

Prophecy Unveiled - The Valley of Dry Bones

Sunday, March 13, 2022

Our ground rules for studying prophecy...

- **There is much we can learn from studying prophecy**
- **There is much that will still be unclear** (It is best for us to focus on what we can know rather than argue about what is still unclear)
- **The point of studying prophecy is not to be able to set times and dates**
- **By studying prophecy we can become more aware of the devils schemes and the world in which we live.**
- **Prophecy helps us be prepared**
- **We must keep in mind that prophecy must be examined from three different viewpoints** (The Past - prophecy that has already been fulfilled, The Present - Prophecy that is currently unfolding, and The Future - Prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled) In some cases a particular prophecy may have application to all three.

Remember that prophecy is like a multi-faceted diamond. We can view it from many different angles and learn something new from each one and yet, it also must be viewed as a whole

We have looked at the prophecies of

- Daniel Chapter 2
- Ezekiel 34
- Matthew 24
- Matthew 25
- Daniel 12 (verses 1-4)
- Daniel Chapter 12 (verses 7, 11 & 12)
- Revelation 2 & 3 (specifically the church of Ephesus)

This morning I would like to talk about one of the lost well recognized passages of Ezekiel, The Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

4 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

11 Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.’”

When we look at this prophecy as a whole, we see...

- It relates to both historical events as well as the overall nature of God and His plan for humanity

We can of course see a fulfilment of this prophetic vision within historical events. Events like Israel's return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple. Events like the miraculous restoration of the Jewish homeland of Israel and the return of the Jews to that nation.

But it is also a prophecy that relates to us the nature of our God - His mercy, His power, His desire to restore, and bring back to life. His plan to redeem us from the death of sin

It takes us back to the original creation of man when which the spirit of God (ruah) breathed the breath of life into the man he had created. Here we see a restoration of that creation and a redemption from the death that sin brought upon that original creation

- **It speaks of both physical and spiritual restoration**

God restores not only physically but spiritually. We specifically see a two-fold process in this passage. First a physical restoration of the bones coming together and then the tendons, flesh and skin creating a whole physical person where once there was only dry bones

But the physical is not enough in and of itself. God wants to restore us spiritually.

- **In depends entirely on what only God can do; yet requires our faith and involves our participation**

One of my favorite aspects of this passage is the picture of grace and faith interacting with each other.

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It is only by the power of God that this miracle takes place and yet he calls upon Ezekiel to participate by faith and prophecy the word of The Lord over the bones. Likewise God calls us to believe and then to act upon that belief.

- To speak forth the word of the Lord
- Hebrews 11:1 (NCV)
11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.
- Hebrews 11:6
6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
- It means stepping out of the boat when He says you can, it means rising to walk when He says your healed, it means trusting His promises before you see them come to fruition, It means walking by faith when you can't see where you are going, it means living by faith in His will and His word when the world says you can't live that way. It is an active participation in the work of God

When we look at the specific facets of this prophecy, we see...

- **It points to the nation of Israel**

At the time this prophetic experience was given to Ezekiel, it spoke directly to the condition of the people of Israel who had been defeated because of their disobedience to God and had been dispersed to foreign nations. It was a promise to bring them back to their own land. It was a promise to give them hope. It was a promise to rebuild the temple

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This prophecy continued to be relevant to the Nation of Israel and found fulfillment once again in our day with the restoration of Israel as a country

In his earnest studies of biblical prophecy back in the 1600s, Sir Isaac Newton wrote that it was foretold in “all ye prophets” [2]. Back in the seventeenth century, Newton even made calculated estimates of the dates of their return, based on numbers given in the book of Daniel, saying that the call to return and rebuild Jerusalem would go out in 1895 or 1896 (in fact it was 1897 at the Basel Congress) and that it would could come to pass in 1944 [3]. He was very close!

In 1897 Theodor Herzl invited 204 Jewish leaders to Basel, Switzerland, for the First Zionist Congress. He opened the conference with these words: “There is a land without a people, there is a people without a land; give the people without a land to a land without a people.” Then he made an astonishing prediction: “In five years or fifty years, we will have a homeland of our own.” His purpose was to put in place an organization that would legally secure a homeland for the Jewish people in what had formerly been the land of Israel. Herzl concluded the conference by saying, “If you will it, it is no dream.”

In the 19th century, Jewish people began returning to Israel. Russian Jews founded the city of Tel Aviv and Deganiah (the first collective settlement that was called a kibbutz). Before the State of Israel was founded, thousands of Jewish people returned to settle in the land; and by 1948, about 657,000 Jewish people resided there.

*The Balfour Declaration, 1917: the UK with support of four other nations declared a homeland for the Jews in Palestine after defeating the Turks
The San Remo Article 22, April 1920: Ratified the Balfour Declaration as internationally binding law*

The League of Nations 1922: A legal document titled “Mandate for Palestine” was unanimously approved by all 51 states of the League, laying down the Jewish legal rights in Palestine: “Recognition has been given to the historical

connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country.”

On November 29, 1947, Theodor Herzl’s dream became a reality. The United Nations voted 33 to 13 (with 10 abstentions) to partition what was then called Palestine into two independent states: one Arab and one Jewish. UN Resolution 181: UN member states voted to partition Palestine in 1947, although with a smaller share for the Jews. The original Mandate for Palestine had given the area east of the Jordan river to the Arabs and west to the Jews, but the UN resolution allotted 77% of that area as a Jewish homeland.

Great Britain, which had administered the land since 1920 under a mandate from the former League of Nations, did everything in its power to hamper statehood for the Jewish people. But on May 14, 1948, the British evacuated; and Israel declared independence for the first time in 2,500 years. The 1948 invasion by the surrounding Arab nations and their surprising defeat led to Israel declaring independence in May of that year.

In 1967 another miracle of restoration took place when Israel, threatened with annihilation by the PLO and the hostilities of the surrounding nations of Egypt, Jordan and Syria initiated what would become known as the 6 day war that ended with a resounding Israeli victory that doubled the size of the new Jewish homeland.

Today Israel’s Jewish population numbers about 6.5 million. In the past 63 years, those returning have rebuilt and cultivated the land, bringing it back to life and beauty (36:8–12).

But as we said the prophecy of Ezekiel 37 is not only a physical restoration, but a spiritual one

The foretold re-establishment of the Jewish state has risen out of the ashes of the Holocaust, and the promised spiritual revival is starting to take place. Just as the physical restoration of Israel has happened in stages, so we see spiritual life breathed back into the people due to several significant and observable developments.

- *In 1948, there were approximately ten million Jewish people around the world who had survived the Holocaust, and about 600,000 were living in Israel. Of those, only 23 of them believed in Yeshua as their Messiah. There were some churches*

led by denominations and missionaries in Israel, but there were no Messianic congregations at all.

- o In 1989 Israel's Jewish population had grown to 3.5 million, and by this point, the estimated number of believers had reached 1,200. There were now 30 congregations.*
- o By 1999 there were 4.8 million Jews living in Israel, 81 Messianic congregations, and an estimated 5,000 believers.*
- o In 2017, 300 congregations were counted in a survey conducted by Israel College of the Bible, undertaken to get a clearer picture of the body of Messiah in Israel [5]. It has become increasingly difficult to accurately identify the number of Jewish believers in Israel, but a conservative estimate is now 30,000.*

What we see is a fulfilling of the spiritual restoration of Israel as prophesied not only in Ezekiel but is confirmed by other prophecies

Zechariah 12:10

10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit[a] of grace and supplication. They will look on[b] me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

And how about all of Romans chapter 11 in which Paul reminds the gentile believers that the branch (Israel) that was broken off can be grafted in again pointing to the grace of God and His plan to bring spiritual restoration to the Jews.

Romans 11:25-32

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way[a] all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
27 And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for

God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

- It points to the crucifixion and the resurrection

What was dead is brought back to life

- It points to God's plan of salvation through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ that makes us a New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ezekiel 36:26-27

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

- It points to the work and outpouring of the Holy Spirit

It is the Spirit who must be involved in salvation, it is the spirit who brings life and power to the people of God

- It points to a bodily resurrection from the grave

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them;

Acts 4:2

2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Revelation 20:12-13

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

- It points to the power of God that works miracles of revival, renewal and restoration