

# Ezekiel 37 Commentary

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Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
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**Ezekiel 37:1** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

To help understand the **context** of Ezekiel's message of hope in Chapter 37, study the following diagram of the book. Another suggestion before you begin to study Ezekiel 37 is to take some time and study **Dr Tony Garland's** well referenced discussion of the [Interpreting Symbols](#) (From the preface of Garland's commentary on The Revelation, one of the best and most balanced commentaries from a literalistic perspective I have ever read = [A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#) - highly recommended).

**Irving Jensen** points out that "There is a turning point in the book, made up of two parts. At Ezekiel 24:2, Ezekiel is informed by God that the king of Babylon has begun the siege against Jerusalem. At Ezekiel 33:21, the actual turning point, Ezekiel learns from a messenger that the city has fallen. Up to Ezekiel 24:2, Ezekiel's message is mainly "The city shall be destroyed." After Ezekiel 33:21, Ezekiel looks to the next prophetic peak, and prophesies, "The city shall be restored." It is at Ezekiel 24 that the prophet learns that when Jerusalem falls, his tongue will be loosed to speak a new message of hope; and people, sobered by the reality of

Jerusalem's destruction, will begin to give him a hearing. (Read Ezekiel 24:25-27.) (Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament)

**A C Gaebelein** outlines this last section of Ezekiel...

## EZEKIEL 37-48

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel Re-united. Chapter 37.
2. Gog and Magog and Their Destruction. Chapters 38-39.
3. The Millennial Temple and its Worship. The Division of the Land. Chapters 40-47.

(From The Annotated Bible, Volume 4)

<b>PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT</b> <b>Ezekiel 1-32</b> <i>Jehovah Departs</i> <i>The LORD is not there</i>			<b>PROPHECY OF RESTORATION</b> <b>Ezekiel 33-48</b> <i>Jehovah Shammah — The LORD is There</i>	
<b>FATE OF JUDAH</b>		<b>FOES OF JUDAH</b>	<b>FUTURE OF JUDAH</b>	
Before the Siege		During the Siege	After the Siege	
<b>593-588 BC</b>		<b>587-586</b>	<b>586-571</b>	
<b>7 YEARS OF PROPHESYING</b> <b>HORROR &amp; NO HOPE</b>			<b>15 YEARS OF PROPHESYING</b> <b>HOPE</b>	
<b>Ezekiel 1-3</b>	<b>Ezekiel 4-24</b>	<b>Ezekiel 25-32</b>	<b>Ezekiel 33-39</b>	<b>Ezekiel 40-48</b>
Ezekiel Sees the Glory & Receives the Call	Judgments Against Judah	Judgments Against the Gloating Nations	Restoration of Israel to the LORD	Visions of the Millennial Temple

## EZEKIEL 37:1-14 THE PROPHECY OF DRY BONES

**Ezekiel 37:1-14** is a vision of dry bones and is the third of four major visions in Ezekiel...

- Ezekiel 1:1-3:15
- Ezekiel 8:1-11:24
- Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Ezekiel 40:1-48:35

**ESV Study Bible** introduces this chapter noting that "This vision, Ezekiel's third in the book, is one of the most famous passages in Ezekiel. While it stands on its own as a powerful statement of God's power to re-create the community, the context is significant. The promised gift of new heart and spirit (Ezek 36:26-27) left questions hanging (i.e., how can this be? and can it be true...?). Chapter 37 addresses these questions. ([ESV Online Study Bible Crossway](#))

**Joel Rosenberg** writes that Ezekiel 36, 37 "set the stage for the **War of Gog and Magog**" by describing that Israel will be reborn as a country in the last days, the Jewish people will come back to the Holy Land from exile all over the world, the Jewish people will rebuild the ancient ruins and make the deserts bloom again (**Ed**: I have been to Israel and this is a beautiful reality today!). These things have all happened, and this suggests we are getting closer to the fulfillment of the next set of prophecies.

**Related Resources - Here are 3 articles by Merrill F Unger**

- [Ezekiel 37 - Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration—Part 1](#)
- [Ezekiel 37 - Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration—Part 2](#)

- [Ezekiel 37 - Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration—Part 3](#)

**Hand of the LORD** -38x in 37v in NAS - In some contexts this is "good" but in others "not so good" Study the passages -

Ex 9:3; Deut 2:15; Josh 4:24; 22:31; Jdg 2:15; Ruth 1:13; 1Sa 5:6, 9; 7:13; 12:15; 2Sa 24:14; 1Kgs 18:46; 2Kgs 3:15; 1Chr 21:13; Ezra 7:6, 28; Job 12:9; Ps 75:8; 118:15f; Pr 21:1; Isa 19:16; 25:10; 41:20; 62:3; 66:14; Jer 51:7; Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1; Luke 1:66; Acts 11:21; 13:11

One of my favorite examples (not the exact phrase but certainly a synonym) is found in the life of Ezra...

For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him**. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezra 7:9-10-see in depth discussion, cp Ezra 7:6, 28)

**Comment:** This passage is a great example of the importance of interrogating the little preposition "for" when it is used (as it is here) as a **term of explanation!** **What does it explain? Why was Jehovah's good hand upon Ezra? Can you see the clear application to your life? Then go forth and apply this truth, so that the good hand of Jehovah might be on your life.** As an aside, does this mean you will never experience trials, troubles or tribulations? Absolutely not! This is a fallen world and every believer will experience manifold tests (1Pe 1:6-7-note) (but God always provides manifold grace [1Pe 4:10-note] to enable us to "bear up under" whatever trial He allows in our life. Indeed Luke records that "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Acts 14:22). But Paul "buffers" this truth with the declaration that "momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison." (2Cor 4:17-note)

**Spirit of the LORD** - Ezekiel was carried by the Spirit, and set down in a valley filled with dry bones. Sometimes God's will and way seems to be without purpose, but we are caught in time and so can see only a portion of the "tapestry" He is weaving, and remember that He is the "Master Weaver" of all the variegated threads in our lives!

**Spirit in Ezekiel** - Hebrew = ruah/ruach in Ezekiel 1:12, 20, 21; 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 8:3; 10:17; 11:1, 5, 19, 24; 13:3; 18:31; 21:7; 36:26, 27; 37:1, 14; 39:29; 43:5. **Ruah/ruach** is translated breath in Ezekiel 37:5, 8, 9, 10.

**Set me down in the middle of the valley** - As noted above this reflects that this section is in the form of a vision.

**Full of bones** - This is highly symbolic language. **Bones** are the framework on which is "built" the human body. It follows that **bones** in this context speak of the framework, not of individual bodies coming to life but of the nation of Israel coming to life (as determined from the context). Remember that at the time of this prophecy, the nation, the holy city of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple all lay in ruins. God is giving a prophecy of hope, remembering His great lovingkindness or mercy in the midst of great wrath. God had made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and based on those covenant promises (especially that Israel would receive the land), God is acting in mercy by giving this hope filled promise. It is not a "hope so" type of hope, but a sure and steadfast promise that will come to fruition in the Lord's perfect plan and timing.

**J. Dwight Pentecost** writes that this chapter sets the stage for the events of Ezekiel 38-39 - Ezekiel 37 deals with the restoration of the nation Israel to her land. This is pictured as a gradual process, for the prophet sees the process of bone being joined to bone, tied together with sinews, clothed with skin. It is a **regathering in unbelief**, for the prophet observes that there was no life in the assembled carcass (Ezek 37:8). Ezekiel 40 carries us on to the Millennial Age. Thus the movements of **Gog and Magog** are seen, in the context, to transpire between the time of the beginning of the restoration of Israel to the land and the millennial age.

**It was full of bones** - Remember that context is king in interpretation. We could guess that the bones are individuals, the nation of Israel or something else. But we do not have to guess if we carefully observe the context. Ezekiel 37:11 clearly states "**these bones are the whole house of Israel.**" So what is your interpretation of the **bones**? Clearly the **whole house of Israel**. What does that mean "**whole house**"? What is a synonym for "whole" or conversely what is an antonym for "whole"? Divided or undivided. So clearly **whole house** refers to the undivided **Kingdom of Israel**, which in 931BC was split by the Sovereign Lord into a **Northern Kingdom** (10 tribes) and **Southern Kingdom** (Two tribes = Benjamin and Judah). Notice also that Ezekiel 37:11-14 gives a fuller interpretation of the vision. Remember that the best commentary on Scripture is always Scripture (**Compare Scripture with Scripture**). Always check the immediate context to see if that interprets the passage you are studying. You might then examine a good cross reference resource (unfortunately the cross references in the margin of your Bible are generally not the best compilation), such as the [Treasury of Scripture Knowledge \(TSK\)](#). Respected Bible expositor **John MacArthur** speaks very highly of the **TSK** noting that it is "The one book, aside from the Bible itself, that I value most in my studies." The great preacher **Donald Grey Barnhouse** testified to the value of using Scripture as a commentary on itself, remarking that "You very rarely have to go outside the Bible to explain anything in the Bible." Do you believe that statement? How quickly do you go to the notes of your study

Bible or favorite commentary? That will answer whether you really believe Scripture is the best commentary (and whether you are willing to do a little "work" to compare other passages)! Remember that while the TSK is a good resource, we need to examine the [context](#) of every cross reference to be certain that it is referring to the same subject as the passage you are studying.

**A C Gaebel** makes the point that "What these dry bones represent and what their revival mean, is explained by the Lord Himself. It may be used in application in different ways, to illustrate certain truths, but the true and only interpretation is the one which is given by the Lord in verses 11-14. But there is an erroneous interpretation of a serious nature which is widely taught and believed among many Christians. Because "graves" are mentioned, beside the dry bones and their resurrection, it is being taught that the vision means physical resurrection. (Ibid)

**KJV Bible Commentary** says that Ezekiel 37 "deals with resurrection is without question. Some think the primary emphasis is upon a physical resurrection of individuals, while others see a resurrection of national life following the Babylonian captivity. It appears to us that the emphasis here is upon a resurrection of national life, especially as inaugurated by the Lord Himself at His **Second Coming**. The **dry bones** that come to life are figurative of the **national resurrection of Israel**. That this cannot refer to the physical resurrection of individuals in this context is evident by several things. These bones are all seen in one valley in Chaldea, not buried or scattered; and the remains of Israel's people were not so disposed. Furthermore, these bones are revived in stages: first bone to bone, then sinews, then flesh, then skin, and finally breath. The physical resurrection, in contrast, is instantaneous (1Cor 15).

**Ezekiel 37:2 He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry.**

**He caused me** - God's sovereignty, man's responsibility.

**Among them** - The exiles in Babylon who had heard of the defeat of Judah and Jerusalem and the destruction of the Holy Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and were justifiably deeply distressed and relatively hopeless regarding God's future blessings on the nation of Israel. The prophecy of the dry bones being revived was the message of hope and encouragement they needed.

**Round about** - Hebrew reads "and he made me pass over them, around, around."

**Behold...lo-** ([hinneh](#)) (9x in 8v in Chapter 37 - Ezek 37:2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21) Even though the **NAS** translates with two words, the same interjection **hinneh** is used twice. **Hinneh** calls attention to the text and directs the reader to give special attention. It is given to heighten the reader's or hearer's awareness that what follows is truth that must be heard and/or heeded. The idea is "Listen up! Pay attention!"

**Spurgeon on "behold"** (in English) - "Behold" is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation.

**Behold** ([02009](#)) ([hinneh](#)) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of **hinneh** in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." **Hinneh** is often used in the idiom "Here I am" in Ge 22:1, 7, 11 Ge 27:1, 18, Ge 31:11, Ge 46:2 Ex 3:4 1Sa 3:4, 3:16, 12:3, 2Sa 1:7, Isa 52:6, Isa 58:9. **Hinneh** is used most often to point out people but also to point out things (Ge 31:41, 17:4). God uses **hinneh** to grab man's attention before He brings destruction (Ge 6:13, 17). God uses **hinneh** when He establishes covenants (Ge 9:9, 15:12, 17 [when Jehovah cut the Abrahamic covenant], Ge 17:4, cp Ge 28:13, 15), when He provided a sacrificial substitute for Isaac (foreshadowing His giving us His only Son!) (Ge 22:13). **Hinneh** marks the "chance (The Providence of God)" arrival of Boaz at the field where Ruth was gleaning (Ru 2:4-[read about this "chance romance"](#) - Indeed, "Behold!"). **Hinneh** is used to announce the Lord's sending of a child as a sign and a prophecy of [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#), the Messiah (Isa. 7:14-[note](#)). In fact W E Vine says that it is notable that when **behold** (**hinneh**) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances.

**On the surface of the valley** - Notice the bones were not buried in graves.

**They were very dry** - Dry bones are dead bones and in context depict the nation of Israel which for the most part is spiritually dead (See Study of the Remnant for exceptions)

**Ezekiel 37:3 He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know!"**

**Son of man** - God's name for Ezekiel, but in the NT God's name for the Son of God.

**Can these bones live?** - In a sense this is a rhetorical question. God can cause anything to live.

**O Lord GOD, You know** - Good answer! Ezekiel correctly answers that only the Lord knows the answer to that question. In one sense this should be the mindset of every believer-we worship a God Who knows all, the beginning from the end, the alpha and the omega and everything in between. When we walk through the dark night spiritually, God grant us the remembrance that this One is our God. See **Omniscience of God**

**Ezekiel 37:4 Again He said to me, "Prophesy over these bones and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!'"**

- **Prophesy:** Eze 37:11,15,16 Nu 20:8 1Ki 13:2 Mt 21:21 Jn 2:5
- **O dry bones** - Ezek 36:1 Isa 26:19 42:18 Jer 22:29 Mic 6:2 Jn 5:25,28,29

**Prophesy** - A command to speak with divine inspiration, proclaiming what God wants to make known, which was heretofore unknown.

**O dry bones** - In context, this is symbolic language. What do bones do for a body? They provide support. Just break a bone, like I did in 2011 and you will quickly discover the function of bones.

**Hear the word of the LORD** - God's Word is life giving. The Spirit uses God's Word to bring life. Compare Jesus' words...

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. (Jn 6:63)

**For (Term of explanation** = explains Deut 32:46. **What is Moses explaining?**) it is not an idle **word** for you; indeed **it** is your life (**What is Israel's life? And ours beloved!**). And by this **word** you will prolong your days in the land (See the contrast in Deut 30:17-18), which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. (Deut 32:47)

**The Word of the LORD** - 257x in 255 verses in NAS (Note prominence in the Exilic Prophet Ezekiel! The Temple destroyed and yet the God in His mercy still spoke His Word to a disobedient, disciplined people - Is that not true in our individual lives beloved? How great and merciful, mercy filled is our God! -

Ge 15:1, 4; Ex 9:20-21; Num 3:16; 15:31; 36:5; Deut 5:5; 34:5; Josh 8:8, 27; 1 Sam 3:7, 21; 15:10, 23, 26; 2 Sam 7:4; 12:9; 22:31; 24:11; 1 Kgs 2:27; 6:11; 12:24; 13:1-2, 5, 9, 17-18, 20, 26, 32; 14:18; 15:29; 16:1, 7, 12, 34; 17:2, 5, 8, 16, 24; 18:1, 31; 19:9; 20:35; 21:17, 28; 22:5, 19, 38; 2 Kgs 1:17; 3:12; 4:44; 7:1, 16; 9:26, 36; 10:10, 17; 14:25; 15:12; 20:4, 16, 19; 23:16; 24:2; 1 Chr 10:13; 11:3, 10; 12:23; 15:15; 22:8; 2 Chr 11:2; 12:7; 18:4, 18; 30:12; 34:21; 35:6; 36:21-22; Ezra 1:1; Ps 18:30; 33:4, 6; 105:19;

Isa 1:10; 2:3; 28:13-14; 38:4; 39:5, 8; 66:5;

Jer 1:2, 4, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 31; 6:10; 7:2; 8:9; 9:20; 13:2-3, 8; 14:1; 16:1; 17:15, 20; 18:5; 19:3; 20:8; 21:11; 22:2, 29; 24:4; 25:3; 27:18; 28:12; 29:20, 30; 31:10; 32:6, 8, 26; 33:1, 19, 23; 34:4, 12; 35:12; 36:27; 37:6; 39:15; 42:7, 15; 43:8; 44:24, 26; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34;

Ezek 1:3; 3:16; 6:1, 3; 7:1; 11:14; 12:1,8, 17, 21, 26; 13:1-2; 14:2, 12; 15:1; 16:1, 35; 17:1, 11; 18:1; 20:2, 45,47; 21:1, 8, 18; 22:1, 17, 23; 23:1; 24:1, 15, 20; 25:1, 3; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1, 11, 20; 29:1, 17; 30:1, 20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:1, 23; 34:1, 7, 9; 35:1; 36:1, 4, 16; 37:4, 15; 38:1;

Da 9:2; Hos 1:1; 4:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 7:16; 8:12; Jonah 1:1; 3:1, 3; Mic 1:1; 4:2; Zeph 1:1; 2:5; Hag 1:1, 3; 2:1, 10, 20; Zech 1:1, 7; 4:6, 8; 6:9; 7:1, 4, 8; 8:1, 18; 9:1; 11:11; 12:1; Mal 1:1;

Luke 22:61; Acts 8:25; 11:16; 12:24; 13:44, 48-49; 15:35-36; 16:32; 19:10, 20; 1Th 1:8; 4:15; 2Th 3:1; 1 Pet 1:25

**Ezekiel 37:5 "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life**

- **I will:** Eze 37:9,10,14 Ge 2:7 Ps 104:29,30 Jn 20:22 Ro 8:2 Eph 2:5

**Says the LORD** - Notice how God uses a man, Ezekiel, to speak His Word. In this sense, the prophet Ezekiel not only **spoke forth** the Word of God, but **spoke before** those the events would transpire. Today, there are prophets who **speak forth** the Word of God (using the inspired Word, not new revelation), but in my opinion no longer speak forth **before** things happen in the same sense as did Ezekiel.

**Behold- (hinneh)** is repeated to call the reader to give special attention to what follows. Hinneh is found almost 1000x in the OT - God continually seeks to get wayward man's attention! We don't seek Him, but like the "Hound of Heaven" He pursues us with His great love in Christ!

**I will cause breath to enter you** - I will speaks of God's **Sovereignty** and **Omnipotence**. **Breath** is Hebrew **ruah/ruach** which is also translated **spirit**. Life from the dead (bones) requires divine intervention. God is describing a supernatural event.

**I will** - 16x in 10v = Ezek 37:5, 6, 12, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27. God's **Sovereignty** will permeates Ezekiel 37.

**I will cause** - 18x in 18v in NAS - Ps 45:17; 132:17; Isa 38:8; Jer 15:11, 14; 19:7; 33:15; 49:2; Ezek 32:4, 12; 34:26; 36:11-12, 33; 37:5; Zech 8:12; 11:6; Rev 3:9

**That you may come to life** - That is a **term of explanation** (or here of purpose - explaining the purpose) which obviously explains what happens when **breath** enters the **bones**.

**Ezekiel 37:6 'I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.'"**

**I will** - 177x in 137 verses in Ezekiel - most describe the "will" of God.

**You will know that I am the LORD** - What is the purpose of the fulfillment of this prophecy. That Judah (and all Israel) would know that it was Jehovah Who had spoken these words.

**Know** (repeated in Ezek 37:14) (**yada**) does not mean simply to have knowledge of something. Yada is used in a number of Scriptural context in a protective sense and refers to God's providential care and love, which includes the eternal security of believers and His divine provision. It means that God looks out for the righteous. (Ps 1:6) **Yada** can also speak of intimate acquaintance or of knowing by experience (especially in the Septuagint or Lxx which uses the verb **ginosko**).

The idea of **knowing the LORD** is repeated numerous times in Ezekiel 6:7, 13. Ezek 7:4, 9. Ezek 11:10, 12, 20:38, 28:22-26. 32:15, 34:27. 35:9, 12, 15. 38:23. 39:6, 22, 28. Clearly Jehovah desires to make His Name known!

Specific phrase "**will know that I am the LORD**" most in Ezekiel - 59x in 59v in NAS -

Ex 14:4, 18; Isa 49:23; Ezek 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 27; 11:12; 12:15, 20; 13:14, 21, 23; 14:8; 15:7; 17:24; 20:38, 42, 44; 22:16; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22-24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25-26; 33:29; 34:27; 35:4, 9, 15; 36:11, 23, 38; 37:6, 13, 28; 38:23; 39:6-7, 22, 28; Joel 3:17

**Ezekiel 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.**

**So** - A term of conclusion

**So I prophesied as I was commanded** - A good example for all God's saints to emulate! Remember that so-called **'delayed obedience'** is really a charade which masks our covert (not to God though) "disobedience."

**Behold- (hinneh)** is repeated again (cp Ezek 37:2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21) to call the reader to give special attention to what follows.

**Ezekiel 37:8 And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them.**

**And I looked** - Why? Because God told Ezekiel **"Behold!"** What is God telling you to "Behold" dear reader? Obey Him. Look. You may be surprised at how that which was murky becomes clarified by the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit who always honors obedience (under grace not law). **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** obeyed and "looked" (when he heard Isaiah 45:22KJV preached - see **Spurgeon's Personal Testimony** = a must read) and God saved him and then went on to show him great and mighty things he did not know. And O, the blessing Spurgeon's obedience has been and continues to be to countless numbers of souls.

**Behold-** ([hinneh](#)) is repeated again to call the reader to give special attention to what follows.

**But - term of contrast**

**But there was no breath in them** - Notice the critical contrast - bodies but no **breath**. No life.

**Ezekiel 37:9 Then He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'"**

**Then** - Always be attentive to the conjunction **then**, an **expression of time**, which can be especially in prophetic writings as it gives the reader a clear sense of the sequential occurrence of events. **Then** means "soon after that", "next in order of time", "following next in order" or "next in a series." When you encounter a **"then,"** try to **interrogate this time sensitive word with the 5W/H'S**. You can always ask what happens **"then?"**

**Robin Mark** has a great song that mentions the **"Days of Elijah"** - this song is sure to get your blood pumping as they say...

These are the days of Elijah,  
Declaring the word of the Lord:  
And these are the days of Your servant Moses,  
Righteousness being restored.  
... And though these are days of great trial,  
Of famine and darkness and sword,  
Still, we are the voice in the desert crying  
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'

Behold He comes riding on the clouds,  
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,  
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes.

These are the days of Ezekiel,  
The dry bones becoming as flesh;  
And these are the days of Your servant David,  
Rebuilding a temple of praise.  
These are the days of the harvest,  
The fields are as white in Your world,  
And we are the labourers in Your vineyard,  
Declaring the word of the Lord!

There's no God like Jehovah.  
There's no God like Jehovah!

**Ezekiel 37:10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.**

**As He commanded me** - Immediate obedience!

**Ezekiel 37:11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.'**

## **INTERPRETATION OF THE DRY BONES**

**Then** - expression of time

**These bones are the whole house of Israel**- God is speaking of the nation of Israel

**We are completely cut off** - That is indeed the way it looked at the time of Ezekiel's prophecy - the Northern Kingdom of 10 tribes had been taken captive by the Assyrians and now the Southern Kingdom composed of Judah and Benjamin had been defeated by Nebuchadnezzar and taken into exile in Babylon. Jehovah however is a covenant keeping God and so in this section He prophetically promises and pictures the fact He was not finished with Israel. Why? As mentioned in these notes but always worth reiteration -- because of His unconditional covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). Beloved, when you begin to understand that most (? all) of what God does to His people is based on covenant, you who have entered the New Covenant but grace through faith will come to understand that you can rest secure in the promise that He will never desert you nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5-note)

**Our hope has perished** - The Hebrew word for hope is **tiqvah** which means "wait or to look for with confident, eager expectation, calling for patience, reminding us that the fulfillment of hope lies in the future". **Tiqvah** is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek noun **elpis** which means **absolute assurance of future good**, the way Scripture most often defines "**hope**" - not so, but hope sure! God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy to the despairing exiles that they are incorrect. Their **hope has not perished**. While this prophetic hope, this absolute assurance that God will do good to Israel in the future, will not necessarily be fulfilled in his hearer's lifetime, it will most assuredly be fulfilled! (Cp Joshua 21:45, 23:14, Nu 23:19, Titus 1:2-note, Heb 6:18-note)

**Ezekiel 37:12 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.**

**Behold-** (**hinneh**) is repeated again to call the reader to give special attention to what follows.

**I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people-** My people is spoken to Israel - context rules this interpretation - we are in the "context" of the OT and there is no mention of the church.

To reiterate (because so many fail to see the plain sense of this text) God is addressing this prophetic promise to **Israel** (not to the Church! See related topic - Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?) The context helps us understand that the "graves" refers to places other than the land of Israel.

**My people** - "He calls them "**My people**" when receiving them into favor; but "**thy people**," in addressing His servant, as if He would put them away from Him (Ezek 13:17; 33:2; Ex 32:7). (Jamieson, R, et al - A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments)

**Ezekiel 37:13 "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.**

**Then** - As discussed in Ezekiel 37:9, always be attentive to the conjunction **then**, an **expression of time**, which can be especially in prophetic writings as it gives the reader a clear sense of the sequential occurrence of events. As you **interrogate this time sensitive word with the 5W/H'S**. one question you need to ask in this context is "When is then? What will mark this time?" Ezekiel tells us that this time will be characterized by Israel knowing that Jehovah is the LORD. The second fact Ezekiel gives us is that God will "open their graves." When will they know Jehovah? While there are increasing numbers of Jews in Israel and around the world who are coming to know Jehovah Jesus by grace through faith in the New Covenant He gave first to them (Jer 31:31, 32, Hebrews

8:8-note; **See** New Covenant in the Old Testament; Why the New is Better; Abrahamic vs Old vs New), the fulfillment of this passage awaits the Second Coming of the Messiah, the Deliverer, at which time "all Israel will be saved." (Ro 11:26)

**When I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves**- This is figurative language which describes giving spiritual life **in Christ** to those who are spiritually dead **in Adam** (1Cor 15:22) and unless they receive Christ as their new life, they will spend eternity separated from the glory of Christ. **Dear reader, you have received Christ by grace through faith haven't you?**

**John MacArthur** writes that Ezekiel 37:11-13 is "the key to the interpretation of the vision. It is the resurrection and salvation of Israel."

Ezekiel is describing "salvation" of the nation and salvation of individual Jews who receive Messiah as Redeemer. **Henry Morris** explains it this way...

The first part of this "dry-bones" prophesy (Ezekiel 37:8) was evidently fulfilled with the worldwide return of Jews to Israel and the official recognition of the nation in 1948. The true (spiritual) regeneration of the nation (Romans 11:26), however, when the Holy Spirit will be in them, awaits their acceptance of Christ when He returns (Zechariah 12:10).

**Comment:** Israel's return to the land in 1948 was and still is to this day largely in unbelief in Messiah. But the when the Deliverer returns, one-third (Zech 13:8, 9, the "all" of Ro 11:26) of the individual souls will be regenerated by the Spirit of Christ. These are the Jews who in fact will enter into the Millennial Kingdom and populate the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Gaebelein** adds that...

When we read here in Ezekiel of **graves**, it must not be taken to mean literal **graves**; the **graves** are symbolical of the nation as being buried among the Gentiles.

If these dry bones meant the physical dead of the nation, how could it be explained that they speak and say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost?" The same figure of speech is used in the New Testament. Of the prodigal it is said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke 15:24). Yet he was not physically dead, nor was he made alive physically. Therefore, this vision has nothing whatever to do with a physical resurrection. The late Dr. Bullinger, whose erroneous suggestions have led astray some, also taught that the vision of the dry bones includes resurrection as well as restoration.

Equally bad is that spiritualizing method (**Ed: A very dangerous practice if one seeks to accurately interpret the Bible, especially the prophetic passages - See [Allegorizing and Spiritualizing the Truth](#)**) which takes a vision like this, as well as the hundreds of promises of a coming restoration, and applies it all to the church, ignoring totally the claims of Israel and their promised future of glory. This is the general trend of commentators. (Ibid)

**Ezekiel 37:14 "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."**

**I will put My Spirit within you** - In the context of the previous chapter, this is clearly a reference to the Holy Spirit and the regeneration or new birth that only He can create (John 3:3, 5, 6 7). In Ezekiel 36:27 God promised...

And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (cp God's Provision = Php 2:13NLT-note), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (cp Man's Responsibility = Php 2:12b-note). (Ezekiel 36:27)

**Comment:** Do not miss the truth that you cannot keep God's laws in your own strength. You cannot obey His commands in your strength. We are spiritual beggars and God makes us supernaturally rich by giving us of the Spirit of Christ. Our job now is to learn to listen and yield to the Spirit in us and He will enable us to keep the law and obey the commands. Anything short of total, absolute dependence on the Spirit will indubitably lead you into legalism and bondage to the law, because the "fallen flesh" is actually stirred into action or aroused by the law! (See Ro 7:5, 6-note)

**Jesus** spoke a similar truth to the Jews who were following Him some 500 years later...

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. (John 6:63)

**Comment:** Most of the Jewish hearers refused to accept Jesus' words (John 6:55-58, 60-61, 64, 66) One wonders how many of the actual hearers of Ezekiel's words received those words and entered into the Kingdom of God by grace through faith?

**Then** - What happens "then?" Two things will happen - (1) God promised a physical return of the Jews to the land of Israel (we have seen a **partial fulfillment** of this in our day, for the Jews do not yet occupy all the land which God promised to Abraham) and (2) God promised that Israel will know Jehovah (Jesus) intimately and personally. **Why?** Because the Spirit has given Israel new birth (cp Zech 12:10, Ro 11:26). In summary, in Ezekiel 37 God promises that Israel will one day experience both complete **physical** and **spiritual renewal**. Paul refers especially to this spiritual renewal in Romans 11 asking rhetorically...

For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Romans 11:15-note)

### Ezekiel 37:15 The word of the LORD came again to me saying

Ezekiel is not speculating or postulating but is proclaiming truth, performing the function of God's "mouth piece."

Ezekiel 37:16 "And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.'

## THE PROPHETIC SIGN OF TWO STICKS

**Take for yourself one stick** - God gives Ezekiel a picture of what He will do with the divided nation of Israel in the end times.

Most commentators interpret the "Two Sticks" as a **Prophetic Sign**, which was a dynamic "visual aid" performed in public to increase the impact of the prophet's message and in a sense to help the hearers who witnessed the signs to "feel" the truth as much as to hear the truth. In short, the point of these "visual aids" was to cause the message to be embedded unforgettably into the people's hearts. Ezekiel was inspired by the Spirit to give 10 messages using signs.

### SUMMARY OF EZEKIEL'S 10 PROPHETIC SIGNS

SIGN	TEACHING	PASSAGE
1. Sign of the Brick	Jerusalem's siege and fall	Ezekiel 4:1-3
2. Sign of the Prophet's Posture	Discomforts of captivity	Ezekiel 4:4-8
3. Sign of Famine	Deprivations of captivity	Ezekiel 4:9-17
4. Sign of the Knife and Razor	Utter destruction of the city	Ezekiel 5:1-17
5. Sign of House Moving	Removal to another land	Ezekiel 12:1-7, 17-20
6. Sign of the Sharpened Sword	Judgment imminent	Ezekiel 21:1-17
7. Sign of Nebuchadnezzar's Sword	Babylon the captor	Ezekiel 21:18-23
8. Sign of the Smelting Furnace	Judgment and purging	Ezekiel 22:17-31
9. Sign of Ezekiel's Wife's Death	Blessings forfeited	Ezekiel 24:15-27
10. Sign of the Two Sticks	Reunion of Israel and Judah	Ezekiel 37:15-17

From: Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament

**Ezekiel 37:17 "Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand"**

**Then** - Always be attentive to the conjunction **then**, an **expression of time**, which can be especially in prophetic writings as it gives the reader a clear sense of the sequential occurrence of events. **Then** means "soon after that", "next in order of time", "following next in order" or "next in a series." When you encounter a "**then**," try to **interrogate this time sensitive word with the 5W/H'S**. You can always ask what happens "**then**?"

**That they may become one** - God uses **figurative language** to picture reunification of the nation of Israel.

**Ezekiel 37:18 "When the sons of your people speak to you saying, 'Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?'"**

## **INTERPRETATION OF THE TWO STICKS**

**Declare to us what you mean by these** - (Scripture is the best "interpreter" of Scripture) The interpretation follows in Ezekiel 37:19-27.

**Ezekiel 37:19 say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand."'**

**Behold-** (**hinneh**) is repeated again (cp Ezek 37:2) to call the reader to give special attention to what follows.

**They will be one** - The divided kingdom is reunited into one nation of Israel. In other words, God will restore union between Israel and Judah (Ezekiel 37:19, 21, 22). This prophecy will be fulfilled when Messiah returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

It is worth noting that God gave similar prophecies of reunion of Judah and Ephraim (the house of Israel in this context referring to the 10 northern tribes) in Isaiah 11:12, 13; Jeremiah 3:18 and Hosea 1:11.

**In My hand** - Implies that God is in control and the unified nation finally allows Him to be their Lord and Master.

**Ezekiel 37:20 "The sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes"**

**Before their eyes** - Like the old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words!"

**Ezekiel 37:21 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;'"**

**Behold-** (**hinneh**) is repeated again (cp Ezek 37:2) to call the reader to give special attention to what follows.

**I will take...I will gather** - The repetition of "I will" speaks of God's sovereign promise and power to perform. He is omnipotent! What He promises is as good as done! Here the **Lord God** promises the regathering of the nation of Israel. There has been some "regathering" of Jews to the land of Israel in the 20th century (especially since May, 1948 when the United Nations granted statehood to Israel), but the final regathering of Jews to their land will be at the end of this age when the Messiah, the Deliverer (Ro 11:26) returns and takes "away their sins." (Ro 11:27)

Even in the first section of Ezekiel (see diagram at top of this page) that deals primarily with prophecy of divine judgment, we find the hope filled prediction of regathering of Israel...

Thus says the Lord God, "When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples (Gentiles) among whom they are scattered, and will manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land

which I gave to My servant Jacob (The promise of "the land" to Abraham is finally fully fulfilled). They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God." (Ezekiel 28:25-26)

**Comment:** This prophetic promise will be fulfilled in the Messiah's **Millennial Kingdom**.

**Their own land** - It is Israel's land not because they deserved it or earned it but because of God's unconditional promise to Abraham...

Genesis 13:15 All **the land** which you see, **I will give it to you and to your descendants forever**. "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

Genesis 15:18 On that day the LORD made (cut) a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants **I have given this land**, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite." (See also Ex 23:31, 1Ki 4:21)

Genesis 17:8 "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, **the land of your sojournings**, all the land of Canaan, for an **everlasting possession**; and **I will be their God**. (This is one of the major components of the covenant God cut with Abraham and then the New Covenant God promised to Israel. Cp Ezek 37:23)"

**Comment:** The Jews' ownership of the land depends solely on God's gracious covenant with Abraham: God gave them the land. But their possession and enjoyment of the land depends on their faithfulness to obey the Lord. This was the theme of Moses' messages in Deuteronomy. More than 60x in that book, Moses told the people they would inherit or possess the land; and at least 25x, Moses reminded them that the land was a gift from the Lord. God's name was there (Dt 12:5, 11, 21), and He would watch over the land to bless it, IF His people walked in His ways. During the reigns of David and Solomon, the people enjoyed their inheritance and served the Lord faithfully. But after the kingdom divided, Israel and Judah both decayed spiritually (except for occasional interludes of revival) and ended up in bondage: Assyria defeated Israel, and Babylon conquered Judah. It was then that God disciplined His people outside their land. It was as though He were saying, "You have polluted My land with your idols, so I will put you in a land that is addicted to idols. Get your fill of it! After you have been away from your land for seventy years, maybe you will learn to appreciate what I gave you." God permitted a remnant to return to the land, rebuild the city and the temple, and restore the nation; but it never became a great power again. However, whether Israel is faithful or faithless, the land belongs to her; and one day she will inherit it and enjoy it to the glory of God. Israel's title deed to the land is a vi

**Ezekiel 37:22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.**

**I will make them one nation** - The kingdom of Israel which God divided in 931BC, He will one day (at the **Second Coming**) reunite into a single kingdom.

**One king will be king over all of them** - Ezek 37:24 describes David as "king over them" and I interpret this as a reference to a literal David, resurrected from the dead. But see the notes for alternative interpretation by many commentators).

Observe Jeremiah 30:9...

(**Context** = Time of Jacob's distress [**Great Tribulation**] = Jer 30:7-note and Jer 30:8 describes the beginning of the **Millennium**) But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. (Jer 30:9-note).

**Comment:** The question is this -- how many individuals do you see in this passage? Are there not two who Israel will "serve" - **Jehovah-Jesus** and **David**? And notice how **David** "gets on the scene" so to speak - God will raise him up! This certainly suggest two kings. Notice also that the Septuagint translates "I will raise up" with the Greek verb **anistemi**, the word which frequently refers to **resurrection** in the New Testament (eg, Mt 24:46, 28:6, 1Cor 6:14, Jn 6:39).

**The land** - This specific phrase refers to the "the land" promised to Abraham in the God's covenant with him.

**Ezekiel 37:23** "They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.

**They will no longer defile themselves** - **They** refers to the reunified nation of Israel, composed of reborn believers in Messiah.

The prophet Daniel describes this future time when Israel will **no longer defile themselves**...

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people (Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. (Daniel 9:24-note)

**Comment:** When the 490 years are completed, Messiah will return (Second Coming) and Israel will be given a new heart and a new Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, 27 ~ the New Covenant) and be enabled to "finish the transgression", their root sin of rebellion against the lordship of Jehovah, Who will rule over them in the **Millennium**.

**Idols** (01544) (**gillul/gillulim** - latter is the plural form = all OT uses are plural) means logs, blocks, shapeless things. This word describes "an object (not necessarily three dimensional) which has been formed to resemble a person, god, animal." (Louw-Nida). Notably, the root *galal* also produced the Hebrew noun גַּל (gel) or גִּלְגַּל (gelel), meaning "dung" or excrement

**Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary** -Of the main words for idol, this term always occurs in the plural form. Of the forty-seven occurrences, thirty-eight are in Ezekiel. The basic meaning of this word is "logs," "blocks" or "shapeless things." It is used to mock the pagan gods, and it always views idols as contemptuous things (1 Ki. 15:12; Deut. 29:17; Ezek. 6:4). Idols are always an **abomination**, and they pollute the people and the land. The word is often used by Ezekiel parallel to the noun *tāmfi*, "to be unclean," "to defile oneself", thus strengthening the etymological argument to associate the noun with dung. The prime indictment of Judah communicated by Ezekiel was idolatry (see ch. 16). This defilement forced the Spirit of Yahweh to depart from the Temple (chs. 9-11), as the Temple itself was defiled by idolatry (Ezek 8:9f). Idolatry was a serious offense for the individual, as Yahweh promises those who fall down before idols in worship will fall down before them dead (Ezek 6:4). The usages of the noun outside of Ezekiel also point out that idols defile the individual and society causing judgment to fall.

Animal and human feces often form round lumps, so ancient Hebrews used the same "round" root to describe droppings. The term *gillulim* seems to deliberately **echo** this word for dung (*gel/gelal*) by sound – essentially a pun. Medieval commentators like Ibn Ezra (12th century) already noticed that *gillulim* sounds like *gelal* (dung) and considered the term an "outrageous and denigrating" nickname for idols as "**dung pellets**" Modern scholars likewise conclude that *gillulim* stems from a single root *gll* with two related meanings – "round, roll" and by extension "**dung**" – and that the biblical writers intentionally exploited the vulgar sense to mock idols

**HCSB Study Bible** - Ezekiel's favorite word for idol (Hb *gillulim*) is based on the root *gll*, which means "to roll." Many believe the term is associated with round dung pellets, which would graphically express Ezekiel's disposition toward useless idols.

**NKJV Study Bible** - The word *gillulim* may be related to a similar Hebrew expression meaning "dung pellets." Later Jewish commentators mocked the *gillulim* as the "dung idols," idols as worthless as dung.

**Mounce** - Some scholars speculate that *gillûlîm* comes from the Heb. word for "dung, manure." Thus, *gillûlîm* ("idols") are as worthless as dung.

**Homan Treasury of Bible Words** - The prophet Ezekiel, who followed his fellow Israelites in 597 B.C. into exile, warned the exiles of the danger of worshiping idols. The Hebrew word *gillulim* is first used in Ezekiel 6:4 in a threatening prophecy, in which God declares that He will slay the people of Jerusalem and Judah in the very presence of their "idols." The word *gillulim* is used about forty times in Ezekiel. It is a derisive, almost lewd term. It comes from the root of *galal*, "to roll" or "to roll away," and literally means "**dung pellets**," or "**dungy things**." The prophets wasted no time seeking words to express their disgust of idols. "Idols" is a rather euphemistic translation of this word, for the word expresses Ezekiel's hatred and disgust for Israel's idols. They were worth no more than **dung**—yet Israel was worshiping them instead of their living God.

Webster's definition of an **idol** is interesting to ponder

[Middle English, from Old French *idole*, from Late Latin *idolum*, from Greek *eidōlon* image, idol; akin to Greek *eidōs* form] **1**: a representation or symbol of an object of worship; broadly : a false god; a material object, esp a carved image, that is worshipped as a god. An image, form or representation, usually of a man or other animal, consecrated as an object of worship; a pagan deity. Idols are usually statues or images, carved out of wood or stone, or formed of metals, particularly silver or gold. **2a** : a likeness of something **2b** obsolete : **PRETENDER, IMPOSTOR** **3**: a form or appearance visible but without substance <an enchanted phantom, a lifeless idol —P. B. Shelley **4** : an object of extreme devotion; **Any thing on which we set our affections; that to which we indulge an excessive and sinful attachment.** **5** : a false conception : **FALLACY**

**Idols** is translated in this verse in the LXX with the Greek word **eidolon**. What effect do **idols** have on our hands and heart? (God's solution = 2Cor 7:1-note).

**TWOT** comments that...

Ezekiel who has thirty-eight of the forty-seven occurrences of *gillûlim* denounces idolatry as infidelity and prostitution (Ezek 16:36; 37:23). Good Israelites have not "lifted up their eyes to idols," while the wicked have done so (Ezek 18:6, 12, 15). Ezekiel reminds the people that God told them not to defile themselves "with the idols of Egypt." Nevertheless "their heart went after" them (Ezek 20:7, 8, 16, 18, 24). They were not to "pollute themselves" with idols (Ezek 20:31). In dramatic irony the prophet says: "Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols" (Ezek 20:39). Again he declares that Israel works against herself by idolatry and defiles herself (Ezek 22:3, 4; 23:7). They are polluted with idols of Babylonia and Assyria (Ezek 23:30) and have followed heathen idolatry to the extent of killing their children in sacrifice to idols and so they will "bear the sins of their idols" (Ezek 23:39, 49), but the Lord will destroy the idols of Egypt (Ezek 30:13).

When Ezekiel hears that Jerusalem is destroyed, he says that the people do not possess the land because of their idolatry (Ezek 33:25; 36:18, 25). Only twice more does Ezekiel refer to idols and in quite a different vein. He predicts that Judah and Israel will be united in their land and will not defile themselves any more with idols (Ezek 37:23). In the restoration the priests and Levites who went astray will be punished by a lowering of rank and given a less important activity in the new sanctuary. Only the Zadokite priests who remained true to the Lord will serve in the high office of priest (Ezek 44:10, 12). ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

Other words for **idols** are:

**selem** "image," which emphasizes its representational character (used seven times);

**semel** of uncertain etymology (5x);

**terapim**, apparently meaning a "thing of shame" used for Laban's household gods stolen by Rachel;

**mippeleset** "thing of horror";

'**elil** "empty or meaningless thing";

'**awen** "sinful thing" BDB (KB suggests, a "thing of mystery" from a possible etymology, but BDB is better on the basis of the usage of 'awen).

**ashera**, which are cult objects, perhaps sacred poles, but are more symbols of the goddess 'ashera rather than idols in the normal sense.

## DICTIONARY ARTICLES ON IDOL/IDOLATRY

- [Idol, Idolatry](#) - Baker Evangelical Dictionary
- [Idolatry](#) - Naves (Huge list)
- [Idolatry](#) - Torrey's topic
- [Idolatry](#) - Holman
- [Idolatry](#) - Hastings NT
- [Idolatry](#) - Hastings Dictionary
- [Idolatry](#) - Fausset Bible Dictionary
- [Idolatry](#) - ISBE
- [Idolatry](#) - Encyclopedia Britannica
- [Idolatry](#) - Kittos Biblical Cyclopedia
- [Idolatry and Idols](#) - Jewish Encyclopedia

- [What is the true meaning of the second commandment?](#)
- [What is the definition of idolatry?](#)
- [What is a graven image?](#)
- [What should we learn from the golden calf incident in Exodus 32?](#)
- [Why did people keep family idols in the Bible?](#)
- [What is the significance of high places in the Bible?](#)

## NT WORDS RELATED TO IDOLATRY

- **Idols** (1497) [eidolon](#)
- **Idolatry** (1495) [eidololatreia](#)
- **Idolater** (1496) [eidololatreis](#)

**Idols** - **gillul/gillulim** 48v (see below) and all uses translated "**idols**" in the plural. This makes one think it is hard to just have one idol to satisfy! How wonderful it is that all we need to be fully satisfied is One God! (cf Ps 16:11)

As an interesting exercise consider making a list of what you learn about IDOLATRY just from observing these 48 uses of **gillul/gillulim**. For example:

**Truth about Idolatry from simple word study** -- Lev 26:40 =God's soul abhors His people because of their idolatry (Application: What does He think about me when I place anything in front of Him). Idols are inanimate and are associated with abominations = Dt 29:17. Idols are associated with sexual perversion = 1Ki 15:12. Dumb idols are followed by foolish men = 1Ki 21:26. Idols do not serve those who worship them but those who worship them serve implying they are enslaved! = 2Ki 17:12. **You get the idea! You can come up with an interesting "synopsis" of idolatry in the OT which can be readily applied to our lives.**

Lev 26:30 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your **idols**; for My soul shall abhor you.

Deut 29:17 "Moreover, you have seen their abominations and their **idols** [of] wood, stone, silver, and gold, which [they had] with them);

1Kgs 15:12 He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land, and removed all the **idols** which his fathers had made.

1Kgs 21:26 And he acted very abominably in following **idols**, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the sons of Israel.

2Kgs 17:12 And they served **idols**, concerning which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

2Kgs 21:11 "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who [were] before him, and has also made Judah sin with his **idols**;

2Kgs 21:21 For he walked in all the way that his father had walked, and served the **idols** that his father had served and worshiped them.

2Kgs 23:24 Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the **idols** and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

Jer 50:2 "Declare and proclaim among the nations. Proclaim it and lift up a standard. Do not conceal [it but] say, 'Babylon has been captured, Bel has been put to shame, Marduk has been shattered; Her images have been put to shame, her idols have been shattered.'

Ezekiel 6:4 "So your altars will become desolate and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will make your slain fall in front of your **idols**. 5 "I will also lay the dead bodies of the sons of Israel in front of their **idols**; and I will scatter your bones around your altars. 6 "In all your dwellings, cities will become waste and the high places will be desolate, that your altars may become waste and desolate, your **idols** may be broken and brought to an end, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be blotted out....9 "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me, and by their eyes which played the harlot after their **idols**; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations.....13 "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when their slain are among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on all the tops of the mountains, under every green tree and under every leafy oak--

the places where they offered soothing aroma to all their **idols**.

Ezekiel 8:10 So I entered and looked, and behold, every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things, with all the **idols** of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around.

Ezekiel 14:3 "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? 4 "Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, 5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.'" "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 7 "For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the LORD will be brought to answer him in My own person.

Ezekiel 16:36 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols,

Ezekiel 18:6 and does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period--....12 oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, but lifts up his eyes to the idols and commits abomination,....15 "He does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife,

Ezekiel 20:7 "I said to them, 'Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the **idols** of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.' 8 But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the **idols** of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt....16 because they rejected My ordinances, and as for My statutes, they did not walk in them; they even profaned My Sabbaths, for their heart continually went after their **idols**....18 "I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances or defile yourselves with their **idols**....24 because they had not observed My ordinances, but had rejected My statutes and had profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were on the **idols** of their fathers....31 "When you offer your gifts, when you cause your sons to pass through the fire, you are defiling yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you....39 "As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD, "Go, serve everyone his **idols**; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols.

Ezekiel 22:3 "You shall say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "A city shedding blood in her midst, so that her time will come, and that makes idols, contrary to her interest, for defilement! 4 "You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by your idols which you have made. Thus you have brought your day near and have come to your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the lands.

Ezekiel 23:7 "She bestowed her harlotries on them, all of whom were the choicest men of Assyria; and with all whom she lusted after, with all their idols she defiled herself....30 'These things will be done to you because you have played the harlot with the nations, because you have defiled yourself with their idols....37 "For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. Thus they have committed adultery with their idols and even caused their sons, whom they bore to Me, to pass through the fire to them as food....39 "For when they had slaughtered their children for their idols, they entered My sanctuary on the same day to profane it; and lo, thus they did within My house....49 'Your lewdness will be requited upon you, and you will bear the penalty of worshipping your idols; thus you will know that I am the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 30:13 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also destroy the idols And make the images cease from Memphis. And there will no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt; And I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 33:25 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You eat meat with the blood in it, lift up your eyes to your idols as you shed blood. Should you then possess the land?

Ezekiel 36:18 "Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols.....25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Ezekiel 37:23 "They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 44:10 "But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me (**note the order - first leave God, then go**) after their **idols**, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity....12 "Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity.

## **NAVE'S TOPIC: IDOLATRY.**

### **Wicked Practices of**

Human sacrifices, Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kin. 3:26, 27; 16:3; 17:17, 18; 21:6; 23:10; 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6; Psa. 106:37, 38; Isa. 57:5; Jer. 7:31; 19:4-7; 32:35; Ezek. 16:20, 21; 20:26, 31; 23:37, 39; Mic. 6:7; practices of, relating to the dead, Deut. 14:1; licentiousness of, Ex. 32:6, 25; Num. 25:1-3; 1 Kin. 14:24; 15:12; 2 Kin. 17:30 (Succoth-benoth in the text implies unmentionable licentiousness.); 2 Kin. 23:7; Ezek. 16:17; Ezek 23:1-44; Hos. 4:12-14; Amos 2:8; Mic. 1:7; Rom. 1:24, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 10:7, 8; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4; Rev. 2:14, 20-22; 9:20, 21; 14:8; 17:1-6.

### **Other Customs of**

Offered burnt offerings, Ex. 32:6; 1 Kin. 18:26; Acts 14:13; libations, Isa. 57:6; 65:11; Jer. 7:18; 19:13; 32:29; 44:17, 19, 25; Ezek. 20:28; of wine, Deut. 32:38; of blood, Psa. 16:4; Zech. 9:7; grain offerings, Isa. 57:6; Jer. 7:18; 44:17; Ezek. 16:19; peace offerings, Ex. 32:6.

Incense burned on altars, 1 Kin. 12:33; 2 Chr. 30:14; 34:25; Isa. 65:3; Jer. 1:16; 11:12, 17; 44:3; 48:35; Ezek. 16:18; 23:41; Hos. 11:2.

Prayers to idols, Judg. 10:14; Isa. 44:17; 45:20; 46:7; Jonah 1:5. Praise, Judg. 16:24; Dan. 5:4.

Singing and dancing, Ex. 32:18, 19.

Music, Dan. 3:5-7.

Cutting the flesh, 1 Kin. 18:28; Jer. 41:5.

Kissing, 1 Kin. 19:18; Hos. 13:2; Job 31:27

Bowing, 1 Kin. 19:18; 2 Kin. 5:18.

Tithes and gifts, 2 Kin. 23:11; Dan. 11:38; Amos 4:4, 5.

Aual Feasts - 1 Kin. 12:32; Ezek. 18:6, 11, 12, 15; 22:9; Dan. 3:2, 3.

### **Objects of Idolatry:**

Sun, moon, and stars, Deut. 4:19; 2 Kin. 17:16; 21:3, 5; 2 Chr. 33:3, 5; Job 31:26-28; Jer. 7:17-20; 8:2; Ezek. 8:15, 16; Zeph. 1:4, 5; Acts 7:42.

Images of angels, Col. 2:18; animals, Rom. 1:23.

Gods of Egypt, Ex. 12:12.

Golden calf, Ex. 32:4.

Brazen serpent, 2 Kin. 18:4.

Net and drag, Hab. 1:16.

Pictures, Num. 33:52; Isa. 2:16.

Pictures on walls, Ezek. 8:10.

Earrings, Gen. 35:4.

## Denunciations Against

Gen. 35:2; Ex. 20:3-6, 23 Deut. 5:7-9. Ex. 23:13 1 Cor. 10:7. Lev. 19:4; Lev. 26:1, 30 Deut. 16:21, 22. Deut. 4:15, 16, 15-23; Deut. 4:25-28; 11:16-17, Deut 11:28; 28:15-68; 30:17, 18; 31:16-21, 29; 32:15-26; 1 Kin. 9:6-9. Deut 12:31; Deut. 27:15 Ex. 34:17. 1 Sam. 15:23; Job 31:26-28; Psa. 16:4; Psa 44:20, 21; Psa. 59:8; Psa. 79:6; Psa. 81:9; Psa. 97:7; Isa. 42:17 Isa 45:16. Joel 3:12; Jonah 2:8; Mic. 5:15; Hab. 1:16; Acts 15:29 v. 20;; 1 Cor. 8:1-13. Acts 17:16; Rom. 1:25; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Cor. 10:14, 20, 21,22.; 1John 5:21; Rev. 21:8 Rev. 22:15.

## Warnings Against, and Punishments of

Deut. 17:2-5; 2 Chr. 28:23; Neh. 9:27-37; Psa. 78:58-64; 106:34-42; Isa. 1:29-31; 2:6-22; 30:22; 57:3-13; 65:3-7; Jer. 1:15, 16; 3:1-11; 5:1-17; 7; 8:1, 2, 19; 13:9-27; 16; 17:1-6; 18:13-15; 19; 22:9; 32:35; 44; 48:8; Ezek 6:1ff; Ezek 7:19; 8:5-18; Ezek 9:1ff; Ezek 14:1-14; Ezek 16:1ff; Ezek 20:1ff; 22:4; Ezek 23:1ff; 44:10-12; Hos. 1:2; 2:2-5; 4:12-19; 5:1-3; 8:5-14; 9:10; 10; 11:2; 12:11-14; 13:1-4; 14:8; Amos 3:14; 4:4, 5; 5:5; Mic. 1:1-9; 5:12-14; 6:16; Zeph 1:1ff; Mal. 2:11-13.

## Prophecies Relating to

Ex. 12:12 Num. 33:4. Isa. 2:18, 20 Isa. 31:7. Isa. 17:7, 8; Isa. 19:1; Isa. 27:9; Jer. 10:11, 15; Jer. 51:44, 47, 52;; Isa. 21:9. Ezek. 43:7-9; Hos. 10:2; Mic. 5:13; Zeph. 2:11; Zech. 13:2

## Folly of

Deut. 4:28; 1 Kin. 18:27 Judg. 6:31; 1 Sam. 5:3, 4. 2 Chr. 25:15 1 Sam. 12:21; 2 Kin. 3:13; Isa. 16:12; 36:18. 2 Chr. 28:22, 23; Psa. 115:4, 5, 8 Psa. 96:5; 135:15-18; Isa. 2:8. Isa. 40:12-26; Isa. 41:23, 24, 26-29.; Isa. 44:19, 9-20.; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 46:1, 2, 6, 7; Isa. 47:13, 14, 12-15; 2 Kin. 19:18; Isa. 37:19; Zech. 10:2. Isa. 57:13; Jer. 2:28 Deut. 32:37, 38; Judg. 10:14. Jer. 10:5, 3-16;; Jer. 48:13; 51:17; Hab. 2:18, 19. Jer. 11:12; Jer. 14:22; Jer. 16:19, 20; Hos. 8:5, 6 Ex. 32:20; Psa. 106:20. Acts 14:15; Acts 17:22, 23, 29; Rom. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 8:4 with 1 Cor. 8:5; 10:19.1 Cor. 12:2; Gal. 4:8; Rev. 9:20 Deut. 4:28; Dan. 5:23

**I will deliver them** - This is a promise from the **Lord God**, a promise to Israel, a promise based on Jehovah's unconditional covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. A promise to be fulfilled when Messiah comes the Second time. In Romans **Paul** describes this event...

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery (musterion), lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in and thus all Israel will be saved (**Ed**: All elect, all who are part of the **remnant**, cp Zech 13:8, 9); just as it is written, "THE **DELIVERER** (The Messiah - rhuomai) WILL COME FROM ZION (Jerusalem), HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB (cp Da 9:24 above)" "AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM (Initially the Abrahamic Covenant culminating in the New Covenant in His blood), WHEN I TAKE AWAY (aphaereo) THEIR SINS (**Ed**: In other words = forgive their sins)." (Romans 11:25-27-note)

**Comment:** Note that the **Septuagint** translates "**I will deliver**" with **rhuomai**, the same verb Paul uses for "**Deliverer**" in Romans 11:26. The idea of rhuomai is to draw or snatch one to oneself, invariably from danger, with an emphasis on the greatness of the peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power. Rhuomai was used in secular Greek to describe a soldier's going to a wounded comrade on the battlefield and carrying him to safety.

**...will cleanse them** - This is an allusion to the New Covenant promises (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

**John MacArthur** summarizes this section...

God made 3 promises that summarized His future plans for Israel: 1) restoration, Ezek 37:21; 2) unification, Ezek 37:22; and 3) purification, Ezek 37:23.

These promises bring to fulfillment: 1) the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Ge 12); 2) the Davidic Covenant (2Sa 7:14-16); and 3) the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31:31-34), respectively.

**But** - Always take note of this conjunction of **contrast**, which marks a change of direction. Pause and ponder what is being contrasted, why, who is involved, etc. In the present context "but" marks a change in direction from sin to the Savior, a change which is motivated by Jehovah's covenant love (His **hesed/chesed/heced**) and His all sufficient grace to "circumcise" a rebellious, hard heart (See **Circumcision Of the Heart**). As an aside, it is not enough to change the environment, for the **heart** of every problem is the **problem of the heart** (all are born in Adam with his "virus" - **the Sin principle or propensity** = Ro 5:12-note - and because this

propensity to sin we commit individual acts of sin against God). God must change the hearts of people so that they want to love Him and do His will. (cp Ro 2:28,29-note) That is why God announced a New Covenant (of grace) to replace the Old Covenant **See New Covenant in the Old Testament**) under which the Jews had lived since the days of Moses, a covenant (of Law) that could specify the *conduct* God desired but not change their *character*.

**And they will be My people, and I will be their God** - This is covenant language! Ultimately it will be fulfilled when all Israel receive and believe in the New Covenant. This will not occur until Messiah returns (**Second Coming**). The exact phrase occurs in the following passages...

Jeremiah 24:7 'And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and **they will be My people, and I will be their God**, for they will return to Me with their whole heart. (Context = Jer 24:5, 6 - This prophecy will be fulfilled at the Second Coming)

**Comment: Whole heart** means their entire lives will be dedicated to Jehovah and they will manifest an absolute commitment to His covenant. Israel will experience spiritual regeneration and not merely national restoration. Only God can create new life within the nation Israel and within every individual who turns in faith and trust to the God of the New Covenant.

Zechariah 8:7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; 8 and I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and **they will be My people and I will be their God** in truth and righteousness.'

**Other passages that have the same idea of God being their God** - (See also Ex 6:7 Ge 17:8 Ex 29:45 Lev 26:45, Jer 31:33, 32:38 Ezek 11:20, 14:11, 34:24, 37:23, 37:27, Zec 8:8, 2Co 6:16, Heb 8:10)

**Zechariah** prophesies...

And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace (unmerited favor) and of supplication (a humbly and earnest entreaty or asking), so that (term of conclusion) they will look on Me Whom they have pierced (Messiah); and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. (Zechariah 12:10-11)

**Ezekiel 37:24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.**

**My servant David will be king over them** - Who does God say will be king over the reunited kingdom of Israel? Notice that it does not say the "**son of David**" but "**My servant David**." Many commentaries see this as a reference to David's "greater Son." (See comments below by Walvoord). If one adheres to the **literal Interpretation** of Scripture where possible (and it is possible in this passage), then this reference seems to be describing a "literal" **David**. How could this occur since David is dead? Is anything too difficult for the Lord? Clearly the answer is "No!" God can and will raise David. The timing of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints is somewhat more problematic, but it would be most reasonable to assume that **David** will be raised before the Millennial reign of Christ. And if we compare this interpretation with Scriptures such as Revelation 19:16-note which identifies Christ as the "**King of kings**," it is not all difficult to see how this passage dovetails with Ezekiel 37:24. Yes, **David** is a king over Israel, but **Christ is King over David**. Luke 1:32-33 does state that "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever" which raises a question regarding the above interpretation. Respected expositors such as John MacArthur feel Ezekiel is referring to the "Son of David" and not to David...

This leader (cf. Ezek 37:24, 25) is the Messiah-King-Shepherd often promised for David's dynasty (Ezek 34:23, 24; Jer 23:5-8; 30:9; Da 2:35, 45; 7:13, 14, 27), who is the one king of Zec 14:9 (cf. Mt 25:31, 34, 40).

**Dr John Walvoord** has some insights that might help guide your interpretation...

A legitimate problem has arisen in the interpretation of the reign of Christ concerning how this relates to various prophecies which speak of David as King in the millennial kingdom. References to this concept are found in Jeremiah 30:9; Jeremiah 33:15-17; Ezekiel 34:23-24; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5, with more indirect references in Isaiah 55:3-4 and Amos 9:11.

Several solutions have been offered to resolve this problem.

One of the most common is to take references to David as indicating Christ Himself as the greater David. Keil and Peters, as well

as Ironside, support this view (cf. Karl Friedrich Keil, The Twelve Minor Prophets, I, 72; Peters, The Theocratic Kingdom, III, 572; and Ironside, Ezekiel the Prophet, p. 262). **There are obvious difficulties, however, in this point of view in that Christ is never referred to as David elsewhere in the Bible though He is frequently called the Son of David, Seed of David, etc.**

**A second view** held by some interpreters is that the reference in some passages is to a future literal **son** of David who will sit on the Davidic throne, but who is not to be identified as Christ. Passages such as Jeremiah 33:15-21-note are cited in support of this view. From many standpoints, however, this is less desirable than the first view. As many have indicated, no one today aside from Christ could prove His kingly lineage among the people of Israel. It is most unlikely that there should be another person closely related to Christ who is a descendant of David other than David himself.

**A third solution** of the problem is more simple and seemingly in keeping with the prophetic references throughout Scripture, namely, that by **David** is meant the **resurrected David** who shares with Christ as prince some of the governmental duties of the millennial kingdom. It should be clear from many Scriptures that the reign of Christ is shared with others. As Newell has written:

"David is not the son of David. Christ, as Son of David, will be King; and David, His father after the flesh, will be prince, during the Millennium."

In the light of many prophecies which promise saints the privilege of reigning with Christ, it would seem most logical that **David the king raised from the dead** should be given a place of prominence in the Davidic kingdom of the millennial reign of Christ. As indicated in Revelation 19:16, Christ is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." This would certainly imply other rulers (cf. Isa. 32:1; Ezek 45:8-9; Matt. 19:28; Luke 19:12-27-note). ([The Doctrine of the Millennium — Part I The Righteous Government of the Millennium](#))

**Ezekiel 37:25 "They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever.**

**They** - Who is "they?" Keeping the context in mind and reading the text literally, the "**they**" clearly refers to those Jews who enter the New Covenant by grace through faith.

**The land** - Again this refers to the land promised to Abraham and the nation of Israel.

**The land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived**- How could this passage be interpreted as anything but literal? Israel will live on it. Period.

**David My servant will be their prince forever** - In case you missed the previous note - Who? **David**. He does not say "Son of David." If he had, clearly it would have been a reference to Messiah. But God says "**David**." **David** will be resurrected at the end of this age (just like all the OT saints, see Da 12:14), and he will rule over Israel in the Millennium and then into eternity in the New Jerusalem, which is **forever!**

Even excellent exegetes like **Dr W A Criswell** (who I greatly respect) somehow fail to interpret this text in its plain, literal sense - Criswell comments on this passage as if it refers to the Messiah

"Certain positive characteristics of the reign of the Messiah are presented: (1) He shall rule forever (v. 25); (2) He shall rule by an everlasting covenant (v. 26); (3) God shall multiply His subjects (v. 26); (4) God will reestablish His sanctuary (v. 26); and (5) the heathen shall know that God has set Israel apart (v. 28)."

While other passages clearly support the validity of Criswell's statements, they are not the conclusion that a natural reading of this specific text (Ezekiel 37:25) and comparison with other OT passages will allow. For example notice what Jeremiah says (and see [Dr Walvoord's preceding comment](#)).

Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's (THE NATION OF ISRAEL'S) distress, But he (ISRAEL) will be saved from it (IT = THE "TIME OF JACOB'S DISTRESS" SYNONYMOUS WITH WHAT JESUS CALLED THE GREAT TRIBULATION; NOTE THAT 2/3'S OF ISRAEL WILL PERISH AND 1/3 WILL COME THROUGH THE FIRE OF THE 3.5 YEAR TRIBULATION - READ Zechariah 13:8-9-note). 8 'It shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their (ISRAEL'S) neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them (ISRAEL) their slaves. 9 'But they shall serve the LORD their God **AND** David their king, whom I will raise up for them. (Jer 30:7-9-note)

**Henry Morris** - After the great day of trouble (GREAT TRIBULATION), when Israel is finally saved and

restored, the whole nation will have recognized and accepted Jesus as their Messiah, the son of David (Acts 15:16; Romans 1:3). But this Scripture, among others including Ezekiel 37:24, indicates that David in his resurrected body will actually reign over the earthly people of Israel during the millennial age. (Matthew 27:52,53 indicates that the believers of the Old Testament days were raised following Christ's resurrection.)

**Ezekiel 37:26 "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever.**

**A covenant (See berit/berith/beriyth )** - In the Old Testament this describes a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh, the parties passing through the flesh saying in essence "Do so to me, just as has happened to the flesh of this animal if I do not keep this agreement."

**Covenant of peace** - This is another name for the New Covenant (**See New Covenant in the Old Testament**), which alone brings peace between God and sinful men, in this context sinful Israel who have by grace believed in the New Covenant in Christ's blood.

(God promises) I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. .(Ezekiel 34:25, 34:22, 23, 24, 26 - describes the time of the Millennium)

**Covenant of peace** - This phrase found 4x in OT - Num 25:12, Isa 54:10, Ezek 34:25, Ezek 37:26

**Everlasting covenant** - Praise God this is a description of the New Covenant.

The writer of Hebrews says...

Now the God of **peace**, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the **eternal covenant**, even Jesus our Lord. (Hebrews 13:20-note)

**My sanctuary (04720)(miqdash)** describes holy or sacred place, a sanctuary - that which has been sanctified or set apart as sacred and holy as opposed to the secular, common, or profane. **Miqdas** usually connotes a sanctuary or the physical place of worship. In the context of Ezekiel's prophecy of the physical and spiritual restoration of Israel, this sanctuary clearly refers to the Millennial Temple

Christ in essence fulfilled of the OT Sanctuary (in both the Wilderness Tabernacle and Solomon Temple), when He "tabernacled" with man in John 1:14-note.

**See Related Resource - CHRIST OUR SANCTUARY**

**Miqdas/miqdash** - 72v in the OT **Note especially the uses of miqdash in Ezekiel 40-48 which describes the Temple of God in the Millennium** -

Ex 15:17; 25:8; Lev 12:4; 16:33; 19:30; Lev 20:3; 21:12, 23; 26:2, 31; Num 3:38; 10:21; 18:1, 29; 19:20; Josh 24:26; 1Chr 22:19; 28:10; 2Chr 20:8; 26:18; 29:21; 30:8; 36:17; Neh 10:39; Ps 68:35; 73:17; 74:7; 78:69; 96:6; Isa 8:14; 16:12; 60:13; 63:18; Jer 17:12; Jer 51:51; Lam 1:10; 2:7, 20;

Ezekiel 5:11; 7:24; 8:6; 9:6; 11:16; 21:2; 23:38, 39; 24:21; 25:3; 28:18; 37:26, 28;

Ezekiel 43:21; 44:1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16; 45:3, 4, 18; 47:12; 48:8, 10, 21

Dan 8:11; 9:17; 11:31; Amos 7:9, 13

In the **Prophecy Knowledge Handbook** John Walvoord comments on Ezekiel 37:26-28

As Jeremiah stated, God predicted here a covenant of peace with Israel which will be "an everlasting covenant" (Ezek 37:26). Though announced in the Old Testament (Jer 31:31-34), it will replace the Mosaic Covenant and **will have its primary fulfillment for Israel** at the time of the Second Coming when Israel is restored nationally and spiritually.

Scholars have puzzled over the precise meaning of the New Covenant, earlier announced by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34). Probably the simplest explanation is that in dying on the cross, God made possible a covenant of grace for those who would trust the Lord. This covenant of grace was the basis for the salvation of every individual, from the time of Adam to the last person who is saved. The New Covenant as applied here to Israel

primarily has a prophetic meaning which was indicated here as being fulfilled in the peace, righteousness, and restoration which will characterize the millennial kingdom. At the time of the fulfillment of this covenant the numbers of Israelites in the land will increase greatly, especially during the millennial kingdom. A preliminary prophecy that God will provide a sanctuary (Ezek 37:28) referred to a **millennial temple** which will be described later in Ezekiel 40-48.

#### Ezekiel 37:27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people

**My dwelling place also will be with them** - This is an amazing passage. The sinless, infinitely holy God, Immanuel, in love draws near to be God with us! Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! **Can you sing these great words from your heart? Have you ever seen yourself as a wretched sinner in need of the Wonderful Savior? That is the true Gospel - the bad news and then the good news!** Don't be deceived! In order to sing this song in His presence throughout the ages, you must be born again (John 3:7) by grace through faith in the New Covenant in (ratified by) Jesus' blood (Lk 22:20, 1Cor 11:25, Rev 5:9-[note](#)).

**Dwelling place (mishkan)** means dwelling place, especially the dwelling place of Jehovah. Mishkan is used in Exodus to indicate the wilderness tabernacle, the temporary lodging of God and His "**Shekinah**" glory among His people, (Lev 26:11).

May our hearts resonate with David's heart, for he was a man after God's own heart...

O LORD, I love the habitation of Thy house,  
And the place where Thy glory dwells (mishkan).  
Psalm 26:8

We see a parallel truth in the **Revelation**...

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, **'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them** (Revelation 21:3-[note](#))

**Comment:** It is notable that God repeatedly emphasizes God's presence with men!

#### Ezekiel 37:28 "And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever."

And the nations will know that I am Jehovah - God is jealous for His glory and His restoration of Israel will give the proper opinion of Him. He is a covenant keeping God and that is worthy of a "**Hallelujah, Praise the Lord! Amen!**"

**The LORD Who Sanctifies** (Ezek 20:12) - In Hebrew this is the great name "Jehovah Meqaddesh"

**See study on The Lord Who Sanctifies**

Dr Walvoord comments that "The restoration of Israel will be a sign to the world so that the nations will know that it will be accomplished by the holy Lord who is able to cleanse Israel and make her holy."