

A Study in the Book of Ezekiel (Chapters 37)

Introduction

At this time of Ezekiel's prophecy God has judged both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel. For many years now they have abandoned God for idol worship (*fornication*) and trampled under foot the covenant of their fathers with God. And now Ezekiel is sent to prophecy of the consequences, even unto the end of kingdoms ruled by men. We also have the witness of Old Testament Prophets such as Isaiah, Daniel, and the New Testament Book of Revelation that tell us of the judgment of God upon Israel, then judgment of Satan and the world.

Israel was given first hand knowledge of who God is, and they were to spread that knowledge to the heathen gentile world. But they became caught up in idolatry (*fornication*) and lost their way.

There was warning after warning through prophets Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, and others that Israel should turn away from iniquity and idolatry (*fornication*), come back to God, and live out the task of witness as the people of God; but they would not completely put away their idols and iniquity.

When Ezekiel began his prophecy it had been about 130 years since the Northern Kingdom (Samaria) was captured, destroyed, and carried off slaves of the Assyrian Empire about 722 B.C.

Judah, the Southern Kingdom, given more time to repent, did not learn from her sister nation, "Samaria's" mistake(s) and continued in her iniquity and idol worship (*fornication*). Now, the time is come that God has begun execution of his judgment upon Judah of Israel. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire is allowed to dismantle the population of Judah according to his own good pleasure.

The first two verses of Ezekiel Chapter 1 explain when the initial prophecy of Ezekiel began, and where he was. Several years earlier Ezekiel had been among the captives which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried off from Judah along with king Jehoiachin (2King 24:12).

2Ki 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. (*This is thought to be the eight year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, rather than Jehoiachin's eight year?*).

Upon evaluation of Ezekiel Chapter 1, verse 1 and 2, the determination is that it was the fifth day in the fourth month, of the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity. This is also the year that Ezekiel is thirty years old. It is unlikely that Ezekiel is saying that it is the thirtieth year of Judah's captivity, or his captivity because of Ezekiel 33:21.

Eze 33:21 And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *that* one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city (*Jerusalem*) is smitten (*fallen*).

It is important to realize that Nebuchadnezzar carried off many Jewish captives whenever he wanted, during a period of several years, before he finally destroyed the city of

Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 B.C. Daniel and the Hebrew Boys (Shadrach, Mishach and Abendnego) were also carried off in one of these earlier groups just as Ezekiel was carried off at the time of king Jehoiachin's captivity. And so we understand from study that the prophecy of both Ezekiel and Daniel took place during the time of their captivity and the destruction of Judah.

We see in Jeremiah that this captivity would continue for seventy years, and then God would return them to their land:

Jer 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jer 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Jer 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you (*Judah of Israel*), and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

Many of Ezekiel's prophecies speak of similar events as those of John the apostle in the Book of Revelation and the prophet Daniel. The Spirit of God is clearly directing Ezekiel as with John and Daniel. But we must note that the Spirit summoned John to heaven; into the very throne room of God (Revelation 4:1), whereas here in Ezekiel and in the Book of Daniel as well, the Spirit is present with the prophets on the earth. But none of the prophets, before the death and resurrection of Jesus, were given access to the Holy of Holies; the throne room where God reside. Thus, access to God must come through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross; that is when and where the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, permitting full access to heaven (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Hebrews 6:19, 9:3, and 10:20).

I know you are probably thinking, "What about Enoch and Elijah?" Well they were indeed taken up to heaven, but there is no record of them entering the Holy of Holies. Only the priest could go in; and that Priest is the Lord Jesus Christ. If they went into the Holy of Holies it was not without Jesus, because God does nothing apart from Jesus, past, present, or future!!!

The prophecy(s) of this Chapter is after the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem by Babylon, and the people are in exile. We already understand from the prophecy of Jeremiah that God will bring the people back to Jerusalem after seventy years. Therefore, Ezekiel is not just talking about that here; but the resurrection of the whole house of Israel from every time of history. And these raised are found written in the book according to Daniel Chapter 12. We must understand and keep in mind that just being a national citizen of Israel does not qualify a person for being in the first resurrection, according to Revelation 20:6. For example, do you suppose Ahab and Jezebel, or Judas Iscariot shall be in the first resurrection?

Chapter 37

*I am encouraged to present my understanding of this Chapter as follows:
The end time prophesy of Revelation Chapter 6:12 through 7:8 and this Chapter (Ezekiel 37) are integral prophecies. These dry bones concern Old Testament Israel at the rapture that takes place at the time of Revelation Chapter 6:12 through 6:17. Jesus opened the sixth seal; man was also created the sixth day. Since this is the time when the Church is taken out of the earth under cover of this great earthquake, the beginning of tribulation(s) from God also begins.*

Those (Gentiles and Jews) that are saved (believed and confessed) and are in the New Testament Church according to the Gospel of Christ Jesus are raised at this time, and are seen around the throne of God in Revelation Chapter 7:9 through 7:17.

When Ezekiel prophesied in his vision upon the dry bones as the Lord GOD commanded, the dry bones stood up, and God put breath in those raised to life by the four winds. Then a great army of 12, 000 from every tribes of Israel was planted in the land out of the resurrection (rapture). These are they that shall be sealed in Revelation Chapter 7:2 and 7:4, and those sealed are kept and protected during the tribulation period unto the second coming of Christ Jesus in Revelation Chapter 19.

Revelation Chapter 9:4 and Revelation 14:1 identify these 144,000 again that are sealed of God.

Ezekiel's vision and prophesy upon the dry bones of Old Testament Israel:

Eze 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,

Eze 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.

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

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

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

Eze 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.

Eze 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking (*earthquake; Revelation 6:12; Ezekiel 38:19; rapture of the Church??*), and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

Eze 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.

The four winds are made to breathe breath upon these slain, that they may live.

Eze 37:9 Then 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.

Eze 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 (*12,000 from each tribe of Israel for a total of 144, 000; Revelation 7:1 through 7:8?*).

The great army of 144, 000 is cut off for the other parts of the whole house of Israel; for the purpose of witnessing salvation by Christ Jesus. After the rapture these and the two saints of Revelation 11:3 and 11:4 are the only witness of Jesus on earth.

Eze 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.

Eze 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.

Eze 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,

Eze 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.

Ezekiel prophesy that the LORD shall make the separated peoples of Israel one nation again, in their land. And David the servant of God shall be king over them forever and ever:

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

Eze 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:

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

The Lord GOD instructs Ezekiel to prophesy about the details as to how he will bring Israel to be one nation again:

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

Eze 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 (*Joseph's 2nd son*), and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him (*Joseph*), *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

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

Eze 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 (*or, scattered through the nations, over the centuries*), and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

Eze 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:

Eze 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.

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

Eze 37:25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob (*Israel*) 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.

Eze 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 (*Jesus?*) in the midst of them for evermore.

Eze 37:27 My tabernacle (*Jesus*) also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

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