

## **Aim of lesson**

To remind the young people of the relevance of events in the Middle East to our lives, to Bible prophecy, and most importantly to the return of the Lord Jesus.

## **Bible background**

This will depend on how you decide to deal with the subject; see the following notes.

## **Preparation required**

The longer you have to prepare this lesson the better. There are two different approaches you can adopt.

### **A lesson based on current events**

If possible you should try to base the lesson on actual news events and current affairs. Try to pick up information from newspapers, radio or television; in addition the CSSU Web site contains a list of addresses for some Web sites which present either an Israeli or an Arabic view of current events. These can be found at <http://www.cssu.org.uk/twol3websites.shtml>.

You should:

- Familiarise yourself with current events in the Middle East and find out the Jewish and Arabic view of what is going on.
- Familiarise yourself with any relevant scriptural background to these events - historical references or relevant prophecies.
- Spend the lesson with the young people going through these materials.

Looking through the Web sites may take some time, and you need to be aware of how much it may be costing. If the young people have access to the internet you may like to share out sites between them and get them to look up what they can in the preceding week - again, you need to check that they are not spending too much of their own or someone else's money.

### **A lesson based on the fulfilment of prophecy**

The students' notes contain a chart of Bible prophecies, on which a lesson and a discussion can be based.

## Suggested outline of lesson

If you are following the first of the options described above, the lesson will depend on the current situation and what you have been able to find out. The notes that follow, therefore, apply only to the second approach.

### Introduction

Get the young people to look at the chart containing prophecies about Israel, the quotations from which they come, and their fulfilments. Get them to link the entries together with pencil lines (so that they can make corrections). The table below summarises the connections.

### Prophecies of Israel

What was prophesied?	Where?	How has it been fulfilled?
The Jews will be thrown out of their own land and scattered into all nations.	Deuteronomy 28:63-64	Around 750 - 600 BC the Jews were exiled. They were scattered around the world after AD 70.
Jerusalem will be destroyed and ruled by Gentiles.	Luke 21:24	In AD 70 the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. It was in Gentile hands until 1967.
They will be persecuted in the different countries where they are scattered.	Deuteronomy 28:65-67	Throughout the centuries Jews have been persecuted. They have been expelled from most of the countries they lived in. Probably the worst persecution was in the holocaust.
They will return to their land and will rule it themselves.	Ezekiel 36:8,12	Jews have return to Israel from over 100 countries. In 1948 they became an independent state.
The desert areas of Israel will blossom.	Ezekiel 36:34-35	Until 1948 much of the land of Israel was swamp or desert. Since then Israel has successfully cultivated many of these areas.
The land of Israel will be given back to its people before Jerusalem.	Zechariah 12:7	The Jews ruled some of the land of Israel in 1948, but they did not govern all Jerusalem until 1967.
When the Jews return to their land there will be trouble.	Zechariah 10:9,11	When the State of Israel was declared, the Arab nations immediately attacked. There have been several wars since then, and Israel has never been really at peace.

<b>What was prophesied?</b>	<b>Where?</b>	<b>How has it been fulfilled?</b>
Jerusalem will be the focus of problems for the nations.	Zechariah 12:2	In the disputes over territory Jerusalem has been a focus of conflict.
During these troubles the nation of Lebanon will see destruction.	Zechariah 11:1	Lebanon was once a beautiful country with a luxurious tourist area and a rich financial centre. Since 1975 war has destroyed it.
Israel will produce fruit that will go all over the world.	Isaiah 27:6	Since 1948 Israel has produced abundant fruit and exports it to many countries.
After their return they will still be a Godless people.	Ezekiel 39:26	Modern Israel is a materialistic, secular state which relies on its own military power.
A king will rule with justice and righteousness.	Isaiah 32:1	This has not yet been fulfilled.

There are many opportunities for discussion here, so take the opportunity to fill in the details of each of the points in the chart.

### **The Pattern of the Return**

Get the young people to look at the information about the Jewish population of Palestine, and encourage them to think about why the population increased at particular times. This should identify the holocaust as the key event in driving Jews back to Israel, although stress that persecution also went on after the Second World War in Russia and that the most recent wave of immigrants followed the collapse of Communist rule.

How does this relate to Bible prophecy? Look at Jeremiah 16:14-16.

### **Relevance to our lives**

Stress again how remarkable all this is. The way God has never forgotten his people (Jeremiah 30:3; Jeremiah 31:35-37) is a clear proof of the Bible's claims to be God's Word and to prophesy the near return of Jesus.

### **Prayer**

You may like to look at some passages such as Paul's prayer in Romans 10:1 or Psalm 122:6-9, and write a prayer with the young people.

## Other suggestions for activities

Get the young people to look at Jeremiah 30 and 31. Emphasize the hopelessness of the Jewish nation when Jeremiah was given these words - in the last stages of the kingdom of Judah, facing siege in Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and the captivity in Babylon. Ask the students to identify which prophecies in these chapters have, and have not, been fulfilled. If time is pressing, split the task up amongst them.

They should identify the following fulfilled prophecies ...

- Jews regathered to Israel at a time of great distress and persecution (Jeremiah 30:11-15; Jeremiah 31:1-7, 9, 15-17).
- Jews return to Israel from every land, especially the North (Jeremiah 31:8,10).
- Those who had persecuted them are suddenly overcome (Jeremiah 30:16,20).
- The land is replanted and prospers (Jeremiah 30:18, Jeremiah 31:5).

... and the following yet to be fulfilled ...

- The coming of Prince (Messiah) to rule (Jeremiah 30:21).
- A new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- Faithfulness to God restored (Jeremiah 31:6).

Ask the young people to make the connection between the fulfilled prophecies and the events of the last century.