

Hagee: Spiritual Awakening Coming to 'Dry Bones' Israel

God's chosen people, the Jews, and the promised land of Israel are the hub that forms the wheel of prophecy. All end-time prophecy focuses first and foremost on Israel's importance to God and His eternal covenant with them: "All the land of Canaan, where you now live as strangers, I will give to you and to your descendants for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:8). But because of the Jews' disobedience and rebellion, they were scattered around the globe, and control of their promised land of Israel slipped right out of their fingers for hundreds of years.

More than 2,600 years ago the prophet Ezekiel prophesied the resurrection of Israel from the Gentile graves in the lands to which she had been scattered, predicting the rebirth of Israel, which took place on May 14, 1948. Ezekiel also prophesied about the holy war that would take place in Israel some time after Israel's restoration to independence.

God gave Ezekiel a vision of a valley full of dry bones. I want to make it very clear that I do not believe that Ezekiel's vision has anything to do with the resurrection of the dead saints of the church. In Ezekiel 37:11, God told Ezekiel, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." There is no doubt in the text that this could only be Israel.

In a vision, God took Ezekiel to a valley full of dead bones that were very dry and scattered. This was God's physical portrayal of the nation of Israel. Israel ceased to be a nation in A.D. 70 when the Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth by the Roman army under Titus. It would be more than 2,000 years before Israel became a recognized state again in May 1948—and the bones grew very dry!

God asked Ezekiel a perplexing question: "He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'" (Ezek. 37:3).

Ezekiel responded to God by saying, "O Lord God, You know" (v. 3). In other words, he was saying, "I don't see how it's possible. Death has done its work. Life is gone. Lord, if these bones live, it will require the miracle-working power of Jehovah God."

For nearly 50 years I have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to audiences all over the earth. I have stood in churches, cathedrals, auditoriums, football stadiums and a preaching field in Nigeria with more than 3,000,000 people attending. Yet, like Ezekiel, as I have looked over the audiences large and small, I have often thought, "*Can these bones live?*"

In response to Ezekiel's question, God told him to do something very strange. It was the strangest message to the dearest congregation in the history of preaching! God told him to preach the Word of the Lord to the dry bones. "Again He said to me, 'Prophecy over these bones and say to them, "O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord"' (v. 4).

The word "prophecy" doesn't always mean to foretell or to predict. Here, it means to speak out or to preach a message to the people of God. There is supernatural power in the spoken Word of God.

Ezekiel's faith conquered the limitations of his carnal mind, and he obeyed the voice of God. It is a Bible fact: Obedience brings blessing, and disobedience brings judgment. Ezekiel looked at the valley full of scattered, very dry bones and preached this message:

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord."

–Ezekiel 37:5–6

Ezekiel proclaimed that God was going to do a supernatural work that would make those dry, lifeless, scattered bones live again. It would be a reversal of death and corruption.

In perfect obedience to the Word of God, Ezekiel said:

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.

–Ezekiel 37:7–8

Notice that the restoration to life for the bones was a process. It was not an instantaneous event. The bones were dry, scattered, and dead for a very long time. The dry bones in Ezekiel's vision represent the nation of Israel during the Diaspora, beginning in A.D. 70 (Ezek. 37:11). Gradually the bones came together, and the sinews and flesh came upon them.

It was at this point of Israel's gradual restoration that people like Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism, began to call the Jews back to Israel. The "sinews and flesh" continued to come together as the Jews of the earth returned to Eretz, Israel, to drain the swamps and transform the desert into a rose. On May 14, 1948, at 4:32 p.m., the State of Israel, after 2,000 years, was reborn. Ezekiel's prophetic vision was fulfilled:

Then say to them, "Thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land.'"

–Ezekiel 37:21

God made it exceedingly clear that He would bring the Jews back to “their own land.” He would not bring them back to the Palestinians’ land—He would restore them to the promised land of the eternal covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants.

At the conclusion of Ezekiel 37, the nation of Israel had been physically reborn. Today they have a flag; they have a constitution; they have a prime minister and a Knesset. They have a police force, a powerful military and the world’s best intelligence agencies. They have Jerusalem, the city of God. They have a nation. They have everything but spiritual life.

Like the dry bones of Ezekiel 37, Israel awaits the spiritual awakening of the breath of God and to the coming of Messiah.