***The Valley of Dry Bones
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Please turn with me to Romans 11:17-21. Our subject is "The Olive Tree of Blessing.” This is segment number one.

**Mankind**

As I'm sure all of you know, mankind began with the man, Adam, whom God created. When Adam sinned in Eden, however, he contaminated all his subsequent progeny with moral guilt. So, all of us, because of Adam, are born into the human race destined for an eternity in the lake of fire. God proceeded to solve this terrible problem. In order to do that, He raised up a man named Abraham to become the progenitor of a special line of humanity, the Jews. Through the Jewish people, God would supply a Savior for mankind to undo what Adam had done. This Savior would be a sinless God-Man Who Himself would pay the penalty of death for the sins of mankind. In this way, God indicated that Abraham would be a very special blessing to all the families of the human race.

**The Gentiles**

So, we gentiles, who are destined for the lake of fire, because of our participation with our federal head, Adam, have placed at our disposal, through the Jewish people, an opportunity to go to heaven. The Abraham Covenant gave the Jewish nation special access to God's blessings, which were not available to the gentiles. Among these was God's promise that they would have a land which would be their own forever; that they would have a nation which would exist forever; that they would have a king which would rule over them forever; and that they would have a life of material prosperity so that they had a very special place of blessing with God. And it all stemmed from God's promise to this man, Abraham, who was the Father of their nation.

**The Jews**

In our study, we have come to Romans 11:16. And in verse 16, the apostle Paul compares, in the last line, the Jewish nation to a tree whose root is holy, and which, therefore, produces holy branches? Paul says, "If the root be holy, so also are the branches." The word "holy" means "set apart to a special divine purpose by God." It does not mean moral purity necessarily, though it is used like that as well. The root of this particular tree is Abraham; the trunk is the promised blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant; and, the branches are the Jewish people. So, I want you to have that picture, first of all, because we're going to be dealing with this olive tree of special blessings. There are no gentiles in this tree; and there are no Christians in this tree. This is a very special place of blessing for the Jews alone.

**Noah**

In Romans 11:17, Paul then takes this picture of Israel as a tree of blessings, and expands upon it. Before we get to that, however, I want to give you a little background reminder about the status and the condition of the gentile nations. As you know, the three sons of Noah formed the three channels from which all the human race, as we have it on earth today, descended. After the flood, we're told that the father, Noah, became drunk on his own wine that he had produced. And in a drunken stupor, he lay naked in his tent.

**Noah's Son Ham**

Noah's son, Ham, stumbled into the tent and saw his father in that condition. And he went outside, and he made jokes about it to his brothers, Shem and Japheth. Now this was a serious breach before God, of respect for one's parents, and more importantly, for the sanctity of the family unit. The family unit is the core of all of God's structure of civilization. It is what keeps us from being raging animals. It is what keeps human society from descending into the violence that existed on this earth before the flood, that caused God to just wipe out the whole mess. It is a serious breach to violate the institution of the family, and to violate the institution upon which the family is based – the marriage institution. This is something that our society thinks it is getting away with, and only certainty is going to reveal the enormous flood of tears and grief, both for Christians and non-Christians, that are going to be the result of violating this core building block of human society. From the very first, God placed a special sanctity upon the home, and upon the family unit. And it was not to be violated by the sin nature of men.

This is what Ham was guilty of. It was a serious moral breach. And the thing that is interesting about this is that history reveals to us that in the ancient world, this was considered, even by the pagans, a grievous sin. It was a taboo to look upon the nakedness of your parents, and certainly a taboo to make jokes about it, and to hold it up to ridicule. Even the pagans consider this a serious threat to the stability of human society.

**Noah's Sons Shem and Japheth**

However, Ham's brothers, Shem and Japheth, did not join in the ridicule of their father, but respectfully took a garment (took a blanket) went in backwards, with eyes averted, and covered the body of their father. Ham’s deliberate viewing of his father's nakedness revealed that there was, in this man, a licentious and immoral sensual characteristics. It was just a quality in him. It's kind of strange. You wonder: how could somebody have spent a year on that boat, seeing the complete devastation that that flood had perform, and seeing that this God Who spoke to their father, Noah, direct person-to-person, Who gave them information, and Who told what was coming. He had listened to this father for 120 years, warning the society of his day that God's judgment is coming, and that you can't break the rules, and was treated as an ignorant fool, and simply dismissed as a wild alarmist. Suddenly, Ham and sees all this fulfilled before his eyes, and sees, when the waters recede, what a terrible devastation there was upon the earth when they got off that ark. You would think that somebody like that would say, "Boy, I am going to respect that God, if I'm going to respect anybody. He is there, and He has spoken to us."

That's the problem with society in America today. They don't think that God is there. And if they think God is there, they don't think He has spoken to us. And since He hasn't spoken to us, including a lot of preachers who don't think He has spoken to us, they're not spending their time explaining what the Bible says to people.

So, this was a very strange thing about Ham. But he revealed that he did have a licentious, immoral, sensual character about him that was a dominant feature of his sin nature – that he had not brought in subjection to the truth that he had learned about God. The Bible, interestingly enough, records for us the nations that descended from Ham. We know who the Hamites were in the ancient world. And if there was anything characteristic about the Hamites, interestingly enough, that is that they were an enormously gross licentious people. They were a sexually depraved people consistently – those who descended from Ham. The most prominent ones were the group you're well acquainted with. They're called the Canaanites – in the land that the Israelites were given. And it was the Canaanites that they were conquering.

You remember that, in the process of clearing the land, when God was giving them the Promised Land, there was one basic guideline that God gave to the Jewish people: "Kill every one of them. Don't let a single Canaanite live, from infant baby to elder people. Wipe them out. They are a moral cancer. They are a degradation upon human society. And if you do not clear them out," God said, "they will come back to plague you, and cause you to go into sin, and they will be a grief to you."

Well, of course, God knew what he was talking about, and God was acting in perfect justice. But once the Jews got a toehold, and got themselves well established, and a beachhead in the land, they decided to forget about the mopping up operations of the campaign. So, they permitted these pockets of Canaanites to exist. And from then on, it was the cause that ultimately brought the whole nation down. They just couldn't listen to God. These people were known for their repulsive, immoral, sexual behavior.

For example, in Leviticus 18:3, the Jews were told this: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwell." Where did these gypsies come from? That's right. They were Hamites: "And so," God says, "I have taken you out of Egypt. I don't want you to be practicing the lifestyle of the Egyptians, because if you do, I'll have to destroy you. If you do, I'll have to discipline you:" "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwell, you may not do. And after the doings of the land of Canaan, to which I bring you (Canaan was another Hamite descendant), neither shall you walk in their ordinances. God says, "Follow My moral commitments. Do not follow what you have seen in Egypt." Well, what did they see in Egypt? What will they see now among the Canaanites? It is very gross picture. Verses 6-30 are details of unlawful lusts, all about which God repeatedly says, "If you do these things, you defile your country," among which is included homosexuality and bestiality. Canaanites Egyptians were doing this all time – sex with animals.

So, it goes on, and in verse 25, he makes a very interesting statement. What happens if a society does these things? The United States is doing it today. Here is a pattern. This does not apply to us directly, but here is a pattern of how God deals in righteousness. Leviticus 18:25: "And the land is defiled. Therefore, I do visit the iniquity there upon it, and the land itself vomits out her inhabitants." That's an interesting expression – "the land itself." God says, "I will make the very country; the very land; and, the very territory in which you live, become like a human being that has become nauseated in its stomach, and it vomits out that which is making it sick. And this immorality of various kinds, the land will vomit. And this is exactly what God is proceeding to do. God vomited out the Jewish people by taking away their land; He took away their temples; He took away their king; He took away their freedom; and, He took everything away from them. And He imposed upon the disease, so they died like flies – the consequences of these acts. Today, before your very eyes, you see the United States finding that God is causing the land to vomit out those who are pursuing the patterns of immorality that are listed here.

So, I call your attention to this chapter to show you what happens to a people who were descended here from the Hamitic line who were guilty of sexual practices that God forbids, and who instead ignored the Word of God. I remind you, too, that it is interesting that the territory in which the Hamitic people lived included Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Ham's Son Canaan**

So, the nations descended from Ham were placed by God under a divine curse which was pronounced upon Ham and his descendants by his father, Noah. This curse, we find, is directed particularly at Ham through His Son Canaan. In Genesis 9:25, we have that statement made. Noah says, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Canaan was the son of Ham. Noah's divine oracle predicted, furthermore, that these nations would be enslaved by others from the lines of Shem and Japheth.

Verse 26: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem. Canaan shall be his slave. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Canaan shall be his slave. So, God said, "OK, Shem is going to be the leading source of spiritual blessings. Through Shem, I'm going to execute what I promised Adam and Eve about bringing a Savior." And Shem will dominate the descendants of Ham. Shem will have slaves working for him, out of the Hamites. Japheth (the great nations of which Western culture and civilization has descended) is going to be the prominent one. He will become the great nations of the world. He will become the great centers of civilization. But Japheth is going to find strength and dwelling in the spiritual tent of Shem. It is because the strength that Shem gives spiritually that the Japhetic nations are going to become powerful. And when they lose their association and appreciation for the spiritual inheritance from Shem, the Japhethites sites are going to go down. Furthermore, the Hamites are going to be slaves to the Japhetic nations.

So, this was a very serious condemnation upon the Hamitic people, which included the Egyptians; the Canaanites; the Hittites; and, in great prominence, the Carthaginians of North Africa.

So, the descendants of Shem would be blessed by the Word of God, and through Abraham, a spiritual blessing to the world. The descendants of Japheth would spread and prosper the nations of the world and would be the spiritual beneficiaries of the Shemites.

**Ham's Grandson Nimrod**

Now, the Hamites, very naturally, were the enemies of the Semitic nations. This was Satan's attempt to destroy the nation of Abraham, and to prevent the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, with its Savior for the world. And who should descend from the line of Ham but a grandson who was named Nimrod? Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, began the Babylonian religion, worshiping the sun through the goddess mother and the child cult. And it was centered in such systems as the sex worship cult of Baalism. Nimrod, carrying on the family tradition and the family characteristic, of all things, of Ham. And it was Nimrod who put together the first attempt at internationalism in bringing people together. God had told the people when they got off the ark, "I want you to spread out. The animals are going to find their own way. They will reproduce and repopulate. I want you to start spreading out, and recover the earth." Instead, Nimrod said, "Now, that would put God in charge of us. We will be in charge of ourselves because we are going to stand together.

**The Tower of Babel**

So, they proceeded to build this enormous, huge tower that they were able to put so high in the sky that it actually would be hidden in the clouds. At certain times, the cloud level was such that the tower would simply go right up through the clouds. People said that it was going right up into heaven. Nimrod was no clod. And the culture (the civilization he lived in) had great technical capacities. They built a tower, and they were going to shove God out of the picture. It was an attempt at international control. But God said that if we permit them to have a one world government, then that means that one dictator will control all humanity, and he can wipe out the access to the Word of God.

**God Confused the Languages**

The Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) said, "The only thing to do is to confuse their languages. Then they will separate and they will become national entities. So, if one nation goes down, under a dictator like in Russia, that opposes the Word of God, other nations will not lose their access to the Word of God. The light will still be burning." And sure enough, He confused the language, and that stopped the project, and people drifted off by language groups and formed the nations of the world.

**Roman Catholicism**

The people of the Hamitic descent through Nimrod, however, introduced to the world the first organized counterfeit religion against God's true revelation. Ultimately, that religion in our day has been brought down as the Roman Catholic Church. It took all of Nimrod's basic false religious doctrines, and incorporated them into a corrupted form of Christianity.

This was the background that existed in the world of the most debased kind of human relationships that now needed a Savior of the world. So, in comes the living God. He picks up this man, Abraham, who himself was born into this kind of a family. Abraham is an example of that interesting phenomenon in the kings of Israel, when the kingdom divided. They never had one single godly king in the north. Every one of them was an ungodly ruler. They were of Ahab and Jezebel types – every single one of them. But in the south, the kingdom of Judah, it had a different pattern. But it was a very strange pattern. You would have one of the grossest, most ungodly men ruling. He would die, and his son would come and the guy would be a gem – a wonderful godly ruler, a Josiah type. And everybody would thank God for having this kind of a ruler. And they look at the kid's father and say, "How in the world could you be this kind of a person when you have that kind of a bum for a father?"

But what should happen, but this godly King has children, and they become bums. And it happened again and again. There's no relationship between how the children turned out, almost, from what their fathers were. And this gave a very clear indication to remind us again that there is a God in heaven that reaches down, and pulls people out, and says, "You – I'm going to make you a gem. I'm going to make you a terrific person. You – I'm going to lead. It is the sovereign election of God that is the only answer.

**Abraham**

So, here's Abraham, in gross spiritual darkness here in the territory of Babylon. God comes along. He's a Shemite. And He selects him to be the father of an important new division of humanity. Genesis chapters 1-11 is devoted to the history of the universe and early man. Then you have almost 40 chapters devoted to the history of Abraham and his descendants. That is just to give you an indication of how important this man is.

Now, there was nothing special about Abraham. There was nothing special about the Jews who came from him, to cause God to select them as His special nation of blessing. It was God sovereign choice. But Abraham was planted as the root. Abraham was given great promises as the trunk of a tree. And out of this root and this trunk, were going to come enormous blessings to anybody who was associated with Abraham. And out of it came the branches of the Jewish people. Israel has a vital relationship, however, to all other nations. Because God, though He has now cast aside this nation, and as we shall see in Paul's analogy, he says, "God has started breaking off those Jewish branches. God has, however, not thrown away the Jewish nation." The church, as the body of Christ, has not replaced Israel in God's plan. The nation of Israel is God's channel of blessing upon all mankind, including the golden age of the millennium, which is ahead.

In Romans 11:17-21, which we'll be pursuing next, Paul takes up this picture of this tree of blessing. Paul renews the provision of spiritual blessings upon the Japhetic nations through the Semitic nation of Israel. This is the fulfillment of what God promised would come as blessing through these sons of Noah. God has a purpose for the nation of Israel, and that purpose has not ceased. This is another one of those big theological confusions today. Satan has confused the issue about the Jew. The Jew is being viewed as somebody that is entirely cast off from God. He is cast off now.

**Does God Hear the Prayers of the Jews?**

On Sunday morning services television program. It's called something about "the Religious Round Table," or something like that. And it's a Jew; it's a Catholic; and, it's a Protestant. And they sit around, and they talk about religious matters. This morning, somebody brought up the fact of the Southern Baptist preacher who, a few years ago, said that God does not hear the prayers of Jews. Did anybody around that table say, "Well, that's what the Bible says?" No. They all leaned back and didn't pick it up. Does God hear the prayers of the Jews? God does not hear the prayers of anybody who does not have Jesus Christ as his high priest. The only way you get to God is through your high priest, Jesus Christ. And if you do not have Christ as personal Savior, then you have no high priest in heaven to carry your message in.

Indeed, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you have no access to the Father. And God does not hear the prayers of the Jews, or any other unbeliever. God does not even hear the prayers of unsaved football players who are desperate to win a game. And that is going to be a great disappointment to many of you who have been counting on the fact that your team gets out there and they all put their hands together in the middle of the field, and they bow their heads in prayer. These are the same guys who have been using the name of God as curse words in the locker room; and, the same people who have been telling their dirty stories, and fouling up the dignity of the human body. They're out there now praying to a God who is not listening.

**Believers are the Spiritual Seed of Abraham**

However, I want you to understand that the people who think that God is through with the Jewish people, in spite of their being broken off from the place of blessing, are very, very wrong. God has a purpose for Israel. One of the purposes, obviously, is to provide a Savior. In Genesis 3:15, God promised a Savior. And in Genesis 12:3, I've shown you that God has promised to bring that Savior through the Abrahamic line to the blessing of all the nations on the earth. Everyone who trusts in this Savior are, in fact, spiritual seed of Abraham.

Galatians 3:7 tells us that, "If you believe in Christ as Savior, you become the son of Abraham. Does that means that you get all the blessings nationally that are promised the Jews. No. It means that you get that part which was promised to you in the Abrahamic Covenant. You gentiles are going to get salvation. That's all you were promised. The rest of the stuff belongs to the Jews, and they will yet all receive that full blessing.

All the movements of history in the past, and the movements of history today, are meaningless unless you relate them to what God is doing with the Jewish people. So, first of all, God is going to provide a Savior. He needs the Jews to do this. Secondly, He has to provide real, true information. He had to give us the Bible. He has to have the Jews to do that. The Jewish nation was used to reveal God to humanity. All of the Bible was written by Jews except close associates, like Luke, who were gentiles, but close associates of the Jews. The climax, of course, of God's revelation, was the person of Jesus Christ. And because God needed to give us information, he gave it to us in a Bible that has no mistakes in it.

Furthermore, we needed the Jews to illustrate certain biblical principles. Romans 15:4 tells us that we learn biblical principles, and how God works from watching what He does with the Jews. With the Jews, because of their disobedience to God, God has brought in the times of the gentiles. From the conquest of Jerusalem, in the year 605 B.C, by Nebuchadnezzar, to the future coming of the antichrist, and the final defeat of the antichrist, there is a period in human history which is known as "the times of the gentiles" – the gentiles are the dominant people. The Jews are no longer the dominant people with God. God is dealing with the gentile nations. In the history of Israel, they were associated with these gentile nations in various ways.

**The History of the Jews**

As you know, the people of Israel were associated in Egypt with the Egyptians. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never came into the possession of the Promised Land. But they were told that they would experience enslavement in one of these gentile nations for over 400 years. And that was the nation of Egypt, and it came to pass. In 1446 B.C., they were finally let out of that enslavement by Moses as a result of ten plagues upon the gentile Egyptians. Then Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after the negative volition act at Kadeshbarnea. It was at this time that they received the Mosaic L. Then, at the end of that wandering period, they entered the era of the conquest of the Promised Land from the Hamitic Canaanites. And Joshua conquered that land piece-by-piece. They did not exterminate all the Canaanites, so the corrupt practices persisted. And when their children were born, the kids thought that the sex practices of the Canaanites were very interesting and very cute. And they imitated them. And the parents now grieved over the fact that they had not destroyed this vile group of people.

When they got into the land and settled down, they were ruled by judges. Because they could not simply obey the Word of God, God kept bringing these gentile nations which brought them into discipline, and put them under enslavement. For 300 years, they kept going back and forth between enslavement and freedom. God would raise up a great judge. The judge would lead them back to God, and then they'd have prosperity. And then they would forget God, and they'd go down again. It was a period that illustrated, however, the grace of God. God kept being very patient.

Then they came into the period of the kingdom. They decided they didn't want God ruling as their king anymore. They wanted a human king. God said, "You won't like it. He'll really make life miserable for you." But they insisted on it. So, God gave them a king. The first one, Saul, was a terrible bomb. David extended and consolidated the Jewish nation, and Solomon brought it to a point of great peace and prosperity and great military power. After Solomon died, the nation divided into two. In 930 B.C., the ten northern tribes seceded from Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Those northern tribes were called Israel. The southern tribes, two of them, they were called Judah. Israel was prosperous in the north, but it was a total spiritual failure. They never had one godly king. Judah had periods of godly rule and prosperity.

However, eventually, the northern kingdom was taken into captivity in Syria in 721 B.C. And we never heard of them again. The two southern tribes finally were taken into captivity in Babylon 606 B.C. And 70 years later, they were brought back. After they were back in the land, they rebuilt their temple, which had been destroyed by the Nebuchadnezzar. The day they dedicate at the temple, the old folks stood there, and they cried. The people asked them said, "Oh, you're so happy because the temple has been rebuilt, aren't you." They said, "No, we're weeping because this temple is only a shadow of the marvelous thing that Solomon had built. This is a rinky-tink temple. It's much smaller. It's nothing like the glamorous, glorious thing that they had at first." So, they had something, but it was second best. You have your best with God. Then you foul it up with your sin nature, and God will come back and give you something of blessing, but it'll always be second best.

So, here come the Jewish people. They have their city rebuilt. They have their temple back up, such as it is. The Jews began returning to Palestine, and they're there back in rebellion against God, finally killing Jesus Christ. With that, in 70 A.D., God brings the Romans conqueror Titus. He destroys the city. And something like two million Jews are killed, out of three million, and the rest are scattered around the world. Until May 14th, 1948, they never had a place that they could call their own. On that day, they returned to part of the land which once was there in Palestine. And now the Jews are hanging on for dear life, trying to find themselves again, and trying to find themselves in a position of protected custody. But what they are finding out is that God is not blessing them. But God has not thrown them away. His promises to them are that they are going to be brought back together. They are going to be a nation forever.

Please notice what God said to these people in Jeremiah 31:35. I want you to have this background so that when we start reading about the Jewish branches is being broken off the tree of God's blessing from Abraham, you will not make the same mistake that the amillennialists makes today, about which there are several prominent books being written – that the breaking of those branches means that God is throwing the Jewish nation away. In fact, here's what Jeremiah said God is going to eventually do for that nation. Jeremiah 31:35: "Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinance of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; who divides the sea when its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is His name" – the Lord of Armies is His name. He introduces his statement by saying, "The Person Who is now speaking to you is the Person Who made everything, so that you understand that I am very powerful, and that I can do what I'm going to tell you I'm going to do.

As a matter of fact, verse 36 says, "'If those ordinances (with these natural laws, relative to the sun and the moon and the stars) depart from before Me,' says the Lord, 'then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.'" This is God's way of saying that the nation of Israel will not cease being Israel" "Thus says the Lord, 'If heaven above can be measured, and if the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast of all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done,' says the Lord." So, it is very clear that God says, "No matter what they do, I am never going to throw away the nation of Israel."

**The Valley of the Dry Bones**

We conclude today by turning to the dramatic chapter 37 of the book of Ezekiel, where the future of the Jew is forever made clear, as a people who will exist as a nation, under periods of God's judgment, but where God is again going to pick them up. This is the picture of the valley of the dry bones. Ezekiel 37:1: "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and sat me down in the midst of the valley which was full of 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." Ezekiel was taken by the Spirit of God, and he is place in a valley. Suddenly, looks around in this vision that he's experiencing, and there are dry bones all around – bleached white.

In Verse 3, the Lord puts a question: "He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' And I asked, 'O, Lord, you know.'" Ezekiel plays it safe. God says, "Can these bones live again?" And Ezekiel says, "I don't know, Lord. You know. What's the answer?"

Verses 4-6: Here is the Lord's answer. "'He said unto me, 'Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, 'O, you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God unto these bones, 'Behold, I will cast breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and I will bring up 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.''"

Now, here is a picture of these bones suddenly being put back together, having all the muscles restored; all the ligaments; all the sinews; all the bodily organs; and, all the outside skin. And they are put back together so that these bones come back to life.

Verse 7: "So, I prophesied, as I was commanded that I prophesy. And there was a noise; and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to its bone." That must've been an interesting sight. All of a sudden, he hears all these bones rattling, and there's all the shaking. And then right before his eyes, he sees the tow bone hooks to the foot bone; the ankle bone to the shin bone; the shin bone to the knee bone; the knee bone to the thigh bone; the thigh bone to the hip bone; the hip bone to the chest bone; the chest bone to the neck bone; the neck bone to the head bone; and, just right on up. And Ezekiel says, "I can't believe this. That'll make a good song. I have to remember that rhythm. And right away, Ezekiel got the rhythm for that song that has since become very popular. But it started right here, as he's standing in the value of bones. And he sees it shaking, and this miracle taking place before his eye.

"And I beheld, and, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them." The skeletons were together, but they weren't alive: "And He said unto me, 'Prophesy unto the winds. 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 exceedingly great army. These bodies were suddenly restored to life. On the 14th of May, in the year 1948, the bones began to shake. And the rattling of the bones began.

However, as we shall see in a moment, these bones were God's picture of the nation of Israel in its discarded present condition – rejected by God. Now God has started to bring them back together – in unbelief. They're not coming back in belief, but they're now coming back alive, and they did come alive, indeed, as a nation. They were reborn once more as a nation. So, now, what does this all mean?

Verse 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, and we are cut off in our part.''" So, it's very clear that he says, "I'm giving you an illustration of what I'm going to do with the Jewish nation in the future.

Verse 12-13 give us the Jewish hope: "Therefore, prophesy, and say unto them, 'Thus says 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. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O, My people, and brought you up out of your graves." God said, "I'm going to restore you. I'm going to bring you back to life. You are again going to come back out of those graves."

Verse 14 says, "'And shall put My Spirit in you, and you shall live (that means you'll be born again), and I shall place you in your own land (that means Palestine), and shall know that I am the Lord, and have spoken it and performed it,' says the Lord." Israel will be regenerated. Israel will be restored to its land.

Furthermore, verse 16 says, "Moreover, son of man, take one stick, and write upon it for Judah and for the children of Israel (his companions). And 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." The two parts of the empire are going to be brought back together. The two kingdoms will again be one. The Jewish people will be rejoined.

Verse 18: "And when the children of your people shall speak unto you, saying, 'Won't you show us you mean by this,' say unto 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 fellows, and will put them (that's the northern kingdom) him even with the stick of Judah (the southern kingdom), and make them one stick, and they shall be one in My hand.

Verses 20-28 here then go on to describe the blessings of grace on Israel in their land forever. They will have permanent union. Verse 23 says that idolatry will forever be gone. Verses 24-25 tell us that David is going to be raised from the dead to be the ruler over this people under the authority of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. David will be their prince. And I must direct you to the end of verse 25, which says that: "David shall be their prince forever." That means that the kingdom will never come to an end. So, how can you say that God has discarded the Jewish people, and has replaced them with the church?

Best of all, verses 26-28 say that now God will be in the midst of them forever. And verse 28 says, "And all of the nations (all the gentile nations) shall know that I, the Lord, do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever more.

So, ahead for the Jewish people is yet a condition that they are out of the tree of blessing. They indeed have been broken off. And this background will help you to understand now what Paul is going to refer to in this analogy that he's going to use – that the Jew is out of the picture. But I must stress, as Paul does, that this is only temporarily. The worst thing for them is yet ahead: the Great Tribulation era; and, the horrible nightmare that is ahead for the Jews. The Jews today think that they will never experience something as terrible as what they experienced in Nazi Germany under Hitler's regime. They are wrong. They have not yet experienced the worst of it all. What Hitler did to them was not nearly as bad as what the antichrist will do to them in the future. We're told that the time is going to come when, at the end of the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, which will be "the time of Jacob's great trouble," the Bible says, that they will find themselves once more looking to the Jesus whom their forefathers crucified.

Notice Matthew 24:30-31, where Jesus said, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. 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 a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together His elect (the Jews) from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other."

We may compare this with the writing of the prophet Zechariah, that gives us a little further picture, in Zechariah 12:10, as to what this event is going to be like: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication. And they should look upon Me, Whom they have pierced." Have the Jews ever done that? "And they shall mourn for Him." Have the Jews ever done that? "As one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." This will be like somebody who has had a firstborn child die, and that agony. They will experience that agony, when suddenly, they see Jesus Christ coming. They see Him as Paul saw Him. And all the Jews who have survived the tribulation will look up and say, "Jesus was the Messiah. We were wrong. Our rabbis were wrong. They led us by the millions into hell because we listen to them."

Zechariah 13:1: "In that day, there should be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness;" that is, the nation will be restored. They will look, and they will mourn, and they will be restored.

So, there is a future for the Jew. Yes, they are broken off. This people is now broken off, out of their place of blessing. This people is under a future of enormous suffering of the worst kind. And yet, we gentiles are the beneficiaries. We the gentiles now, who of all things, have been put into this tree in which we do not naturally belong, but which God says, "I am putting you into My place of blessing. I'm going to give you salvation, and I'm going to give you all kinds of blessings, as long as you obey the principles of Scripture.

Next week, we'll look at the tree of blessing, and of the serious consequences for Israel, and the happy consequences for the gentile.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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