

# A Prophecy Fulfilled

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken. I will save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey: and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. ---Ezekiel 34

**C**HRIST OUR LORD declared that he was the good shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. (Jn. 10:11; Is. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23). His coming had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament. Many centuries had to pass before the prophecy of Ezekiel could be fulfilled. It did not come to pass until Easter Sunday. At that time, Christ began to gather his apostles and disciples, who had been scattered by the scandal of his passion, as was foretold by the prophet Zechariah: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;" (Zech. 13:7) Christ wanted to gather his own people, his own nation, and for three years he preached to them, but because of their bad disposition, the prophecy could not be fulfilled. He wanted to gather them, but could not. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mt. 23:37)

It was prophesied about Christ that he would die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, (Jn. 11:52) that is, all those who had been scattered by the sin of Adam, both Jew and Gentile, and who were destined to be the sheep of his flock and members of his body, chosen before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

During his public ministry Christ preached only to the Jews, but he prophesied that one day the Gentiles would enter into his kingdom. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." (Mt. 8:11) St. Patrick quoted this verse in his *Confession*, revealing that this passage was fulfilled when he preached in Ireland, and so many were converted. Ireland was located at the extreme west of the world; at that time it was not possible to go any further. The Irish came from the west and sat down in the kingdom. The Irish and other

nations were privileged to be associated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the great ones of the Old Testament, they were privileged to receive so many privileges that the Jews had lost, being disinherited, because of their obstinacy. The Irish were privileged to see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel and so many other wonderful promises made in the Old and New Testament. They saw the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed, in a particular manner, their own nation.

It is a truth of scripture that men have free will, and that God does not force them. This truth is especially evident in the book of Deuteronomy, when God asks the people many times to choose between good and evil, life and death. They had to make the decision themselves. In the book of Joshua, it is written: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (Josh. 24:15). The people had to make a choice.

In the scriptures it is stated that Christ stands at the door, and knocks, if any man hears his voice, and opens the door, he will come in. (Apoc. 3:20). If Christ knocks at the door a thousand times and the resident refuses to answer, could not this be an instance of arrogance, of pride, of hubris? Christ did not give the Jews just one opportunity; he preached for three and a half years, that is more than a thousand days; they had more than a thousand opportunities of responding to him, more than a thousand chances of opening the door and of allowing him to come into their lives, to fulfill the purpose of their nation. If something sinister happened to them afterwards, whose fault was it? Did they not have opportunities? Were they arrogant and obstinate? *Hubris ante nemesis*. Pride goes before destruction. (Proverbs 16:18)

In the year 70, the sinister part of the prophecy of Matthew 8, the children of the kingdom being cast into outer darkness, was fulfilled. The Romans came and annihilated Jerusalem; many of the Jews died in the famine and the siege, many were killed by the Romans, and those who were left were scattered among the nations, according to the prophecy of Deuteronomy. "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other." (Deut. 28:64) They had no right to complain of what happened. They could not complain that they had not had an opportunity of being saved; they had thousands of opportunities.

At the time of Moses the nation Israel made a covenant, that is, a contract, with the Lord. They were allowed to take possession of the land promised to their ancestors, and to live upon it and receive many material and spiritual benefits, on the condition that they kept the covenant and obeyed the Lord. Since they did not fulfill the terms of the contract, they were cast out of the land for 70 years, at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The Lord revealed to the prophet Jeremiah that he would make a new covenant with the nation Israel; but even at the time of Christ, when the new covenant was accomplished, at the last supper, when Christ said: "This cup

is the new covenant in my blood," even after Christ had established his church and worked so many miracles, and afterwards, the apostles worked many miracles in the sight of the Jews, after all this, the majority of the nation was obstinate: they lost their privileges and were taken into captivity by the Romans. No one can blame the Romans or anyone else for what happened. They were the ones who made their decisions. They were more privileged than other nations, being, at that time, the only nation chosen by God. They could not allege ignorance as an excuse. They knew much more than the Gentile nations. They knew the prophecies. History was repeating itself. *Hubris ante nemesis.*

The prophecy of Ezekiel was fulfilled on Easter Sunday, on Pentecost Sunday, and during the course of centuries, it has been fulfilled by the preaching of missionaries and apostles who have preached the gospel to many nations, beginning in Europe and eventually going throughout the entire world. Christ's apostles and missionaries are his ambassadors, and they help him to gather into the fold of the church the sheep that were scattered because of the sin of Adam. All humanity was lost and was dead in sins and trespasses. (Ephesians 2:1) The result of preaching is conversion, and the result of conversion is salvation. Every time that a soul dies in grace and is saved, (gathered into the eternal sheepfold of heaven), the prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled.

Christ said that his church was like a city set on a hill that could not be hid. In the scriptures it is written that the gates of the city are open, and that they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. (Apoc. 21:25; Is. 60:3, 66:12). The gates are open. Who can enter? Anyone who wants to. Many have had the opportunity of entering into the church and of those who enter, many are saved. The church is like a sheepfold: if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall find pasture. (Jn. 10:9) Both Jews and Gentiles are in it: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (Jn. 10:16). These verses have been fulfilled in the preaching of St. Patrick, who converted so many Gentiles, and whenever preachers and missionaries bring souls into the fold of the good Shepherd.

The prophecy of Ezekiel harmonizes with other passages of Messianic promises:

And he shall set up a standard unto the nations, and shall assemble the fugitives of Israel, and shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. --Isaiah 11:12

In Ephesians it is written: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. --Eph. 1:10

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young. --Isaiah 40:11

For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. --Isaiah 54:7

The Lord God, who gathereth the scattered of Israel, saith: I will still gather unto him his congregation. --Isaiah 56:8

Save us, O Lord, our God: and gather us from among the nations: That we may give thanks to thy holy name, and may glory in thy praise.  
Psalm 105:47

The Lord gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the broken in heart.  
Psalm 147:2-3

And I will gather together the remnant of my flock, out of all the lands into which I have cast them out: and I will make them return to their own fields, and they shall increase and be multiplied. --Jeremiah 23:3

Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the islands that are afar off, and say: He that scattered Israel will gather him: and he will keep him as the shepherd doth his flock. --Jeremiah 31:10

Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If you are driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee. Deuteronomy 30:3  
They (angels) shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. --Matthew 24:31

Gather together all the tribes of Jacob: that they may know that there no God besides thee, and may declare thy great works: and thou shalt inherit them as from the beginning. --Ecclesiasticus 36:13

Even those who do not have the vocation of being a missionary, can still help Christ to gather into his fold the souls that have been lost and scattered. Any man or woman of good will can help him, by praying for the fulfillment of these magnificent scriptural promises, of souls being gathered, and kept safe from fear and their souls persevering in grace and being saved. By offering one's prayers, daily actions and sufferings in union with Christ, any man, woman or child can help in this apostolic enterprise.

Please pray and do what you can, in order to help Christ to save the souls of whom he spoke, the other sheep that are not yet in his fold, so that he may bring them in, so that they may be gathered into his fold and saved for all eternity.

<p>Save us, O Lord, our God: and gather us from among the nations: that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and may glory in thy praise. Amen.</p>
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