

<Bone to His Bone>

Ezekiel 36:35 – 37:28

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~ Our Spiritual Safari arrives on a sensational scene in this report. No screen-writer in Hollywood or special effects producer could do justice to this passage by replicating it visually; and I don't think any have ever tried. While this chapter is likely the most well-known, single-most read section of Ezekiel's prophecy, I have found very few Bible teachers who can provide the proper, correct and complete interpretation. We have dismembered skeletal remains spread-out across a huge valley. This scene would make Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge mass-genocide in Choeung Ek and Tuol Sleng look like amateur hour at an office Halloween party. What happens in this chapter of the Word of God defies imagination. I caution all of you safari readers to remember what Ezekiel has said to us well over one hundred times now, which is, "... *the Word of the Lord came to me...*" This is the Word of God we are studying in this so-called safari, friends.

A profound lesson in this report comes directly out of a cemetery; straight out of the grave. If I were to make a movie about chapter thirty-seven of Ezekiel, it would open at night with a preacher standing on a tombstone preaching to a crowd of walking dead people. So, let's call this the evening service. Well, the bones that come alive do *NOT* have anything to do with the resurrection of believers. I understand most so-called Bible teachers spiritualize the Old Testament – and particularly this passage of the Old Testament – and it is spiritual, to be sure; however, these bones represent something very *literal*: the *WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*. We must deal with Ezekiel's literal intent before the Spirit of God can elevate us to a proper, correct, and Spirit-filled revelation.

Ezekiel is speaking about a *national* resurrection of Israel to a vital spiritual nation that represents God to the entire world *in that day* – *IN THE FUTURE*. There is *NO WAY* this can be applied to Israel's present return to the land today – and for myriad reasons I have laid out several times previously in this Spiritual Safari. I have no intentions of being overly-tedious with that in this report; except to say that God tells Israel He is

going to “.... *put My Spirit in you*” – that’s in chapter thirty-seven verse fourteen. That, my friends, is not happening in Israel today.

The children of Israel in Babylonian captivity at the time in which we are studying could not believe they would ever return and become a great nation again. After all, the whole land has now been decimated by Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem has been destroyed, all of the remaining inhabitants have been killed or taken as slaves, and Solomon’s Temple has been crushed and burned. Even if they were released from captivity right now, there was nothing to go back to; except desolation and nothingness. As we know, Cyrus will allow them to return to the land after the seventy years captivity – and they do return, led by Nehemiah and Ezra – but they never had a king again; and they were constantly in subjection to other world rulers from that time forward – right up to this very day as I type this report and as you read it. So, we can know very definitely that this all speaks of the prophetic future restoration of the nation Israel; again, meaning *future* from the time I am typing this report and you are reading it....

XXXVI

35 And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.

36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.

37 Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

38 As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

~ Chapter thirty-six is inextricably intertwined with chapter thirty-seven; because, in chapter thirty-six, Ezekiel tells us what he is going to talk about in chapter thirty-seven. These two chapters must be taught together. If you have not read our previous report, I can only suggest you go back and do so now – *AFTER* praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment – and *AFTER* reading the text for these two chapters completely in your own Bible. Previously, in chapter thirty-six, God said He would give them a new heart and put His Spirit within them; meaning the day would come that they would be *born again*. I want to be absolutely clear that this section of Scripture *IN NO WAY* refers to the spiritual *OR* the physical resurrection of the dead; neither Old Testament saints nor of those who have died in the church. Those who over-spiritualize the Bible make impossible theological leaps in doing so – and they always land out-of-bounds. They like to say the historical section is all myth and allegory, and the prophetic section has been completely fulfilled but, my friends, one must be totally and completely ignorant of the Bible to make such a statement. Frankly, to say all prophetic Scripture has been fulfilled is to reveal you possess *ZERO* understanding of Holy Writ – are wholly unlearned, and typically unwilling to be taught the truth....

XXXVII

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,

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 chapter three of Ezekiel, we saw the Spirit of the Lord take the prophet and transport him from Babylon to the city of Jerusalem. God did that spiritually, literally and physically. So, here, God once again took Ezekiel, spiritually, literally and physically, to the valley which was full of dried bones. Again, my beloved, you'll just have to make a decision of whether or not you believe this is the Word of God. If you do not believe what you are reading, when doctrinally sound theology has been presented, then your best bet is to stop, renounce your Christianity, and throw your Bible in the

garbage can – because a dead, vain, empty and meaningless religion is never going to mean anything to you. Be honest with yourself, friends. Christ is alive.

Alright, another brief example of a desert disaster would be William Lewis Manly and John Haney Rogers; who were American pioneers in 1849. These two men trekked two hundred fifty miles on foot across the Mojave Desert to Rancho San Fernando near modern day Los Angeles. They were leading the Bennett-Arcane party that had split off from Jefferson Hunt's Mojave Sand Walking Company that was in a search for a shortcut to the gold fields in northern California back home. The Bennett-Arcane party had wandered into Death Valley by mistake and, to make a long story short, a whole bunch of people died in the desert.

Well, that didn't compare to what would come later in Pol Pot's Killing Fields; and none of those compare to the vision Ezekiel was given out there in the valley of dry bones. What Ezekiel saw was more fearsome, more gruesome, more desolate, and more horrifying than anything that had ever happened before, or that would ever happen after. Think of a desert with sand as far as you can see. I believe Ezekiel was surrounded by human bones as far as his eye could see; as in, there was no way out....

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

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

~ Ezekiel answered God's question in verse three with a question because, candidly, Ezekiel didn't see how those bones could ever live again. Ezekiel didn't doubt God; but he wasn't going to answer for Him, either. Verse four contains irony, to be sure; but I find it quite humorous, personally. God has a tremendous sense of humor. If you don't, well, that's unfortunate. I think Ezekiel had a difficult time beginning his sermon to the dead here with, "... oh, ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." Today, if you went to the graveyard and started preaching, a man in a white suit might show up and carry you away to the valley of rubber rooms. If you are a pastor, you may

have been tempted to step into the pulpit and begin your Sunday sermon that way – because some congregations are as dead as Ezekiel’s audience was – but I don’t think I would advise it. When John the Baptist began his sermon in the wilderness by asking, “... *oh ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*” – at least he was talking to physically living, breathing people.

Well, today, there are saved people and unsaved people in any congregation. Saved people may have ears, but they don’t always hear. Even when they do hear, they don’t always *do!* The unsaved remain dead in their trespasses and sins. So, either way, any preacher is just about as helpless as Ezekiel was as he talked to a pile of bones! Any pastor or preacher – or Bible teacher – worth his salt, recognizes his absolute helplessness in reaching the hearts and minds of others. If your pastor doesn’t understand that tenet of truth, then they do not understand whatever it is they are preaching to you, either. If we aren’t handling Scripture soundly, we dispense hopeless confusion. Ezekiel knew God, speaking through him, could communicate with a pile of old, dusty, dried-up dead bones, and cause them to live again....

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

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.

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.

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.

~ There is a method here we need to recognize:

(a) the bones were dead and scattered.

(b) Ezekiel obeyed God in verse seven; when he spoke as he was commanded to.

(c) when he obeyed God, even though it seemed ridiculous, God acted; and a result was witnessed.

(d) the result was gradual, and happened through a very slow process; one by which the sinews and flesh came upon them.

None of this was instantaneous. So, when we end verse eight, all we have is a corpse. They are no longer bare bones but they don't have life in them, either. They looked like human beings now – and they are – and if you want to read present day Israel into this passage of Scripture – fine by me – but that is where the correlation ends. They may be a national body, but they are still a literal corpse – just as dead, spiritually, as they ever were. This is the spinal-cord central nervous system of all Bible prophecy. I suggest you pray about it and begin to understand it....

9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, 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.

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.

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.

~ Verse eleven makes it clear we're talking about the *WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*. We're *NOT* talking about the church in any way, shape or form. Ezekiel didn't know anything about the church. The false prophets had been assuring the children of Israel they were going home from Babylonian captivity; but that hope has been dashed. That has sent the captive children of Israel into what the psychologist diagnoses as manic depressive psychosis. It means they are in a bad state of mind. It was only a few days

ago they were high on hope about returning to the land; but the Lord plunged their roller-coaster of emotions to the depths of despair. This awful vision was given to let them know they can have hope again – *IF – IF – IF* they will believe God’s commands – and *do* them....

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.

~ Now, don’t read verse twelve and think I missed it when I said this doesn’t speak of physical resurrection; because verse twenty-one tells us what we already know: Israel – the Diaspora – is presently buried in the nations throughout the world. Someday, they will be brought back and made a nation according to Scriptural prophecy. So, as I have already stated, if there is any place in the Bible we can say we are seeing prophecy being fulfilled – this is it. I’ll go along when we say Israel was buried and scattered – completely dead to God – dead to the things of Christ – but they have, at least, come back into the land as a nation. They have a flag. They have a constitution. They have a Prime Minister. They have a Parliament. They have a police force and they have an army. However, they are still a corpse. They have everything the Bible says they will have *EXCEPT* spiritual life. They don’t live in peace and safety. The Word of God does not flow from Jerusalem as a river. When you cross over, out of Old Jerusalem, into the Moslem controlled Arab section of the city, there is *NO* sign of spiritual awakening. There is as much deadness on one side as there is on the other. They have materialism, intellectualism, science, education, and a semblance of civilization on the Israeli side – but it isn’t prophecy being fulfilled according to Biblical tenets of truth as taught by Ezekiel.

As we read on concerning the “*two sticks*” in verses sixteen and seventeen, one stick represents Israel, and one represents Judah. Someday – not today – the ten northern tribes will be rejoined to the southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah. There is no such thing as “*ten lost tribes*.” If they are “*lost*” – God knows where they are – and it won’t be your nation that is joined to them in the land, either, by the way. *IN THAT DAY* – either in the Millennial Kingdom or the Eternal Kingdom – King David himself will rule again on the throne; seated next to the One Shepherd mentioned in verse twenty-two:

Christ Jesus. There will be a Millennial Temple, according to verse twenty-eight of this chapter, and there will be an Eternal Temple down here on earth, also. Revelation tells us there will be no temple – but, guess what? – that’s where the church is – in the New Jerusalem. See, friends, you run into hopeless confusion studying the Bible *UNLESS* you allow the Word of God to say what it wants to say; and unless you have a grasp on the *entirety* of Holy Writ. I hope you can continue with us from here....

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.

15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

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:

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

18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

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.

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

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:

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:

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.

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 for ever.

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 ~

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