

EZEKIEL 37: 1 The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.

This chapter treats of the same subject with the preceding, in a beautiful and significant vision. Under the emblem of the open valley being thickly strewed with very dry bones is represented the hopeless state of the Jews when dispersed throughout the provinces of the Chaldean empire. But God, contrary to every human probability, restores these bones to life, thereby prefiguring the restoration of that people from the Babylonish captivity, and their resettlement in the land of their forefathers, Eze 37:1-14. The prophet then makes an easy and elegant transition to the blessedness of the people of God under the Gospel dispensation, in the plenitude of its manifestation, when the genuine converts to Christianity, the spiritual Israel, shall be no longer under the domination of heathen and anti-christian rulers, but shall be collected together into one visible kingdom, and constitute but one flock under one Shepherd, Eze 37:15-28. The vision of the dry bones reviving is considered by some as having a remote view to the general resurrection.

Verse 1

The hand of the Lord was upon me - The prophetic influence was communicated.

And carried me out in the spirit - Or, And the Lord brought me out in the spirit; that is, a spiritual vision, in which all these things were doubtless transacted.

The valley which was full of bones - This vision of the dry bones was designed, first, as an emblem of the then wretched state of the Jews; secondly, of the general resurrection of the body.

EZEKIEL 37: 2 He caused me to pass by them all around: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and behold, they were very dry.

EZEKIEL 37: 3 He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? I answered, Lord GOD, you know.

Verse 3

Can these bones live? - Is it possible that the persons whose bones these are can return to life?

EZEKIEL 37: 4 Again he said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and tell them, you dry bones, hear the LORD's word.

Verse 4

Prophecy upon these bones - Declare to your miserable countrymen the gracious designs of the Lord; show them that their state, however deplorable, is not hopeless.

EZEKIEL 37: 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.

Verse 5

Behold, I will cause breath - רוּחַ ruach signifies both soul, breath, and wind; and sometimes the Spirit of God. Soul is its proper meaning in this vision, where it refers to the bones: "I will cause the Soul to enter into you."

EZEKIEL 37: 6 I will lay sinews on you, and will bring up flesh on you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.

Verse 6

I will lay sinews upon you - Observe the progress:

1. Here are the bones.
 2. The ligaments, called here sinews, are to be added in order to unite the bones, that the skeleton might be complete.
 3. The flesh (the whole muscular system, the subjacent and superjacent muscles, including the arterial and venous system) clothes this skeleton.
 4. The skin (the dermis and epidermis, or cutis and cuticle) envelops the whole of these muscles or flesh; and now these bodies are in the state that the body of Adam was before it received the animal and intellectual principle from God.
 5. There was no breath in them - they had not yet received their souls.
 6. The wind, רוּחַ ruach, the soul, came into them. They were endued with animal and intellectual life; and they arose and evidenced a complete restoration to life, and began to perform its functions, Eze 37:10.
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EZEKIEL 37: 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

EZEKIEL 37: 8 I saw, and, behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them.

EZEKIEL 37: 9 Then he said to me, Prophecy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and tell the wind, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.

Verse 9

Prophesy unto the wind - רוּחַ ruach. Address thyself to the soul, and command it to enter into these well-organized bodies, that they may live.

Come from the four winds - Souls, come from all parts where ye are scattered; and reanimate these bodies from; which ye have been so long separated. The four winds signify all parts - in every direction. Literally it is, "Souls, come from the four winds;" "Breath, come from the four breaths;" or, "Wind, come from the four winds." But here רוּחַ ruach has both of its most general meanings, wind or breath, and soul.

EZEKIEL 37: 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

EZEKIEL 37: 11 Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.

Verse 11

These bones are the whole house of Israel - That is, their state is represented by these bones; and their restoration to their own land is represented by the revivification of these bones.

EZEKIEL 37: 12 Therefore prophesy, and tell them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.

Verse 12

I will open your graves - Here is a pointed allusion to the general resurrection; a doctrine properly credited and understood by the Jews, and to which our Lord refers, Joh 5:25, Joh 5:28, Joh 5:29 : "The hour is coming when they that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth."

And cause you to come up out of your graves - I am determined that ye shall be restored; so that were ye even in your graves, as mankind at the general resurrection, yet my all-powerful voice shall call you forth.

EZEKIEL 37: 13 You shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, my people.

Verse 13

When I have opened your graves - When I shall have done for you what was beyond your hope, and deemed impossible, then shall ye know that I am Jehovah.

EZEKIEL 37: 14 I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it, says the LORD.

Verse 14

And shall put my Spirit - רוח רuchi. Here רוח ruach is taken for the Holy Ghost. They were living souls, animal and intellectual beings, when they had received their souls, as mentioned above: but they could only become spiritual, holy, and obedient creatures by the Spirit of God actuating their spirits. See the notes on Eze 36:25-27 (note).

Three degrees or processes have been remarked in this mystic vision.

When the prophet was commanded to prophesy - to foretell, on the authority of God, that there should be a restoration to their own land: -

1. There was a noise, which was followed by a general shaking, during which the bones became arranged and united.
2. The flesh and skin came upon them, so that the dry bones were no longer seen.
3. The spirit or soul came into them, and they stood up perfectly vivified.

Perhaps these might be illustrated by three periods of time, which marked the regeneration of the Jewish polity.

1. The publication of the edict of Cyrus in behalf of the Jews, which caused a general shaking or stir among the people, so that the several families began to approach each other. and prepare for their return to Judea, Eze 1:2, Eze 1:3. But though partially restored, they were obliged to discontinue the rebuilding of their temple.
2. The edict published by Darius in the second year of his reign, Eze 4:23, Eze 4:24, which removed the impediments thrown in the way of the Jews. Eze 6:6, Eze 6:7, etc.
3. The mission of Nehemiah, with orders from Artaxerxes to complete the building of the temple and the city, Neh 2:7, etc. Then the Jews became a great army, and found themselves in sufficient force to defend themselves and city against all their enemies.

As to the spiritual uses of this curious vision, I must leave them to preachers. I have given the literal meaning, and what the different parts refer to; and if they found their observations on these, they may profit their hearers.

EZEKIEL 37: 15 the LORD's word came again to me, saying,

EZEKIEL 37: 16 You, son of man, take one stick, and write on it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write on it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

Verse 16

Son of man, take thee one stick - The two sticks mentioned in this symbolical transaction represented, as the text declares the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which were formed in the days of Rehoboam, and continued distinct till the time of the captivity. The kingdom of Judah was composed of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites; all the rest went off in the schism with Jeroboam, and formed the kingdom of Israel. Though some out of those tribes did rejoin themselves to Judah, yet no whole tribe ever returned to that kingdom. Common sufferings in their captivity became the means of reviving a kinder feeling; and to encourage this, God promises that he will reunite them, and restore them to their own land; and that there shall no more be any divisions or feuds among them. To represent this in such a way as would make it a subject of thought, reflection, and inquiry, the prophet is ordered to take the two sticks mentioned above, to write on them the distinguishing names of the divided kingdoms, and then by a notch, dovetail, glue, or some such method, to unite them both before the people. He did so, and on their inquiry, showed them the full meaning of this symbolical action.

EZEKIEL 37: 17 and join them for you one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.

EZEKIEL 37: 18 When the children of your people shall speak to you, saying, Will you not show us what you mean by these?

EZEKIEL 37: 19 tell them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand.

Verse 19

The stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim - Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, was an Ephraimite. Joseph represents the ten tribes in general; they were in the hand of Ephraim, that is, under the government of Jeroboam.

EZEKIEL 37: 20 The sticks whereon you write shall be in your hand before their eyes.

EZEKIEL 37: 21 Say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, where they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

EZEKIEL 37: 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on 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;

Verse 22

I will make them one nation - There was no distinction after the return from Babylon.

And one king shall be king to them all - Politically speaking they never had a king from that day to this; and the grand junction and government spoken of here must refer to another time - to that in

which they shall be brought into the Christian Church with the fullness of the Gentiles; when Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, shall rule over all.

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, in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

EZEKIEL 37: 24 My servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them.

Verse 24

And David my servant shall be King - That this refers to Jesus Christ, see proved, Eze 34:23 (note).

EZEKIEL 37: 25 They shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, in which your fathers lived; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, forever: and David my servant shall be their prince for ever.

Verse 25

The land that I have given unto Jacob my servant - Jacob means here the twelve tribes; and the land given to them was the whole land of Palestine; consequently, the promise states that, when they return, they are to possess the whole of the Promised Land.

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 their midst forever more.

Verse 26

Covenant of peace - See this explained Eze 34:25 (note).

EZEKIEL 37: 27 My tent also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Verse 27

By tabernacle - Jesus Christ, the true tabernacle, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

EZEKIEL 37: 28 The nations shall know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in their midst forever more.
