***Prophecy

The Jewish People - PR01-02***

We have begun a basic or general survey series of the prophetic Scriptures. We are not interested in getting into detailed explanations. Consequently, we will be studying things that are in your mind you may say, "I wonder how we come to that conclusion and how we reach that understanding." That would require more of the detailed expositions step-by-step arriving at that point. The process of doing that sometimes loses the overall sweep of what God is doing and where history is moving. So we're trying in this series to give you a broad tying together of things that you perhaps already know from the prophetic Scriptures but which you have not put into an orderly fashion.

One of the most important factors when you think about prophecy is, of course, the Jewish people, and we are going to direct our attention to them here. Abraham, as you know, was selected to be the father of a new division of humanity. All humanity had been in the gentile classification up to that time. Then with Abraham began a new group called the Jewish people. Today you often hear people speak about Jews and Christians as if those are the two divisions. Christians fall into a third category of humanity, and everybody on the face of the earth tonight is either a Jew or a gentile or a Christian. The three categories do not overlap. They each have a special specific program of God's dealing with them, and they go out into eternity in that specific category as either Jew, gentile, or Christian. So the contrast is not a true one that you often hear that you are either a Jew or a Christian. Most people in our country are either Jews or Gentiles, and some of us are Christians.

The book of Genesis places an emphasis immediately upon the Jewish people in God's planning. 11 chapters of Genesis are devoted to the entire history of the universe up to that point, up to the time of Abraham. Then almost 40 chapters of the book of Genesis have to do with the history of Abraham and his descendants. Now there was nothing special about Abraham or about the Jews nationally as such, but they were simply the object of God's sovereign divine choice. Israel has a vital relationship to the nations of the world today, and therefore you cannot understand what is taking place in our world unless you know about the nation Israel, and have a little bit of clear background on where this nation came from; what its progress has been in history; and, the role that it is to play in the final days of the earth scene.

To begin with, I must emphasize to you that God is not through with the Jewish people. There is the realm of the amillennialist, which is what most churches are, who believe that Jesus Christ will never come and set up a thousand year kingdom that He will rule upon this earth. Most churches do not believe that there will be a golden age of humanity for a thousand years under the rule of Jesus Christ from the headquarter city of Jerusalem. Rather they take all the Old Testament areas of blessing that were promised Israel, and they say the church--the Christians--have inherited those blessings, and all of these are given now to you and me. But the Old Testament also has many condemnations and predictions of trial and punishment for those who reject obedience to God. But these are never applied to the church. You twist Scripture when you try to confuse Israel and the church.

Now this is the general theological position of Christendom today--that Israel has been cut off, and God has washed his hands of the Jews, and the church has replaced the point of blessing. The church is in a point of blessing during this age, but God's program for the Jew is temporarily in abeyance. Don't make the mistake of thinking He is through with the Jew. If you do that, then what is taking place in history today becomes totally meaningless to you. The whole Arab dispute today is totally meaningless if the Jew is no longer important in God's program. But the background of the Arab dispute; the hatred that the Arab has for the Jew; and, the determined course of destroying the Jew are the results of centuries of progress of God's dealing with the Jewish people. So we're going to look at that here.

**God's Purposes for the Jewish People**

God has certain purposes for the Jews. We may list these purposes specifically in three directions:

1. **To Provide a Savior**

There was the purpose to provide a savior. In Genesis 3:15, Adam and Eve were told that God was going to provide a solution for their sin problem. In 12:3, God said to Abraham, "I'll bless them that bless you, curse them that curse you, and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Throughout that segment of Scripture and that time, it was God's purpose through the Jews to provide a Savior. Now all who trust this Savior, Galatians 3:7 says, are "spiritual seed of Abraham." But the Gentile is never confused with the Jew. A gentile never comes under the Jews' program unless he came under that as a proselyte in the Old Testament. But what is to Israel is not applied to the church. Now the movements of history, as we have said, become meaningful as you understand that God has a certain purpose for the nation Israel. Purpose number one was to provide a savior.

1. **To Provide a Revelation**

Purpose number two for the Jews was to provide a revelation. God was going to make Himself known. The Jewish nation would be raised up by God, and through it, he would reveal himself to all humanity. So, the Bible, most of it if not probably all of it, was written by descendants of Abraham, or at least those who were very close associates. The climax of this revelation, of course, was the person of Jesus Christ.

1. **To Provide an Illustration**

Then, God had a third purpose for the nation of Israel, and that is to provide an illustration. As you follow the history of the Jewish people, you have illustration upon illustration of spiritual principles that God reveals to us through his dealings with his people. This is what Romans 15:4 is describing to us when Paul says, "For whatever things were written in earlier times (that is, the Old Testament) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. So God is using this people to teach us.

There is a relationship of Israel to the gentile nations, and through this relationship God reveals His thinking, His plans, and His working. In Luke 21:24, we have the expression "the times of the Gentiles." This expression refers to the period in which the Gentiles are the dominant power, but they are dominant always in a period when Israel is taking a back seat. The times of the Gentiles are going to come to an end. It began in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and it's going to come to an end when Jesus Christ returns to this earth and judges the antichrist who will be ruling the world at that time.

**Jewish History**

Now there are several segments of God's relationship between Israel and the nations that it would be useful for us to look at briefly here. So let's take a quick review of the history of the Jewish people. The question that is preoccupying the United Nations today is, "Who really owns Palestine? Who really has a right to the land of Palestine?" To answer that question, those fellows are going to have to sit down with a Bible and review the course of Jewish history, or they'll never be able to answer the question and come out with the same answer that God has on it.

**Enslavement in Egypt**

To begin with, there's a period when Israel was in Egypt. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while promised the land of Palestine as an eternal possession, never possessed it. They were entering into the land but it was never theirs. There were other nations, heathen nations, which actually possessed it. At the same time that they were given the nation, there was a prophecy made to Abraham of a period of enslavement. Genesis 15:13-14 tells of a period when the Jewish people would be in servitude to another nation for a period of 400 years. Genesis 46 gives the fulfillment of that prediction. For 430 years, the Jews were in slavery in Egypt. For a period of about thirty years, things went well. Then for 400 years they were slaves of the pharaoh. They went in as a group of 70 people, and when they came out there were three million Jews in the world. They were freed about the year 1446 B.C. as a result of the ten plagues.

God taught the nation of Israel, and has taught us, a great deal about His workings as a result of this period that Israel spent in Egypt. God never goes back on His promises; you may resist God in what He says to you and what he tells you to do, just like Pharaoh did; and, you may bad-mouth God's divine viewpoint, but God keeps up the pressure and He wins every time.

**Wandering in the Wilderness**

The second period that we ought to look at is Israel in the wilderness. For 40 years, this people experience the very special divine care after they refused to go into the Promised Land at Kadeshbarnea. While they were there, during the first year of the wilderness wanderings, they received the law on Mount Sinai, and received a way of life which was exclusively applicable to the Jew. They had a few conflicts with some of the nations around them including Edom and the Amorites (they took away the Amorite territory), but there was not much contact with the nations around them in their wilderness travel.

**Taking the Promised Land**

Then there was a third period, the period of the conquest of the Promised Land. The land that God actually promised to Abraham was basically under the control of Egypt, but Egypt was not in dominant control. Most of the territories were self-sustaining and self-ruling and very weakly held together. So Joshua worked out the strategy as the leader of the Israeli military force. Joshua worked out the strategy to begin, piecemeal, to conquer the land section-by-section and stronghold-by-stronghold. Of course it worked brilliantly.

But there was one problem. Before Moses died, Moses said, "I'm going to make one thing very clear to you." (That was where that expression originated.) "I want to make one thing very clear." Moses said. "When you go in to conquer the land, you don't permit one heathen to live. I mean you go in and you exterminate, so that when our armies have swept through, there will be not one Canaanite drawing another breath." And Moses was emphatic, but they didn't take it seriously. Consequently, they would bypass vast pockets of Canaanites that were no longer any military problem to them, and they would move on in their conquest, and they never returned for the mopping up operation which they should have done. The result was that there were large bodies of Canaanites left alive after the Israelites moved into the Promised Land. And these contaminated Israel.

Now I can't go into here the practices of these people, but they were the most immoral; they were the most debased; and, they were the most vile people that you could read about in ancient history. Their practices were just as low and animalistic as a human being can become. They were thoroughly against every practice that was the way of life that the Jews had been led into through the Mosaic Law. Consequently, they exposed themselves to that which was a plague for them all the rest of their time in Palestine.

**The Judges**

Well, this period of the conquest was followed by a period where they were ruled by judges. Because they had failed to execute Moses's commandment to exterminate the Canaanites, they were constantly finding themselves under the domination of one of these Canaanitic groups. As they would turn from God and forget about God, God would let one of these nations rise up and conquer them. Then they would cry out in agony to God for release and God would raise up a judge, and he would lead them to victory. For 300 years they cycled where they were obeying God and things got good; they forgot God and God brought them under the judgment of one of these Canaanite groups; they cried out in desperation for release; a prophet would arise; they'd be released; and, they'd start the cycle again.

Israel, at this time, came to its lowest point ethically, religiously, and politically. You have to realize that this is the people through whom God had brought the revelation of Himself. Yet, this is the people that would move into every kind of sensual perversion in the worship practices of the heathen that they had absorbed. You find it very difficult to try to picture that here are these people reading the Torah, the Old Testament law, and then practicing the heathenistic rites that were common around them. Now this went along for years, even after the period of the judges where they became a kingdom.

Even under Manasseh, one of the rulers of the southern kingdom, which was better than the northern kingdom, he brought in the heathen Baal worship right into the temple itself, and he just set up shop. Here were all these images designed for sexual relations with inanimate objects; here were the animals for sexual immorality; and, here were the temple priests, priestesses, the prostitutes, and the whole works. Can you imagine that this is brought right into God's holy temple, and he sets up shop? He's king of Israel, King Manasseh. It's hard to believe that his grandson was Josiah, the great good king Josiah, the eight-year-old boy who had such a positive volition toward God that God even enabled the people to discover a copy of the Bible which had all been lost and forgotten.

This is the period of the judges when Israel went down down down. You couldn't imagine a more debased people. One of their major enemies was the Philistines. They lived along the Mediterranean coast, and the Greek word for Philistia is Palestine. The country is named from the term Philistia. They were one of the major enemies that plagued Israel that should have been destroyed when they conquered the land. This was true up to the last judge, and it was the Philistines who attacked and killed Saul, the first king, and his son Jonathan. Well, this period certainly illustrates the grace of God. I don't care how low you get, when you turn back in confession as Israel did, God reaches out and picks you back up again. This is a period of great illustration of the grace of God no matter how far you swing away from the Lord.

**The Kingdom**

This was followed by the period of the kingdom. The Jews came to the point where they said, "We want to be like the other people around us." This is a common problem with Christians today, and here's a lesson we never learn. They rose up and they said, "Yes, God is our king. He has ruled us through judges. We're a theocratic kingdom--a God-ruled kingdom, but we want to be like the nations around us. We want to have a king. We want to have somebody who's a real 'silver lips' that gets up and blows the bugle, and the troops march by, and we have a review, and our King is there, and we can salute him, and we want all that stuff just like the nations do."

Churches have this problem. Churches are plagued with the fact that they want to be like other churches. It's hard to find a church that has the personal self-esteem and has the command presence to say, "God, what do you want us to be? That's what we want to be." Every time people say the name of our church, we want it to be a name to contend with in the Lord's glory and in the Lord's honor--a church that you can't just pass off and say, 'Ah, yeah, that's another one of those groups of people who meet. They've got sound doctrine and good talks.'" Churches are forever picking up bad habits from each other because they haven't learned to let God be their guide and to make them something unique.

This was Israel's problem. So she got her king. The first one was a tremendous failure. David was far better--the second king. He extended and he consolidated the Jewish rule of Palestine to its farthest extent and reaches, and under his son Solomon, it was a time of a reign of peace and a reign of luxury. But just as God said, "If you have a king, he's going to make you pay through the nose. And they paid. From the time they got the kings, they were under the burden of the king. It got so bad in Solomon's day, because Solomon was an ambitious man. He had great works of building. He had a thousand wives, and that made quite a grocery bill, among other things. Solomon was the last of what was known in the ancient world as the big spenders.

After he died, his son Rehoboam came to the throne, and he tried to play the same game as his daddy did, only he didn't have his father's capacity or his father's presence. The result was that the kingdom split. In 930 B.C., ten northern tribes said, "That's all. We're seceding." They formed their own kingdom under Jeroboam, and this kingdom was then called Israel. The one in the south, the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, were called Judah.

So Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was prosperous, but it was a spiritual failure right from the first. It didn't have one single godly King. Not one single godly King in all the years that that northern kingdom existed. Finally in 721 B.C., Assyria came along and took them into captivity. Judah had periods when it had some godly kings. It had its Hezekiahs and it had its Josiahs, but not very many. In 606 B.C., the Babylonians came in, and they took this southern kingdom into captivity.

**Post-Captivity**

There is one more period in which God's dealing with Israel you need to understand as background for our scene today, and that is the post-captivity period. When the people carried the Jews off, they carried them off to Assyria and to Babylon as captives, and Jerusalem was destroyed. Then the ruler of the Media-Persian Empire, a man named Cyrus, in 538 B.C., issued a decree for the Jews, giving the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild Palestine. This was the end of the 70-year captivity period which had been predicted to the people if they persisted in their ways in the southern kingdom in their rebellion against God.

Well, the temple and the walls were rebuilt, and the city was reconstructed. Palestine was re-inhabited by the Jews, but always under some gentile rule. Now this went along to the time of Christ when the Roman Empire ruled Palestine. Then, finally, in 70 A.D., the Roman general Titus came in and laid siege to Jerusalem. Finally it fell. They went in and they slaughtered a million Jews, and tore the city apart so that not one stone lay upon another, all of which the Bible had predicted, and the Jews were scattered all over the world.

So the years have rolled by, and the centuries have rolled by, and the Jews had no homeland. He was under everybody's foot. He was a dog to be kicked. He was plagued fantastically in World War II so that six million Jews died. Once a year, the great synagogue here in Dallas has a moment when they all stand and face toward Palestine, and for six solid minutes hundreds of people stand in that synagogue in total stony silence, in memory of one minute for every million Jews who died under Hitler's persecution of the Jews.

**Return to the Homeland**

Then a very dramatic thing happened. May 14th, 1948 came along. It was a momentous day in the history of the world. On that day, the Jewish homeland was reborn. Under the auspices of the United Nations was established a homeland for Jews that they could come to from all over the world. There is now a drive on to bring the Jews from all over the world back to Palestine. There are in the world 14 million Jews. Two million of those are in Palestine. Two million are in Israel now. We have, in this country, six-and-a-half-million in the USA, and three-and-a-half million are in Russia. Russia is not too fond of the Jews. Russia is another nation which is following the path to prove the prediction to Abraham that, "Those who curse you, I will curse," as Hitler learned. So Russia is going to learn. A little later, we're going to see where Russia is going to come out. But every now and then you hear about the persecutions that Russia is exercising toward the Jews. The United States has given them better treatment.

**Israel Today**

But this is the picture today. Now there is a great movement. As a matter of fact, the Israeli government has established vast sums of money for the specific purpose of getting families (family groups) to move back from all over the world to Palestine. Now this is part of what's behind this aggravation toward Russia, that you've been reading about, to release the Jews and to permit them to leave Russia and to flow into Palestine. The Israeli government wants to see 14 million Jews living in the homeland.

**Jeremiah 31:8-10**

This is rather fantastic in itself and fascinating to see in our day because this seems very much to reflect what Jeremiah was saying. It is certainly the laying of the foundation for what Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 31:8-10 in describing this regathering: "Behold, God says, I will bring them from the North Country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, her who travails with child, together a great company shall return here. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters and the straight way in which they shall not stumble, for I am Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O you nations, and declare in the coast afar off and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.'"

**God's Promises to the Jews**

Now the prediction of the Scripture is that Israel will be regathered *never* to be scattered again. For this reason, this Scripture has not been fulfilled. This is a Scripture which is yet in the future, that God is going to do this, and this is what you see taking place in our day. God made these promises to the Jews. If the people in the United Nations understood this, they'd have a little better perspective on the problems that they deal with. God had certain promises he made to Jews:

1. **Israel Would be a Nation Forever**

That they would be a nation forever. Jeremiah 31:35-37: "Thus says the Lord who gives us the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who divides the sea when its waves roar, and the Lord of Hosts is His name. 'If those ordinances depart from before Me (these natural processes of nature),' says the Lord, 'then the seat of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.' Thus says the Lord, 'If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seat of Israel for all that they have done,' says the Lord." Well, you're not going to stop the processes of nature, the natural functioning of the natural laws, and neither is God going to cease dealing with Israel as a nation. Of course this is what amazes everybody, that this people which has been under persecution for 2,000 years in the way they have, and to this day there is still no mixture in them. There are still pure-blooded Jews, and they exist as Jews. God says, "You'll be a nation forever."

1. **Israel Would Have a King Forever**

Another promise God made is that they would have a king forever. In 2 Samuel 7:16, He made a promise of a king who would rule over them for the eternity of the nation: "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you, and your throne shall be established forever." So there's going to be a kingdom of the Jews, and there's going to be a king forever--*forever*. That means without end. There will be no termination of the Jewish people.

1. **Israel Would be a Land Forever**

And he gave them a third promise. This is the one that plagues the United Nations today. And that is that God said in Genesis 17:8 that He would give them a land forever: "And I will give unto you and to your seed after you the land wherein you are a sojourner (which was the land of Palestine), all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God." The people who have fair and right and genuine title to the land of Palestine are the Jewish people. Every effort on the part of the Arabs to move the Jew back from Palestine is going to end in disaster. Anybody who had an ounce of brains relative to Bible doctrine could have known how the Six-Day War was going to end. There was no way the Jew could have been driven out. And when Moshe Dayan stood on the site of Solomon's Temple and said, "We have returned to our most holy place and we will never again leave it," he was fulfilling Scripture in a dramatic declaration that will come to pass just as he said it. They will never again leave that place.

The thing that you should be looking for in your newspapers is what's going to happen to that mosque. What you should be waiting for on TV is the interruption of the bullet, "Ladies and gentlemen we have a news special. The Dome of the Rock, the Muhammadan Mosque which stands on the site of Solomon's Temple has just experienced an earthquake, and it has been shaken to the ground." When that happens, you can be sure that Moshe and his boys are going to be there sweeping off the dust within the hour, and they're going to break out their plans which they already have for the rebuilding of the temple. They are collecting materials. They are collecting money now, and the temple is in the plans. Now this is exactly what the Word of God says. The Jew, when he returns, will be returning to establish the old worship practices in this temple. It is out of this temple that the antichrist double-crosses them and sets himself up as their God.

**Ezekiel 37**

One of the most dramatic predictions and pictures we have of this return of Israel to prominence is in Ezekiel 37. We're going to look at it in detail here. The kids sing a song that's based upon this chapter in the Bible. I don't really know it but it goes something like, "The foot bone is connected the ankle bone, and ankle bone is connected to the shin bone, and the shin bone is connected to the knee bone," and it has got a little rhythm that beats along like that. There are some of the old spirituals that talk about the bones coming together. Well, this is the famous chapter of the Bible that speaks about the valley of dry dead bones.

In Ezekiel 37:1, first the vision is given: "The hand of the Lord was upon me," says Ezekiel, "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." The prophet is placed in a vision condition and he sees this huge open valley piled high with human bones. "And caused me to pass by them roundabout, and behold, there were very many in the open valley, and, lo, they were very dry."

Alright, here's the picture: an open valley and a huge pile of human bones as far as you could see--a mass of them, dry, with no flesh on them. Just something like you would see out laying out in some desert. The Lord asked Ezekiel a question. He says, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel says, "I don't know. You know Lord." Ezekiel was a little hesitant. If you were asked that question out in the desert, and you saw a pile of dead human bones, all dried, and somebody said, "Can this live?" You would say, "I don't think so." Ezekiel says, "You know Lord." So God answers his own question in verse 4: "For he said unto me, 'Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them: Oh, dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord.'"

I want you to notice one thing. He's telling these dry bones to hear the Word of the Lord. This is not a picture of physical resurrection. This is not a picture of the physical resurrection of the people of Israel. This is a picture that deals with Israel as a nation scattered among the nations. The bones here are the nation of Israel itself. It is people who can hear. That's why he says to tell the bones something, because these bones can hear.

Verse 5: "Thus says the Lord God unto these bones, 'Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I'll lay sinews upon you and I'll bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.'" So the answer to the Lord's question is, "Yes, these bones can live, for these bones represent the nation of Israel, and the nation will live again."

In verse 7, the bones do rejoin. They flesh out, but they are lifeless: "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-bone." Now here's the date it happened. Right there. The shaking of Ezekiel 37:7 took place on May 14th, 1948. That was the date, for the first time since 70 A.D., when the nation of Israel as individual Jews began shaking together again into a nation. Up to then, there hadn't been a particularly great interest. As a matter of fact, it was the fundamental Bible Christians, who knew something about prophecy, that were more of an instrument in bringing Israel together again than were the Jews themselves. It was the Christians who were informed about prophetic doctrine that knew that this must come to pass. The Jews themselves took a long time getting around to being serious about getting back to their homeland. On May 14th, 1948, when the UN recognizes Israel as a as a homeland for the Jews, the bones started shaking and started joining together.

Verse 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, and when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them." And there is no breath in the Land of Israel today. The bones are coming together, but they are dead bones. They are going back in unbelief. There is no spiritual life in the state of Israel today. They have religion. Here's a good example of the difference between religion and faith in God. They've got religion. They're going to get their temple built; they're going to get the ritual going; and, the religion is getting better all the time, but they're spiritually dead.

In verse 9, God steps in and He brings life to the nation which has been shaken together but is spiritually dead: "Then said He unto me, 'Prophesy unto the wind. Prophesy, Son of Man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God; come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' 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."

Here you have the picture of the nation of Israel coming back to life spiritually. That has not yet taken place. Matthew 24 gives us some insights about this period when life comes back into Israel. This is the description of the tribulation period. Matthew 24:8: "All these are the beginning of sorrows." This is the beginning of the seven-year period of the earth's tribulation after the church has been removed. There is a period when sorrows begin. Verse 14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." There comes a time in the tribulation when the Jews realize what has happened to the church.

This is why you should tell everybody you know who is a Jew what's going to happen about the removal of the church. The church is going to be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and that they as Jews who are unbelievers are then going to enter the worst time of persecution in their lives. This is why it's important for you to tell a Jew that, because after you're gone, he will remember perhaps what you said, and he will recognize the path to salvation. Thousands of Jews in Palestine are going to turn to the Lord, and they're going to be saved. And that's in this period when life comes to the nation.

Verse 15: "When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, whosoever reads, let him understand, then let them who are in Judea flee unto the mountains." This is the middle of the Tribulation when the antichrist sets himself up as his own god. That's an abomination in the temple. Then it tells the Jews to get out of town, and run to the hills because many of them will be believers. But they will be under the antichrist's order for execution if they're found.

Now back to Ezekiel 37, this vision is explained beginning at verse 11. We've been filling in for you a little as we go. Here's the basis of that. "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 on our part." So here are the bones, the people of Israel, and they appear lost, never to be a nation again. That's the same mistake the amillennialist makes.

Verse 12: "Therefore, prophesy and say unto them, 'Thus says the Lord God: behold, all 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.'" Because these bones can hear and understand, these graves do not refer to physical graves out of which they are being physically resurrected. These graves rather refer to the place where they have been lost, namely the nations out of which they are being called. This refers to where Israel is buried among the peoples of the world today.

Verse 13: "You shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O, my people, and brought you out of your graves." He is going to bring the bones back together and restore them to life.

Verse 14 "And shall put my spirit in you." This is God the Holy Spirit. So the nation is regenerated. "You shall live, and I shall place you in your own land (Palestine), then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, says the Lord." Here you have the presence of God the Holy Spirit. Let me compare Ezekiel 36:25. He says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean." This speaks of the salvation of the Jews. "From all your filthiness, from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put in you. And I'll take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh." Their spirit is dead. They'll be given a living human spirit.

Verses 15 through 19 observe that the two kingdoms that have split, the northern and southern kingdoms, are going to be rejoined. There will be Jews from every tribe who are alive today who will join together into one kingdom again. As you read through this passage, you see that they're compared to stick's. Verse 16: "Moreover, Son of Man take one stick and write upon it for Judah and for the children of Israel his companions. Take another stick and write upon it for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in your hand. And when the children of your people shall speak unto you saying, 'Will you now show us what you mean by these things?' Say to them thus, says the Lord God, 'Behold, I'll take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his fellows, and I'll put them with him even with the stick of Judah, and shall make them one stick, and they shall be one in mind.'" The nation is going to be reunited.

Versus 23 through 28 list the blessings of grace as a result of this reunion as Israel will rest forever in Palestine. In verse 22, this reunion of the northern and southern kingdoms is to be permanent. Verse 23 tells them that all their idolatry that have defiled them, the detestable things that they did in the past will forever be gone. All the dwelling places in which they've sinned will be cleansed. "They will be my people, and I'll be their God." Verses 24 through 25 tells them how they will be ruled over by the Messiah himself, the descendants of David. He will rule them forever. Verses 26 through 28 tells how God's presence will be with them forever. "The nations shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, and my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever."

With this prediction of the restoration of Israel as a nation, I want to show you something that I think is very fascinating--the Great Tribulation, the last three-and-a-half years of that period. Matthew 24:29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened; the moon shall not give its light; the stars shall fall from heaven; and, the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect (which by this context are the Jewish people) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." These are contrasts to the nations in verse 9 of this chapter. These reside in Judea, verse 16 says. These are the people whom verse 30 says, "Mourn Jesus Christ when they see him, for they now recognize him as their savior.

This is what Zachariah 12:10-13:1 says, "They shall mourn for Him, and they shall recognize Him, and a nation will be born in a day." Now notice Matthew 24:32. All that we've been saying, when is it going to happen? "Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know the summer is near. So likewise when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." What generation? This generation that began on May 14th, 1948. "All these things" means all of the things that Ezekiel 37 describes. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." You know how long a generation is? About forty years. OK, 1948 plus forty years. We could be talking about the year 1988. Let's take away 1971. You're dealing with 15 to 17 years. That's a generation.

And I'll tell you something else about the history of the world. Every time the Jews have lost their temples and then they return to their homeland, they have rebuilt the temple within a generation, within that 40-year period. So start adding to your age, whatever you are. If you're 12 or 15 years old, just add to it, and you'll see where you stand. We rammed it home to those kids around the campfires that they are a princely unique generation of Christians. They are the believers who, in all likelihood, are going to see that heaven open and Jesus Christ call them up to meet Him there. 15 to 17 years is not much for you to survive. This generation in which these things have been set in motion shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

Now you can go ahead and be as negative as you want to, or you can be as positive as you ought to be toward the Word of God. But here is a dramatic evidence, I think, that the Lord's coming is very near at hand.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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