

Ezek. 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones,

Ezek. 37:2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.*

Every time I read an account like this from one of the prophets, I can't help but imagine what it would be like to have such an experience. Needless to say, Ezekiel is given another very dramatic message from the LORD. Whatever the type of experience, he is placed in a valley full of dry bones. Verse two emphasizes the quantity of bones and the fact that they were very dry or old.

Ezek. 37:3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

As declared in verse one, Ezekiel had no doubt that this was an experience with the LORD. Whether he was communicating with a physical being or just a voice we are not told. This was obviously unimportant to Ezekiel; what was important was that he recognized it as the voice of the LORD. The LORD addresses Ezekiel as the "Son of Man." This appears to be a Hebrew idiom for how we would say "human being." In thinking about it, God almost never addresses the prophets by name in scripture. Some commentators point out that it is a title that emphasizes the weakness and/or limitations of man compared to the unlimited power and authority of God.

The Lord asks Ezekiel a question: "Can these bones live?" Since he is talking to the Lord GOD, Ezekiel knows that anything is possible. His wise answer, as far as I am concerned, is basically, "That is up to YOU."

Ezek. 37:4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Ezek. 37:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

Ezek. 37:6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Now the LORD instructs Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones—just as he prophesied to the mountains, hills, rivers, valleys and cities in chapter 36. Ezekiel is to tell these dead, dry bones to "listen" to the word of the Lord. My paraphrase of the message: I (God) am going to bring you back to fullness of life; and when I do, you are going to know without a shadow of a doubt that I AM THE LORD.

Ezek. 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

Ezek. 37:8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was no breath in them.*

As usual, Ezekiel does exactly as he is told. As he was speaking, the bones began to join together in accordance with the specifications for human skeletons. After the skeletons were formed, they were covered with sinews (tendons), muscles and skin. This completed the formation of each human, but they were yet without the spirit of life.

Ezek. 37:9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Ezek. 37:10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Next the Lord instructs Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind and command it in the name of the Lord GOD to come and breathe upon these lifeless beings and give them life. As with every word from the mouth of God, all was done according to His word. As they stood up on their feet, Ezekiel compared them to an “exceeding great army.” That this army represents the nation of Israel is declared in the next verse.

The reference to the four winds immediately makes one think of the cardinal directions—north, south, east and west. This would make sense in that the nation of Israel would be reborn through the return of its people from all those directions. It’s also significant to note that *life* is pictured as the coming together of the people, but is not depicted as being breathed into them by the Lord. In other words, they will come together physically before they come to life again spiritually.

Ezek. 37:11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

Ezek. 37:12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

The Lord begins to explain to the prophet what is meant by all that he has seen. As stated above, the bones represent the nation of Israel. They represent a nation that has been torn apart and dispersed among the nations according to the dictates and needs of the gentile nations. They represent a people who no longer have any hope. The Lord is basically saying that no matter how bad it gets, the Jewish people (and I use that term to represent all twelve tribes) will come together again as a nation in the land of Israel, the land given to them by God. They may think their nation is dead, but it will once again live when God brings His people back into the land.

What an amazing privilege it is to be witness to the rebirth of Israel as a nation. This prophecy was made about 2500 years ago. As predicted, people are returning to the nation from all over the world. I was listening to the news last night, and the journalist was interviewing a doctor who had just moved his family to Israel in the midst of this current outbreak of fighting with Hamas and Hezbollah. He was not afraid; he and his wife knew they were doing the right thing. There are many others like him. I am convinced that it is the hand of God on the hearts of these people that is drawing them back to the land of their heritage.

Also as predicted, they are spiritually dead (the nation as a whole) even if physically alive.

**Ezek. 37:13 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
Ezek. 37:14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.**

You would think that the Israeli's would be getting the picture by now in light of their history and the words of the prophets; but they are still basically a secular nation. Verse 14 identifies the time about which the prophet is speaking. They will KNOW that God is LORD when they have been restored to the land of Israel as a nation AND He has put His spirit in them. This is speaking of spiritual restoration as well as physical restoration. This will not happen until Jesus comes back as their Messiah to occupy the earthly throne of David as we discussed in the previous chapter.

**Ezek. 37:15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
Ezek. 37:16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions:
Ezek. 37:17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.**

The wording of the scripture makes it sound like this is a message received at a different time than the vision of dry bones, but the context of the message builds on that message.

The Lord instructs Ezekiel to take two sticks. He is to write "For Judah" on one stick and "For Joseph" on the other. These sticks are representative of the Southern and Northern Kingdoms that formed after the reign of Solomon. He is then to join the two sticks together to make one stick.

**Ezek. 37:18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these?
Ezek. 37:19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.
Ezek. 37:20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.**

In anticipation of the questions of the people regarding what Ezekiel is doing, the Lord gives him the explanation. The object lesson is fairly clear; it is a picture of the two Kingdoms coming together as one nation again. The phrase that jumped out to me was "and they shall be one in mine hand." In other words, they will become one nation in spirit and in obedience to God Almighty. Verse 20 makes it sound like the sticks miraculously did become one in the hands of the prophet as he gave the explanation to the people.

Ezek. 37:21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

Ezek. 37:22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

Ezek. 37:23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

Again, the Lord makes sure the people understand the message. He declares through the prophet that He will personally see that the people of Israel who are scattered among the gentile nations are gathered together into their own land—the land He originally promised to Abraham. They are going to live as one nation in the land of Israel and will never be divided again. They will never again rebel from the Lord and turn to idols and participate in evil, wicked practices. God is going to cleanse them from inside out. They will finally live in complete submission and obedience to God. They will bring Him the honor they were meant to bring Him from the beginning. Again, this description can only apply to the time of the Messiah's kingdom on earth when He establishes the new covenant with them that includes giving them hearts of flesh and His own indwelling Spirit. (cf 36:24-28)

Ezek. 37:24 And David my servant *shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.*

Frankly, I have no problem with accepting the literal translation of this verse. Scripture states that Christians will rule as kings and priests with the Lord.

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Rev. 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

In the Old Testament we are told that Jewish believers will serve as *Priests* of the Lord.

Is. 61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

Note: The Hebrew for Priests in this verse includes “chief ruler.”

There is no reason that the Messiah could not appoint David as King of Israel under His authority during the Millennial Reign. I believe that is what the Jews to whom Ezekiel was prophesying would have understood it to mean.

Other commentators make a valid argument regarding the term “David” referencing the Messiah. Christ identified Himself as the “good shepherd.”

John 10:11 **I am the good shepherd:** the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:14 **I am the good shepherd,** and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Maybe the reference to the “shepherd” is to the Messiah as distinct from the “king” identified as David. Maybe they are a reference to the same individual, the Messiah. We also know that scripture states that Jesus will rule on the throne of David, i.e., of Israel, the house of Jacob, forever.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This is not an issue that causes me great concern. The Lord Jesus is going to be the One in authority and may / will delegate to whom He so chooses.

The emphasis in this verse is on the fact that the people of Israel will be under spiritual leadership that will direct them in obedience and submission to God. They will never again have to suffer at the hands of evil, selfish shepherds that seek to lead them astray.

Ezek. 37:25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

This verse again emphasizes that the Jewish people will dwell in the land originally promised to Abraham through Jacob. Once the Messiah establishes His kingdom, the Jewish people will be able to dwell there in peace forever. In this verse David is identified as their “prince” (exalted one, king, chief, ruler). In addition to the scripture listed above, there are scriptures that identify the Messiah as a “Prince.”

Is. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The **Prince of Peace.**

Is. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

Dan. 9:25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the **Messiah the Prince** shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

(7/07) In reading through this journal again, I thought I should note here some observations from the last chapters that seem to preclude the “prince” being Jesus.

- He offers the sin offering for Himself and the people (45:22).
- He seems to be restricted from the inner court (46:2).
- He has sons (46:16) to participate in land inheritance.

Ezek. 37:26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

Ezek. 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

In this verse the word for *peace* in the Hebrew is a reference to safety, happiness, prosperity, health and rest. God is saying that He is going to make a covenant (a compact, contract, promise) with the Jewish people that will give them the benefits associated with that covenant forever. “Place them” is a reference to gathering them together to dwell in the “promised land.” “Multiply them” is a promise of great population growth. The terms *sanctuary* and *tabernacle* are referencing God’s dwelling place on earth, i.e., the Temple. God is promising that He will dwell in their midst, among them. As was His purpose from the beginning, “He will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Gen. 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Gen. 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Gen. 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Lev. 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Ezek. 37:28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Never again will the Gentile nations doubt that YHWH has set apart Israel as His pure and clean possession. Never again will the people suffer abuse because others abuse and distort the Word and/or purposes of God in His dealings with His people. Never again will any people be able to declare themselves “replacements” of God’s chosen people. His stamp of approval/security as to His choice of Israel will be the location of His sanctuary in their midst. Never again will His sanctuary be polluted with the presence of shrines to honor false gods.