

## EZEKIEL 37

## IN THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

The threatenings of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem for their sins were terrible indeed; but the promises of their restoration and deliverance, for the glory of God, are equally as comforting. And just as the former were illustrated with many visions and similitudes, for the awakening of a holy fear; so also, the latter are pictured by visions and representations, for the encouraging of a humble faith. God had assured His people – in the foregoing chapter – that He would gather the house of Israel, bring them out of their captivity, and return them to their own land; but there were two things that rendered this very unlikely. First, they were dispersed among their enemies. They were utterly destitute of all helps and advantages which might favor or further their return, and they were dispirited likewise in their own minds. Upon all these accounts, they are here – in a vision – compared to a valley full of the dried-out bones of dead men, which would be brought together and raised to life. But the second issue was that they were divided among themselves as well! Too much of the old enmity remained between the remnants of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel – even in their captivity. But in regard to this, by a sign of two sticks united together in the hand of the prophet, the Lord foretells the happy coalition that would exist between the two nations when the exiles would be permitted to go back to their homeland. In this picture, there was a foreshadowing of the uniting of both Jews and Gentiles in Christ's Church. And thus the prophet slides into a prediction of the kingdom of Christ, and of the glories and graces of that kingdom (verses 23-28).

Once again, the Lord showed Ezekiel a vision. The prophet thought that he was carried out into a valley, where the ground was covered with dead men's bones. He walked about among the bones and looked upon them; and he saw that they had no flesh on them, and were very dry. The Lord asked him, "Can these bones be made alive again?" And he answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest!" After speaking the words that the Lord commanded, the prophet heard a noise among the bones, and saw a shaking among them; they began to move and come together – each bone to the one belonging to it. And as soon as they had come together, flesh grew upon them; and then skin, too – until the bones all became bodies again! But there was no breath in them; they were still dead. So the Lord commanded Ezekiel to speak to the winds, and say, "Come ye winds and blow upon these dead bodies, that they may have breath, and live!" The winds blew upon the dead bodies, and breath came into them; they were alive,

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The revival of the Lord's dispersed and destitute people is represented under the vision of the resurrection of dead and dried-out bones – verses 1-14*
- ❖ *The reconciliation and reunion of the formerly divided kingdom is pictured by the joining together of two sticks into one – verses 15-28*



and stood up on their feet like a very great army. Then the Lord explained to Ezekiel why He had shown him this vision, and what it meant. He told him that all the people of Israel complained because of their punishment and their troubles. They said that they were like bones that were dry and dead; and that they had lost all hopes of ever being happy, or of seeing their own land again. But the Lord said that He would raise them up out of their troubles, just as He had raised those dry bones to life; and that He would bring them back to their own land. When He had saved them from their troubles, and put His Spirit into their hearts, and brought them back to their own land again; then the children of Israel would know that it was the Lord Who had spoken these words to them, and that He had made His words come true!



Undoubtedly, this vision should be assigned a place among the supports for the doctrine of the resurrection! Clearly it was intended to be one of the loftier anticipations with which the Lord's prophets sought to familiarize the minds of their people; they desired them to take it, in a manner, for granted – as a thing that was destined to be experienced one day. This vision may fairly be ranked with such brief and prophetic allusions as those which we find in places such as Isaiah 25:8, when the prophet says, “He will swallow up death in victory.” Or in Ezekiel 27:19: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust!” There is also Daniel 12:2: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” The principle upon which this whole vision rests, as its very basis, is one that carries the hope of the resurrection to all the people of God. The resurrection *must* take place because the living God cannot let death be the conqueror of those who are related to Him as His own children – those whom He calls “my people.” He is the ever-living God, and life must be the possession of all who are His.

The second part of this prophecy, which occupies the remaining verses of the chapter, particularly points to the reunion of the formerly hostile members of the two great divisions within the nation of Israel. The prophet's action with the two rods was employed as a symbol of what was to take place with the people themselves. The close brotherly union among the members of the covenant is here presented to our view as an immediate and certain effect of the manifestation of God's power to revive and bless them – as well as the necessary condition for their complete and final establishment. This prophecy is a detailed picture of blessings that were to be experienced in the future; it was not until the New Covenant entered, with the coming of Christ the Messiah, that these better times truly began to develop themselves.

*Thank You, Lord Jesus, for transforming us from being dead bones, and for causing us to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life that only You can give! Amen.*