

Ezekiel Chapter 37

Verses 1-14: The resuscitation of the nation is compared to dry bones coming to life. At this point the Israelites were like dry bones, nationally dead, and with no hope of restoration. Yet God promises that just as the bones came to life in Ezekiel's vision, so God says: I will "bring you into the land of Israel ... and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live".

Again, this is both a physical regathering to the land and a spiritual regathering to God Himself. The present day existence of the state of Israel may be the initial fulfillment of this prophecy, but it can be completely fulfilled only when Christ returns to establish His kingdom.

Ezekiel 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,"

This is not the same as the prophecies that Ezekiel spoke. This is an experience far above that of common man. This is God reaching to Ezekiel, not Ezekiel reaching to God. The touch from God brings this about.

Ezekiel is miraculously transported to the valley of the dry bones. Not literally, but God gives him a vivid inward sense that he has been taken to a valley "full of bones."

This is a valley of death. It appears from the natural eye, that there is no living here. This is like a cemetery, where the people are not buried, and just their bones remain. This is a highly elevated spiritual experience. It is not just a vision, but is a visual example from God of what He can do.

This passage, part of a series of revelations received during the night before the messenger came with the news of the destruction of Jerusalem, was to ease the gloom of the people. "In the midst of the valley" represents the world area wherever the Israelites were scattered.

Ezekiel 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."

In the sense of the physical house of Israel, we know that many died in the attack of Babylon. So many, in fact, they were not buried, but left where they fell. All of humanity, before they are saved, is just as dead as these dry bones. There is no spirit of life.

This pictures the dead nation lifeless, scattered and bleached, just as a dry tree pictures a dead nation, to which only God can give life.

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

In the natural or physical sense, no they cannot. They cannot bring themselves back to life. Only God can cause these dry bones to live. Ezekiel knew that he had no power within himself to make them live, but he also, knew that God could make them live, if He desired to.

The many dry bones picture the nation Israel (verse 11), as apparently dead in their dispersion, and waiting for national resurrection. The people knew about the doctrine of individual resurrection, otherwise this prophecy would have had no meaning.

Verses 4-6: Ezekiel is to proclaim God's pledge to reassemble Israelites from the world and restore the nation of Israel to life (verse 5) and give them His Spirit (verse 14), in true salvation and spiritual life. Clearly, God is promising the resurrection of the nation of Israel and its spiritual regeneration.

Ezekiel 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."

In the physical sense, these dry bones could not hear anything. We must look at this from the spiritual standpoint. Those who are dead in sin are like these dry bones. They must listen to the Word of the LORD, and receive Him into their being, to be able to live.

Physical Israel had a remnant left. They could live, if they listened to the Word of the LORD. God had made man from the dust of the earth in the beginning. Man was but a clay doll, until God breathed the breath of life in him. It was the breath of God that gave him life. Every creation was (God said let there be, and it was).

The Word of God created all things. The Word of God can revitalize these bones and make them live.

John 1:1-4 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

The Word created. The Word brought life.

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

The sight of these dead bones is the view of a world who knows not God. It is God that causes us to live. Jesus Christ the Son of God gave the power to live to all who would believe. The breath that enters in, is His Spirit which brings life. These bones of the physical house of Israel are dead, as far as the world is concerned. Notice, this is not an act of these dry bones, it is the gift of life from God. This is speaking of the gift of salvation. Man cannot earn life; it is a gift from God.

Ezekiel 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."

This speaks of the dead bones, which take on new life in Jesus Christ. This also, is speaking of God strengthening His people Israel. He will give them a body that is pleasing unto Him. Only God can give life. All who have been given this life will know He is the LORD.

Ezekiel 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."

"Noise", in the verse above, means to call aloud, a voice, thunder, and many other meanings which indicate this, perhaps, is the voice of God. This voice brings life to dead bones. This voice causes the dead in Christ to rise first (read 1 Thessalonians 4:13:18). In the sense of the physical house of Israel, God causes them to receive strength, and to get up, and go to Israel.

Ezekiel 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."

Bones without spirit are not alive. This is a body with flesh and bones, before it receives the Spirit. Physical Israel is just such a house today. They are a body, but the Spirit is not within them. In the sense of the Christians, we read the following.

John 3:5-6 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Ezekiel 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."

The number 4 means universal. This wind is from every direction. The wind of the Spirit of God is what this wind is. It is very similar to the wind in the following verse.

Acts 2:2 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

We see in the following Scripture, a time when the Spirit of God will enter into the body of man and cause him to live.

Acts 2:17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"

Ezekiel 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."

In the vision, Ezekiel did as he was told and the dead bones became a living nation.

Notice, these are spoken of as an army. This is that army of true believers, filled with the Spirit of God.

Verses 11-14: The energy that keeps God's prophetic clock running on schedule is the Jewish nation. The gathering of the Jews to a Palestinian homeland is setting the stage for Christ's return. God promised Ezekiel to restore Israel by returning the Jews to the land God had given Abraham, and by regeneration that people in the land. Even though many Jews have returned there today, most are still not believers.

God will probably use conditions in the Great Tribulation to draw His people to Himself as their savior. Thus "all Israel shall be saved".

The national turning to God by Israel scripturally coincides with the return of Christ. While many Jews are being saved today, probably the greatest fruit of contemporary evangelistic efforts among them will not be reaped until after the Rapture.

Verses 11-13 are the key to the interpretation of the vision. It is the resurrection and salvation of Israel.

Ezekiel 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."

The word "whole" is the secret to this verse. This means the 10 tribes, and also, the two tribes of Israel. In the spiritual sense, this is speaking of the physical house of Israel and the spiritual house of Israel. Another way of saying this is the Christians and the Jews.

Philippians 3:3 "For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."

The physical house of Israel was so scattered, by the captivity in nations around the world, they could hardly be spoken of as a unit.

We are taught that the body of Christ is made up of many parts (believers). In Romans chapter 11, we read of the Christians being grafted into the tree. The Jews were the natural branch.

Ezekiel 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."

This is speaking of the graves of their captivity. This was fulfilled in the time of Babylon's fall. It is, also, coming to pass today in Israel. Many Israelis are returning to their land out of the "graves" of the world.

Ezekiel 37:13-14 "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," "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."

This was such an impossible thing that happened that it can only be credited to the LORD.

God's reputation is at stake in the restoration and regeneration of Israel into the Land. He must do what He promised so all know that He is Lord.

We see from this, that it is the Spirit of God that gives the power to live. This had several fulfillments for the Hebrews. Shortly after the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites returned to their homeland. The present day is another good example of their return to their homeland.

Question: What happens when God puts His Holy Spirit within you? Answer: "And Ye shall live", which is the same as accepting Christ as your Savior today.

Jesus is the quickening Spirit. The Christian will be filled with the Spirit of God.

I Corinthians 15:45 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit."

Verses 15-28: Ezekiel was commanded to write the names of Judah and Israel on separate sticks, and then to join them together as one stick (verses 16-17). This action represented the fact that the two nations would be rejoined as one nation at the same time as the national revival just prophesied in the preceding chapter. The kingdom had split (in 931 B.C.), after the death of Solomon, with 10 tribes in the north being known as Israel (or Ephraim), and two tribes in the south, Benjamin and Judah, being known as Judah.

Ezekiel 37:15 "The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,"

There is a break in the prophecy here.

Ezekiel 37:16-17 "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:" "And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand."

These two kingdoms were never officially reunited in history. Therefore, this prophecy awaits its ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ. The closing verses of this chapter indicate the close association of God's three great unconditional covenants with His people: the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and new covenant.

Ezekiel 37:18 "And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou [meanest] by these?"

This is asking Ezekiel, what God means by the two sticks. The meaning here is that the tribes of the north and the tribes of the south would no longer be thought of as two tribes, but would now all be Israel.

Ezekiel 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."

In the physical sense, this is the 10 tribes and the 2 tribes coming together, and making up the physical house of Israel. It was unnatural for Israel to be separated, and they will be known as one tribe. They are all physically descended from Abraham. They are in the lineage of Abraham.

There is a house of faith that is also Abraham's. They are the Christians. Those who are Christ's are Abraham's seed in faith. They are spiritual Israel.

Ezekiel 37:20 "And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes."

Notice hand is not plural. They have come together.

Verses 21-23: God made 3 promises that summarized His future plans for Israel:

- (1) Restoration (verse 21);
- (2) Unification (verse 22); and
- (3) Purification (verse 23).

These promises bring to fulfillment:

- (1) The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. Chapter 12);
- (2) The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. Chapter 7); and
- (3) The New Covenant Jer. Chapter 31) respectively.

Ezekiel 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:"

Zechariah prophesies the ultimate deliverance and salvation of God's covenant people with a description of her restoration and blessing in the millennial kingdom. Zechariah shows how this happens during the millennial kingdom (in chapter 12 verses), as Jerusalem becomes "a cup of trembling" which is a symbol of the wrath of God.

Zech. 12:7-10 "The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify [themselves] against Judah." "In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David [shall be] as God, as the angel of the LORD before them." "And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn."

Ezekiel 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:"

The King, spoken of here, is speaking of Jesus. He was known as King of the Jews, when He was on the earth as our Savior. He will be all believers' King, when He comes back as King of kings and Lord of lords. The nation reunited for them was the present day Israel.

Ezekiel 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 dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God."

In addition to chapter 12 (we just read in verse 21), this further defines God's work.

Zech. 13:1-2 "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, [that] I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."

The cleansing is provided by the provisions of the New Covenant.

Ezekiel 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."

David, in the Scripture above, is speaking of Jesus Christ descended from David in the flesh. Jesus is the Shepherd.

Ephesians 2:15 "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace;"

Hebrews 8:6 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

Ephesians 2:5 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:"

Ezekiel 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."

“Land that I have given unto Jacob”: It is natural to see this physical land, so clarified, as the very land God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This "forever" is speaking of the reign of Jesus.

Hebrews 1:8 "But unto the Son [he saith], Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of thy kingdom."

Ezekiel 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."

Covenant of peace: This is the New Covenant in full force. Israel has never yet been in a state of perpetual salvation peace; this awaits fulfillment in the future kingdom of the Messiah who is the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

“An everlasting covenant”: The everlasting nature of the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants are joined together in the redeemed who experience the millennial kingdom “forever”. The Hebrew word for “everlasting” may refer to a long time or eternity. It is also true that these covenants will continue to be fulfilled after the Millennium in the eternal state.

“My sanctuary”: The Spirit of God begins to prepare for the great reality that God will have a sanctuary in the midst of His people and will dwell with them. God promised to dwell with man on earth. This has been God’s desire in all epochs:

- (1) Before Moses,
- (2) In the Mosaic era,
- (3) In the church era,
- (4) In the Millennium; and
- (5) In eternity future.

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

Here is the same statement about this verse except a little more fully stated.

Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

Ezekiel 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."

Israel is speaking of all believers, both Jew and Gentile. A believer in Christ is no longer classified as a heathen. The correct definition of heathen is foreign. (as in not Jewish).

Ephesians 2:19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

We can easily see from all this, that Israel (God's people), is made up of many nations.

Ezekiel Chapter 37 Questions

1. It appears from the natural eye, that there is no _____ .
2. What kind of experience is this?
3. Describe the bones Ezekiel saw.
4. What do these dry bones symbolize?
5. Can these dry bones live?
6. What did Ezekiel realize about these dry bones living?
7. What unusual thing was Ezekiel to tell these dry bones to do?
8. Those who are dead in sin are like these _____ .
9. What was man, before God breathed the breath of life in him?
10. Who created all things?
11. What will cause the dry bones to live?
12. Who gave us the power to live?

13. What is verse 6 speaking of?
14. What is the "noise" in verse 7?
15. Bones without spirit are _____.
16. What does the number 4 mean?
17. Verse 11 says these bones are whom?
18. What is the key word in verse 11?
19. The graves, of verse 12, are where?
20. And shall put my _____ in you, and ye shall live.
21. What were each of the sticks to have written on them?
22. Join them together in one _____.
23. Who are the two Israels?
24. Who is the King of verse 22?
25. Who is David in verse 24?
26. Who is the Shepherd?
27. What is the "everlasting covenant"?
28. All believers are saved by the _____ of _____.
29. The tabernacle of God is with _____.