

After Ezekiel chapter 36, with God's promise of restoration, to the Land itself, we read Ezekiel 37 which is God's promise to restore Israel, the people, after their having been cast to the nations for nearly 1900 years.

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, ²And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

Ezekiel knows it's impossible but He also knows God can do anything, so, he says, 'You know, Lord.'

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

God **tells Ezekiel** to speak to the bones: the Word of the Lord being sent forth to accomplish its intended purpose but spoken through His man of God, Ezekiel. This is what God does in the salvation of the lost, today; He sends His Word to go forth, to the lost, as It's spoken through the man or woman of God... you and me.

God can use us as He did Ezekiel who was just a man upon whom God put His hand, using him in mighty and miraculous ways... we, too, can be effective in God's hands; if He can use piles of dead, dry bones... He can certainly use us in His miraculous recreation of a lost person into a born again, new creation: a new child of God with eternal life. Later, we'll study *Evangelism*... to learn, understand and communicate the Gospel.

*⁵Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶And 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. ⁷So I (Ezekiel) 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. ⁸And 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. ⁹Then said he unto me, Prophesy 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. ¹⁰So 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.***

This breath came from the wind; it was not yet God's filling them with the breath of His Spirit... they are still spiritually dead in sin but alive in the flesh.

We see Israel brought back to life; they have breath but not the breath of the indwelling Holy Spirit; God has not yet recreated them into His holy and Spiritual nation; that won't happen until His return at Armageddon.

This is God saying, 2500 years before its fulfillment, that Israel, the people, though they seem to be lost and scattered to the four winds, out among the nations, persecuted to the point of extermination, culminating in the death camps and crematoriums of Nazi Germany, that He would, miraculously, gather the remnant of the Jews and bring them back into their own land in the Last Days... and 'afterward' He will pour out His Spirit. Joel 2

These bones are not just dry, they are very dry... long dead and bleached by the sun; naturally speaking, there is no possibility of their coming to life... just like the Jews out in the World for the past 19 centuries.

This is the picture of Israel, the people, driven from the Land, persecuted and nearly exterminated.

God used Hitler and a vast majority of people and leaders around the World to persecute the Jews, even to the point of near annihilation in order to begin driving them back into their land. Many did not want to leave their comfortable lives in Europe so God removed their comfortable lives and drove them down to Israel.

Some Biblical prophecies have more than one application and fulfillment. The first part of this prophecy had its fulfillment when the Jews were finally brought back into their own land, declaring independence on May 14, 1948; this was the primary fulfillment and the monumental event that 'kicked off' the End Times when the World would enter the '*final generation*' before Jesus Christ's Second Coming at Armageddon.

We are in the waning days of the *Church Age* as the Lord Jesus Christ is completing the building of His Church, His Bride. Soon, God will say, 'It is time, go and receive your Bride.' (The Rapture) When that happens, God will resume His work with His chosen Earthly people, Israel.

Remember, the Tribulation, on Earth, has nothing whatsoever to do with the Church; it is only about God's dealing with Israel and also His Wrath being poured out on the unbelieving World which rejected His Son.

Here's how we know that Israel's rebirth in 1948 was the partial fulfillment of this prophecy of the dry bones and the fulfillment of Jesus' words in His Parable of the Fig Tree that '*this generation*' would not pass. Even though not yet having turned to the Savior, Israel must be a sovereign nation, in her land, before the beginning of the Tribulation, because Israel must sign a seven year peace agreement which the Antichrist will 'confirm,' which will then be the beginning of the final 'week of years' of Daniel's Seventy Weeks... the seven year Tribulation.

The next event in God's timetable will be one thing for sure and also two others around the same time. Although there is no prophecy which must to be fulfilled before the moment of the Rapture, I believe the Word teaches that the Ezekiel 38 invasion and the rise of Antichrist will both happen at, or near, that same time; then, with the signing of the seven year peace treaty, the seven year Tribulation, will begin. This is why only the Rapture is His *coming at any moment*, an unknown time for which to watch. During the Tribulation, they can know for certain that His Second Coming will be exactly seven years from the day of signing a peace treaty, by Israel, and confirmed by the Antichrist.

Jesus' main point in saying '*this generation will not pass until all be fulfilled*,' is, that once End Times Prophecy begins to unfold, everything listed in Matthew 24 will happen quickly, within the time frame of a single generation. The event He foretold that would begin all of it falling into place would be the rebirth of Israel, even though she is not, yet, that Spirit filled people of the Millennial Kingdom occupying all her promised land. In verses 1-10, Ezekiel prophesies that the bones would come together, to be covered with all their flesh, and they would stand up, alive, a very great army... that is exactly what happened to Israel in 1948 and what has continued in Israel during the past 70 years; they are, in fact, a very great army.

But then, beginning in verse 11, God speaks **again** to Israel in a second prophecy: 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.* ¹² *Therefore prophesy (again) 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.*** 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,* 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.*

Here, God is speaking of that future time when all the righteous dead of Israel will be resurrected to begin eternal life in the Earthly Kingdom of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. God is not speaking figuratively; He will actually open their graves and bring them forth: just as He will do for us at the Rapture (if we will have died before the Rapture) but this is not part of the Rapture; this is at the end of the Tribulation.

The Rapture is the closing event of the time of the Church, the glorious time when the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ will accompany Him back to His Father's house to the special place He has prepared for each one of us. God will also open the graves of dead Israelites and put His Spirit within them, causing them to walk in His ways, but that will happen at the end of the Tribulation, the 70th Week of Daniel.

When we are taken to Heaven, in the Rapture, we will be with our Savior for seven years; it will be, like in the Jewish marriage, the 7-day bridal week; in the Jewish wedding this is the time when the bride and groom are ensconced together within the special place the Groom will have prepared, for His Bride, in his father's house. During this time we will receive our rewards, rejoicing together with all our loved ones and beginning our wondrous time of eternal life. We can only imagine all that He will teach us and reveal to us during that time. In Rev. 19, we read that the *Wedding of the Messiah* and the *Wedding Feast* are both held right at the end of

the 7 year bridal week, just before Jesus returns at Armageddon with us, all riding white horses. We will join Him at the Rapture; we will spend the bridal week with Him. Then, after the Wedding and Feast, we will all travel down, together, on white horses, just like the Bride and Groom leaving to take, by force, His new Eternal Kingdom as we begin to rule and reign with Him for 1000 years and then forever.

The guests at the Wedding, those who are invited, are the resurrected Old Testament Saints along with all those who put their trust in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation, Jews and Gentiles, who stayed true until their death or His return, and who resisted the Mark of the Beast. I believe this is how it all works out from Scripture In Rev 9:6:

*'And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, "Write: **'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'***

Someone is called and invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; it's not the Church; we are the Bride of the Lamb. I think these are the ones referred to in Jesus' parable of the 10 virgins and of the one not wearing proper wedding garments. Old Testament Saints and those Saints from the 70th Week of Daniel, the Tribulation, are the friends of the Bridegroom and those invited to the Marriage Supper of the Messiah and His Bride... that is for future study.

By the way... the First Resurrection began with Jesus Christ, the 'first fruits' of God's harvest, it includes all true Christians who will be resurrected at the Rapture because we were crucified and resurrected 'in Him,' and it also includes Old Testament believers and those killed for their faith during the Tribulation who will be raised when Jesus Christ returns at, and after, Armageddon. And then, there will be one, final resurrection, the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium. All of the unbelieving dead will be cast into the Lake of Fire to join Satan, rebellious angels, the Antichrist and the False Prophet where they will be punished forever. However, there will also be raised those who will have died during the Millennium whose names will be found in the Book of Life, **that is... if, in fact, mortal believers do die during the Millennium.** It's also possible that mortal believers, during the Millennium, will have very long life spans, like the first humans, around 1000 years, and so, remain alive through the Millennium. Perhaps believers will also have access to the Tree of Life. Remember, Jesus said, to the Church, *'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'* Rev 2:7 Some things are not as clearly laid out for us as we would hope but certainly, everything God wants us to know, in His Revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and in His Word are all given to us to search out and to understand with the illumination which comes from His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Finally, in this chapter, God speaks to Ezekiel and to Israel a third time:

¹⁶Moreover, 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; ¹⁷And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

¹⁸And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? ¹⁹Say 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. ²⁰And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. ²¹And 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; ²²And 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. ²³Neither 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.

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. 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 forever.**

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

Here we see, two times, God says that David will be King over Israel but Gabriel said to Mary, 'He (Jesus) will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.' ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.' Luke 1:32

Either Jesus Christ will rule over Israel and the Universe from His throne in Jerusalem or Israel will have her own king, David, under the authority and rule of the *Lord Jesus Christ Who is King of kings and Lord of lords.*

This last section of Ezekiel 37 is self-explanatory. In 975 B.C., Israel was split into two kingdoms after the reign of Solomon; they were the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Both kingdoms had various good kings and evil kings.

The Assyrians destroyed and dispersed the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C; those Jews never returned; they were lost to the nations, the dead, dry bones. Later, in 586 B.C., the Babylonians destroyed Judah, the Southern Kingdom, taking many Jews captive, back to Babylon, including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Those Jews were allowed to begin returning to Judah **70 years later**, one generation, in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. That prophetic fulfillment began God's time clock in regard to the 70 Weeks of Daniel, chapter 9, another study coming soon.

Next week we'll begin Ezekiel 38: Gog, Magog, Persia, Gomer etc. and the soon coming invasion of Israel from the North, even what we see forming up now. This, I believe, will occur right around the time of the Rapture along with the revealing of the Antichrist... it could be any day now!

