

And thou, son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions. And take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions. Eze 37:16

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton October 24, 2005

Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from the excellent source the e-Sword Bible computer program unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

In this prophecy given by Ezekiel we see God continuing to show concern to save his people of the House of Israel from their dispersion among the Gentiles and to bring them together again with their brethren Judah in the land of Israel. This is shown to Ezekiel and the people who listened to him explain and act out this truth in two different object lessons given in this chapter 37. The first of the two object lessons given to him is a valley that he sees full of dried human bones which represents the House of Israel so long after their captivity to the Assyrians and eventual dispersion amongst the Gentiles. Ezekiel is shown that this valley of dried old bones (i.e. The House of Israel) can and will live again one day as part of the whole people of Israel. The other object lesson is two sticks that Ezekiel is ordered to take, as people are watching him, and he has to join them together. Each has something written on it that identifies who it represents. One stick is again the House of Israel and the other is their known brethren the House of Judah. The joining of the two sticks illustrates that though to this very day they are still separated from each other God will in the end times bring them back together in the land of Israel as a united kingdom once again. Two wonderful promises that show a most important point to come to understand, which is this; that God has promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their descendent's of the twelve tribes will together inherit and possess all of the promised land of Israel again. He will indeed bring them back together and they will have all of their land again. That land incidentally is much larger than the small sliver of the area that we today call Israel. So you can believe God. When He says that He will do a thing, He will do it whether or not it seems to happen as quickly as man thinks it should.

Lesson text - Ezekiel Chapter 37

Eze 37:1 The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah carried me out in the

Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a valley; and it was full of bones.

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

Eze 37:3And he said unto me, Son of man, Shall these bones live? And I said, Lord Jehovah, thou knowest.

Eze 37:4And he said unto me, Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, Ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah.

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

Eze 37:6And I will put 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* Jehovah.

Comments -

These are clearly human bones that God is concerned about. They are a large body of them filling this valley so they must represent a large body of people that have either died or ceased to exist as the body of people they once must have been. These basic points we may deduce from what is said and the clear importance that God does attach to them.

Eze 37:7And I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a rustling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

Eze 37:8And I looked, and behold, sinews and flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.

Comments -

These bones represent a body of people that were and today still are important to God though to the world they may seem to already have been only distant history by Ezekiel's time. What ethnic groupings of the earth is God concerned about to this degree. Many peoples have risen and fallen only to be absorbed in yet other new alignments of peoples throughout history. God is concerned for this specific people even though by this point they seem to be but a memory. Who can they be? They only people that God shows that degree of determination to preserve as a people are the people of Israel. At this time Judah, the southern kingdom is in captivity in Babylon. The northern portion called the House of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians well over a hundred years before this time. Is it one of these?

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

Slain – H2026 **הרג** hârag haw-rag' A primitive root; to smite with deadly intent: - destroy, out of hand, kill, murder (-er), put to [death], make [slaughter], slay (-er), X surely.

Comments -

***breathe upon these slain* - died of old age in this picture but had been defeated in battle in some manner. They were slain. Strong's Concordance from the e-Sword Program gives the basic definition as smitten intentionally. Perhaps they were smitten by God Himself as seems to be the case when we see in a few verses what people these bones represent.**

Eze 37:10And I prophesied as he had commanded me, and the breath came into

them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.
Eze 37:11 And 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!

Comments -

these bones are the whole house of Israel - These bones that Ezekiel saw represented the entire House of Israel which had revolted against the reign of the Tribe of Judah shortly after the death of King Solomon. They had formed a separate Kingdom of Israel to the north of Judah under their new King Jeroboam who was of the Tribe of Ephraim. But Jeroboam quickly lead them into great idolatry which they never did repent of. Because of that they were eventually lead into captivity by the Assyrians approximately 180 years before the Tribe of Judah to the south fell to the Babylonians.

an exceeding great army - When they are revived again spiritually in God's sight in the future at the end times they will be a very large body of people. The passage is not implying that this is symbolic but rather is portraying the event as something literally that will happen to these real people of God at some point in the future.

an exceeding great army

The word *exceeding* here represents the Hebrew word used twice in a row here in the text to emphasize the point. They are exceedingly great in size! The word *great* is used as is also the word for a force which is translated *army*. It would make no sense in the thought here to take this as any thing other than a very large powerful force of people being literally drawn back to their God.

exceeding— H3966 מֵאֵד me'ed meh-ode' From the same as H181; properly vehemence, that is, (with or without preposition) vehemently; by implication wholly, speedily, etc. (often with other words as an intensive or superlative; especially when repeated): - diligently, especially, exceeding (-ly), far, fast, good, great (-ly), X louder and louder, might (-ily, -y), (so) much, quickly, (so) sore, utterly, very (+ much, sore), well.

great— H1419 גָּדוֹל gadol gādōl gaw-dole',gaw-dole' From H1431; great(in any sense); hence older; also insolent: - + aloud, elder (-est), + exceeding (-ly), + far, (man of) great (man, matter, thing, -er, -ness), high, long, loud, mighty, more, much, noble, proud thing, X sore, (') very.

ARMY— H2428 חַיִּיל chayil CHAH'-YIL FROM H2342; PROBABLY A FORCE, WHETHER OF MEN, MEANS OR OTHER RESOURCES; AN ARMY, WEALTH, VIRTUE, VALOR, STRENGTH: - ABLE, ACTIVITY, (+) ARMY, BAND OF MEN (SOLDIERS), COMPANY, (GREAT) FORCES, GOODS, HOST, MIGHT, POWER, RICHES, STRENGTH, STRONG, SUBSTANCE, TRAIN, (+) VALIANT (-LY), VALOUR, VIRTUOUS (-LY), WAR, WORTHY (-ILY).

Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost – They may have thought at some point that God had utterly deserted them and would never call them unto Him again. But they were wrong. The fulfillment of this prophecy has not taken place yet. It is then still to take place in the future.

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

Eze 37:13 And ye shall know that I *am* Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and have caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people.

Comments -

This is being used to symbolize the spiritual awakening of the House of Israel and their return to unite with Judah as in ancient times. This is not the resurrection of the church or any other body of people including Israel. The people of Judah (descendants of those we read about in the Bible) will still exist in the end times when this happens and they will see the return of the other tribes of Israel (the descendants of those ancient tribes) from among the Gentiles.

Eze 37:14 And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken, and have done *it*, saith Jehovah.

Eze 37:15 And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

Eze 37:16, son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions. And take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.

Jamieson, Fausett and Brown from the e-Sword Bible Program -

Eze 37:16 - stick--alluding to **Num 17:2**, the tribal rod. The union of the two rods was a prophecy in action of the brotherly union which is to reunite the ten tribes and Judah. As their severance under Jeroboam was fraught with the greatest evil to the covenant-people, so the first result of both being joined by the spirit of life to God is that they become joined to one another under the one covenant King, Messiah-David.

Judah, and . . . children of Israel his companions--that is, Judah and, besides Benjamin and Levi, those who had joined themselves to him of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, as having the temple and lawful priesthood in his borders (**2Ch 11:12-13**, **2Ch 11:16**; **2Ch 15:9**; **2Ch 30:11**, **2Ch 30:18**). The latter became identified with Judah after the carrying away of the ten tribes, and returned with Judah from Babylon, and so shall be associated with that tribe at the future restoration.

For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim--Ephraim's posterity took the lead, not only of the other descendants of Joseph (compare Eze 37:19), but of the ten tribes of Israel. For four hundred years, during the period of the judges, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its dependent tribes, it had formerly taken the lead: Shiloh was its religious capital; Shechem, its civil capital. God had transferred the birthright from Reuben (for dishonoring his father's bed) to Joseph, whose representative, Ephraim, though the younger, was made (**Gen 48:19**; **1Ch 5:1**). From its pre-eminence "Israel" is attached to it as "companions." The "all" in this case, not in that of Judah, which has only attached as "companions" the children of Israel" (that is, some of them, namely, those who followed the fortunes of Judah), implies that the bulk of the ten tribes did not return at the restoration from Babylon, but are distinct from Judah, until the coming union with it at the restoration.

Eze 37:17 them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thy hand.

Eze 37:18 And when the children of my people speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not declare unto us what thou meanest by these?

Eze 37:19 them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his

companions, and will put them with this, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand.

Eze 37:20And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes.

Eze 37:21unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them from every side, and bring them into their own land:

Eze 37:22will 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.

Eze 37:23And they shall not defile themselves any more with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; **and I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned**, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Eze 37:24And **David my servant shall be king over them**; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall walk in mine ordinances, and keep my statutes, and do them.

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

Eze 37:26will 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 ever.

Eze 37:27And my tabernacle shall be over them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Eze 37:28nations shall know that I Jehovah do hallow Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for ever.

Conclusion -

We have seen God give Ezekiel two object lessons in this prophecy. In the first lesson he is shown a valley full of dried human bones which represents the House of Israel. God explains to him that these bones of Israel though they seem long since dead, can indeed live once again as the whole kingdom of Israel reunited. The other object lesson is two sticks that Ezekiel is told to take, as people are watching him, and join together. One stick is the House of Israel and the other is their known brethren the House of Judah. The two wonderful promises show a most important point which is that God has promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their descendents of the twelve tribes will together inherit and possess all of the promised land of Israel once again. That land incidentally is much larger than the small sliver of the area that we today call Israel.