; Isa. 45:13).

a. Here is how Mrs. White explain it.

“In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf; for inseparably linked with the prophecy outlining the manner of Babylon's capture and fall were the words: “Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 44:28; 45:13.” **Ibid. pg. 552.**

24. The first exodus from Babylon to Judah started in 536 B.C.B. at the end of the 70 years of Babylonian exile, when Cyrus came into power. (Ezra 1:1-11; Ezra 2:1-3).

a. Here is how Mrs. White explains it.

“In a written proclamation published “throughout all his kingdom,” Cyrus made known his desire to provide for the return of the Hebrews and for the rebuilding of their temple. “The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth,” the king gratefully acknowledged in this public proclamation; “and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem . . . and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering.” Ezra 1:1-4. “Let the house be builded,” he further directed regarding the temple structure, “the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: and also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at

Jerusalem.” Ezra 6:3-5. Tidings of this decree reached the farthestmost provinces of the king's realm, and everywhere among the children of the dispersion there was great rejoicing. Many, like Daniel, had been studying the prophecies, and had been seeking God for His promised intervention in behalf of Zion. And now their prayers were being answered; and with heartfelt joy they could unite in singing: “[1] When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, We were like them that dream. [2] Then was our mouth filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing: Then said they among the heathen, [3] The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; Whereof we are glad.” Psalm 126:1-3. “The chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised”--these were the goodly remnant, about fifty thousand strong, from among the Jews in the lands of exile, who determined to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity offered them “to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.” Their friends did not permit them to go empty-handed. “All they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things.” And to these and many other voluntary offerings were added “the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem; . . . even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, . . . five thousand and four hundred” in number, for use in the temple that was to be rebuilt. Ezra 1:5-11.” **Ibid. pg. 558-559.**

25. The second exodus from Babylon to Judah returned with Ezra under Artaxerxes’ decree in 457 B.C.B. (Ezra 7:1-8; Ezra 8:1).

a. Here also is how Mrs. White explains this particular exodus.

“The events that followed in rapid succession,--the appearance of Esther before the king, the marked favor shown her, the banquets of the king and queen with Haman as the only guest, the troubled sleep of the king, the public honor shown Mordecai, and the humiliation and fall of Haman upon the discovery of his wicked plot,--all these are parts of a familiar story. God wrought marvellously for His penitent people; and a counter decree issued by the king, allowing them to fight for their lives, was rapidly communicated to every part of the realm by mounted couriers, who were “hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment.” “And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.” Esther 8:14, 17. On the day appointed for their destruction, “the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.” Angels

that excel in strength had been commissioned by God to protect His people while they “stood for their lives.” Esther 9:2, 16. Mordecai was given the position of honor formerly occupied by Haman. He “was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren” (Esther 10:3); and he sought to promote the welfare of Israel. Thus did God bring His chosen people once more into favor at the Medo-Persian court, making possible the carrying out of His purpose to restore them to their own land. But it was not until several years later, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, the successor of Xerxes the Great that any considerable number returned to Jerusalem, under Ezra.”

“About seventy years after the return of the first company of exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua, Artaxerxes Longimanus came to the throne of Medo-Persia. The name of this king is connected with sacred history by a series of remarkable providences. It was during his reign that Ezra and Nehemiah lived and labored. He is the one who in 457 B.C. issued the third and final decree for the restoration of Jerusalem. His reign saw the return of a company of Jews under Ezra, the completion of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah and his associates, the reorganization of the temple services, and the great religious reformatations instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah. During his long rule he often showed favor to God's people, and in his trusted and well-beloved Jewish friends, Ezra and Nehemiah, he recognized men of God's appointment, raised up for a special work.” **Ibid. pg. 602-605,607.**

26. When the exiles returned to Judah, the work was now established to teach them the truth to purge them from all their old ways so that they would be made righteous and serve God. This work encountered a large number of obstacles so that God had to use the truth (clean water) to rectify the people.
 - a. First of all, “clean water” means the word of truth, the word of God. (Eph. 5:25-27).
 - b. The “good and comfortable words” we are told of here is the clean water. (Zech. 1:13).
 - i. Here is how Mrs. White explains this.

“The steady advancement made by the builders of the temple greatly discomfited and alarmed the hosts of evil. Satan determined to put forth still further effort to weaken and discourage God's people by holding before them their imperfections of character. If those who had long suffered because of transgression could again be induced to disregard God's commandments, they would be brought once more under the

bondage of sin. Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had ever been the special objects of Satan's enmity; he was determined to cause their destruction. While they were obedient, he could do them no harm; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to entice them into sin. Ensnared by his temptations, they had transgressed the law of God and had been left to become the prey of their enemies. Yet though they were carried as captives to Babylon, God did not forsake them. He sent His prophets to them with reproofs and warnings, and aroused them to see their guilt. When they humbled themselves before God and returned to Him with true repentance, He sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from captivity, restore them to His favor, and once more establish them in their own land. And now that this work of restoration had begun, and a remnant of Israel had already returned to Judea, Satan was determined to frustrate the carrying out of the divine purpose, and to this end he was seeking to move upon the heathen nations to destroy them utterly. But in this crisis the Lord strengthened His people "with good words and comfortable words." Zechariah 1:13. Through an impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, He showed the power of their Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people." **Ibid. pg. 582-583.**

- c. Mrs. White tells us that Haggai and Zechariah were used by God to give truths (clean water) to the people already returned in the land. (Zech. 4:6; Ezra 6:14, 15).
 - i. Here is Mrs. White statement.

"The messages delivered by Haggai and Zechariah roused the people to put forth every possible effort for the rebuilding of the temple; but, as they worked, they were sadly harassed by the Samaritans and others who devised many hindrances. On one occasion the provincial officers of the Medo-Persian realm visited Jerusalem and requested the name of the one who had authorized the restoration of the building. If at that time the Jews had not been trusting in the Lord for guidance, this inquiry might have resulted disastrously to them. "But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius." Ezra 5:5. The officers were answered so wisely that they decided to write a letter to Darius Hystaspes, then the ruler of Medo-Persia, directing his attention to the original decree made by Cyrus, which commanded that the house of God at Jerusalem be rebuilt, and that the expenses for the same be paid from the king's treasury."

“It will go on from strength to strength, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. The promise, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it,” was literally fulfilled. Verse 9. “The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar [the twelfth month], which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.” Ezra 6:14, 15.” **Ibid. pg. 578,596.**

d. Zechariah’s message was also the “clean water”, the words of truth that were sprinkled upon those who had returned from the exile in Babylon. (Zech. 8:16, 17).

i. Here is Mrs. White statement.

“Two months after Haggai's last recorded message was delivered, Zechariah had a series of visions regarding the work of God in the earth. These messages, given in the form of parables and symbols, came at a time of great uncertainty and anxiety, and were of peculiar significance to the men who were advancing in the name of the God of Israel. It seemed to the leaders as if the permission granted the Jews to rebuild was about to be withdrawn; the future appeared very dark. God saw that His people were in need of being sustained and cheered by a revelation of His infinite compassion and love. In vision Zechariah heard the angel of the Lord inquiring, “O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me,” Zechariah declared, “with good words and comfortable words. “So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it . . . and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” Zechariah 1:12-16.” **Ibid. pg. 580.**

e. The symbolism of Joshua the High Priest explains Judah being given a new heart and new spirit in their own land. All this is the influence of the “clean water” words of truth. (Zech. 3:4,5,7).

i. Again, Mrs. White explains.

“Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Verse 2. Long had Israel remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, “Take away the filthy garments from him;” and to Joshua the Angel says, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” “So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” Verses 4, 5. His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel was clothed with “change of raiment”--the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The miter placed upon Joshua's head was such as was worn by the priests, and bore the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord” (Exodus 28:36), signifying that notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary. The Angel now declared to Joshua: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” Zechariah 3:7. If obedient, he should be honored as the judge, or ruler, over the temple and all its services; he should walk among attending angels, even in this life; and at last he should join the glorified throng around the throne of God.” **Ibid. pg. 584,585.**

f. Divine light given to the Jews back in their own land is the clean water. **Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, pg. 594.**

“Immediately after Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel, the prophet received a message regarding the work of Zerubbabel. “The Angel that talked with me,” Zechariah declares, “came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. “So I answered and spake to the Angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord? . . . Then He answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” “Then answered I, and

said unto Him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto Him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? . . . Then said He, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

Zechariah 4:1-6, 11-14. In this vision the two olive trees which stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the candlestick. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a bright, continuous light. So from the anointed ones that stand in God's presence the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. Those who are thus enriched are to enrich others with the treasure of God's love.” ***Ibid.* pg. 593,594.**

- g. Ezra was used by God to give the Jews in their own land the truth of “clean water” to help them. **Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, pg. 608,609.**

“Born of the sons of Aaron, Ezra had been given a priestly training; and in addition to this he had acquired a familiarity with the writings of the magicians, the astrologers, and the wise men of the Medo-Persian realm. But he was not satisfied with his spiritual condition. He longed to be in full harmony with God; he longed for wisdom to carry out the divine will. And so he “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it.” Ezra 7:10. This led him to apply himself diligently to a study of the history of God's people, as recorded in the writings of prophets and kings. He searched the historical and poetical books of the Bible to learn why the Lord had permitted Jerusalem to be destroyed and His people carried captive into a heathen land. To the experiences of Israel from the time the promise was made to Abraham, Ezra gave special thought. He studied the instruction given at Mount Sinai and through the long period of wilderness wandering. As he learned more and still more concerning God's dealings with His children, and comprehended the sacredness of the law given at Sinai, Ezra's heart was stirred. He experienced a new and thorough conversion and determined to master the records of sacred history, that he might use this knowledge to bring blessing and light to his people. Ezra endeavored to gain a heart preparation for the work he believed was before him. He sought God earnestly, that he might be a wise teacher in Israel. As he learned to yield mind and will to divine control, there were brought into his life the principles of true sanctification, which, in later years, had a molding influence, not only upon the youth who sought his instruction, but upon all others associated with him. God chose Ezra to be an instrument of good to Israel, that He might put honor upon the priesthood, the glory of which had been greatly eclipsed during the captivity. Ezra developed into

a man of extraordinary learning and became “a ready scribe in the law of Moses.” Verse 6. These qualifications made him an eminent man in the Medo-Persian kingdom. Ezra became a mouthpiece for God, educating those about him in the principles that govern heaven. During the remaining years of his life, whether near the court of the king of Medo-Persia or at Jerusalem, his principal work was that of a teacher. As he communicated to others the truths he learned, his capacity for labor increased. He became a man of piety and zeal. He was the Lord's witness to the world of the power of Bible truth to ennoble the daily life. The efforts of Ezra to revive an interest in the study of the Scriptures were given permanency by his painstaking, lifelong work of preserving and multiplying the Sacred Writings. He gathered all the copies of the law that he could find and had these transcribed and distributed. The pure word, thus multiplied and placed in the hands of many people, gave knowledge that was of inestimable value.” **Ibid. pg. 608,609.**

27. The date we have chosen for the end of the period of post exilic “clean water” is 404 B.C.B., as a probable date for Malachi.
- a. Nehemiah mentions the Persian king “Darius the Persian” who is Darius ii Ochus who ruled from 424 B.C.B. to 404 B.C.B. Thus he must have lived during his reign. (Neh. 12:22).
 - b. Thus we come to the end of his reign in 404 B.C.B. and assume that Malachi would have been prophesying by that date. So although no one knows the date for that book, we assume that it must have been in 404 B.C.B. Here is what we call Malachi’s “clean water” to the returnees from exile, in their own land. **Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, pg. 705,708.**

“By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. After their return, they gave much attention to religious instruction and to the study of that which had been written in the book of the law and in the prophets concerning the worship of the true God. The restoration of the temple enabled them to carry out fully the ritual services of the sanctuary. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah they repeatedly covenanted to keep all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah. The seasons of prosperity that followed gave ample evidence of God's willingness to accept and forgive, and yet with fatal short-sightedness they turned again and again from their glorious destiny and selfishly appropriated to themselves that which would have brought healing and spiritual life to countless multitudes. {PK 705.1}

This failure to fulfil the divine purpose was very apparent in Malachi's day. Sternly the Lord's messenger dealt with the evils that were robbing Israel of

temporal prosperity and spiritual power. In his rebuke against transgressors the prophet spared neither priests nor people. "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel" through Malachi was that the lessons of the past be not forgotten and that the covenant made by Jehovah with the house of Israel be kept with fidelity. Only by heartfelt repentance could the blessing of God be realized. "I pray you," the prophet pleaded, "beseech God that He will be gracious unto us." Malachi 1:1, 9."

"Through messages such as those borne by Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, as well as through oppression from heathen foes, the Israelites finally learned the lesson that true prosperity depends upon obedience to the law of God."

Ibid. pg. 705,708.

28. Those that therefore gave the "clean water" of the words of truth to bless the returnees in their own land are:
 - i. Haggai
 - ii. Zechariah
 - iii. Ezra
 - iv. Nehemiah
 - v. Malachi

29. Thus an exegesis of Ezekiel 36:24-28 does not yield a future going of the church into the literal land of Israel to then get a clean heart or the Righteousness of Christ as the Davidians teach.
 - a. The Scriptures point to the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile at the end of the 70 years of captivity of Judah, to their own land.
 - b. They point to the fact that God would give them the "clean water" of truths through the teachers and prophets He sent to the Jews in their own land.
 - c. All this was fulfilled many years ago from 536 B.C.B. to 404 B.C.B.
 - d. Thus the only parts of Ezekiel 36:24-28 that are applicable are those about the "clean heart" and "new spirit" that can be applied to any time and any place by God.

FIN