

Last week we ended with the proposition that the resurrection that Ezekiel addresses in the first part of chapter 37 is dealing with a resurrection that is intrinsically tied to the fact that the house of Israel was dead in their sins and needed to be acted upon from an outside force to bring them back to life.

That outside force was of course God Almighty who tells them in **Ezekiel 37:12** "Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves,

Now the first question we need to ask is what type of people inhabit graves?

And so, if dead people inhabit graves what percentage of them have the ability to come up out of their graves unless God first gives them life?

So, what is the connection between dead people coming up out of their graves in verse 17 and the very dry bones in the valley, simply scattering the ground until God gives the dead bones the ability to come together, as He then animates them with the breath of life?

The two images that we have of the dry bones coming to life and the dead coming up out of the grave are meant to describe the exact same thing, what is commonly called a Hebrew parallelism where one thought is described in two different and yet similar ways.

What is the similarity between the two?

They're both describing dead people whom God must necessarily bring to life.

How are they different?

One is describing dead bones lying on the valley floor while the other is describing dead bodies coming up out of their graves.

Who do the dry bones belong to according to verse 11?

Ezekiel 37:11 ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel;

So, is it safe to say that the bones, in the context of Ezekiel 37, do in fact belong to the house of Israel that is in captivity, and

the reason for their captivity is because of their rebellion as they have rejected their God?

Therefore, because of the deadness of their hearts toward God they are deemed dead and the dry bones would exemplify this point as Ezekiel prophesies over these bones.

Since the next section regarding dead men coming up out of the grave is describing the same spiritual condition of the house of Israel, is it reasonable to conclude that this resurrection spoken of in verses 12-14 is describing how God solves the same problem of bringing both dry bones and dead men in graves back to life?

So, we're not talking about two different things here we're simply looking at the same problem and the same solution from two different angles.

In both instances it is the Spirit of God who initiates this life.

Regarding life being brought to dead dry bones on the valley floor the context in chapter 36 must be brought to bear.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 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. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Likewise as it relates to God bringing dead men out of their graves it is the same Spirit who accomplishes this.

Ezekiel 37:13-14 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. 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."

The question is, since both the dry bones and the dead coming out of their graves is describing the exact same problem for the house of Israel being spiritually dead in their sin, does it then follow that this picture of dead men coming up out of their graves is first and foremost a spiritual resurrection unto life?

And this takes us back to our original question last week, what kind of resurrection is this in light of a passage we read in Revelation?

Revelation 20:4-6 ⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. ***This is the first resurrection.*** ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

By the way, the language of Revelation and Ezekiel are identical in that both books are prophetic utterances to God's people.

Ezekiel 1:1 ^{NAU} Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth *day* of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Revelation 1:1-2 ^{NAU} The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw.

Just as Ezekiel was shown a vision, John also testified to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he *saw*.

And so, what proceeds from this point for Ezekiel is a vision that God is showing Ezekiel to teach the house of Israel the problem they are presently experiencing, found in their rebellion to God and subsequent captivity, but also to teach how a future solution would be found to their sin problem.

Ezekiel 16:59-60 ⁵⁹ For thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath by breaking the covenant. ⁶⁰ "Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

What future everlasting covenant is being spoken of here?

The New Covenant in Christ's blood and resurrection. So, Ezekiel is looking down the road to this everlasting covenant while the book of Revelation is looking back to the everlasting covenant with an eye to the future of the people of this new covenant found in the culmination of this covenant.

And this gets to the issue of who the house of Israel is that Ezekiel addresses.

Ezekiel 37:11 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.'

It is this group of people who will experience this everlasting covenant whose lives will be brought from death to life by God and who will find themselves as being recipients of the Spirit of God.

Ezekiel 37:13-14 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. 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."

When the Lord speaks of putting His Spirit *within* the house of Israel at what time in history is this actually accomplished?

On the day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is something that Jesus promised His disciples before His resurrection.

John 7:38-39 ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Is this promise only for the Jews?

By the way, when Jesus says, He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, He is quoting from Isaiah.

^{NAU} **Isaiah 44:3** 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty *land* And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants;

Is this same promise only for Israel?

No, this promise in Isaiah is for the same group in the gospel of John and that is the house of Israel.

John 14:16-18 ¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

And of course this promise from the Lord was accomplished just as He said.

John 20:20-22 ²⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

So, when Ezekiel identifies all of the house of Israel as receiving the Spirit of God and then we see Jesus breathing on His disciples the breath of life in the N.T. who then must necessarily be of the whole house of Israel?

All of those identified with this promise as they receive Christ as Lord and Savior. Therefore, this promise from Ezekiel must include both Jew and Gentile who are part of the everlasting covenant. And this is why the Jew named Paul could say of this promise that all of those who embrace Christ are the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:14-16 ¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

So, when Ezekiel is addressing this new life given by the Spirit to previously spiritually dead men, as the breath of life brings them into the Kingdom, and as he identifies them as the house of Israel, it is a picture of all of God's people, both Jew and Gentile who enjoy the new life in Christ.

This of course would include the Jews living in Ezekiel's day who were given eyes to see and ears to hear as the Lord gave them life,

but they would be represented in the remnant that God symbolically shows us by bringing that remnant from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

And so, we come full circle as we now know that this resurrection is a spiritual resurrection that John describes in Revelation 20 as the first resurrection from death to life. And this is clearly taught in the N.T.

Romans 6:4-11 ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This is a lengthy passage but it essentially teaches us that everything that Christ accomplished, primarily His defeating death through His resurrection, is now presently given to us. And this is what is meant in verse 11, Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Well, if we are in Christ Jesus who rose from the dead, then those dead bones, those spiritually dead people coming up out of their graves, must necessarily be sharing in a life that defeated death. In this way, you and I who are in Christ are living a resurrection life today through faith in Him.

This is precisely what Paul says a little later in this epistle and it remarkably follows the same pattern we have in Ezekiel.

Romans 8:11 ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Again, let's go back to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 37:12-14 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. 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. 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."

This is a type of resurrection life that Ezekiel is describing, the exact same resurrection life that Paul describes.

Ephesians 2:4-6 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

You and I in Christ have already been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places in a very real sense.

Colossians 2:10-13 ¹⁰ and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which *you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.* ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, *He made you alive together with Him*, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

Ezekiel 36:25-28 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. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [*this is the circumcision made without hands in Col.2:11*] ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ²⁸ "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

The Israel of God that Ezekiel describes in verse 28, that will live in the land that God gave to their forefathers, is the same Israel of God that will one day live in the land given to our forefathers.

And what forefathers and what land was Ezekiel addressing?

Hebrews 11:8-10 ⁸ *By faith Abraham*, when he was called, obeyed by *going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance*; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for *he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God*.

You and I in Christ are who Ezekiel is addressing with the same promise of being given our own land, the land which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God, the new heavens and new earth.

The first resurrection guarantees us that we will never taste of the second death, which is the Lake of fire, which is another way of saying, as Paul does in Rom. 8:1, “there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

The first death is the death we were born into this world with and inherited from the first Adam. That death was first and foremost spiritual in nature as the relationship with God was cut off, but manifested itself in physical death when Adam’s body finally died 900 plus years after being separated from God in the garden.

1 Corinthians 15:22 ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Being made alive in Christ is that first resurrection as we are raised up with Him from death to life, but there is a second resurrection that, though certainly spiritual in nature, is also most physical and Paul puts both resurrections together.

Colossians 3:1-4 ^{NAU} Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

What revealing is Paul talking about regarding Christ and us?

^{NAU} **1 John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

This is the second resurrection which is our physical resurrection from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:41-44 ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

You and I in Christ have tasted the first resurrection as we are raised up with Christ through His resurrection from the dead, but there will be a day when we will experience the second resurrection that Paul speaks of and this physical resurrection will take place on the last day when Christ comes back for His people.

John 6:39-40 ³⁹ "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

It is also on this last day that Christ will usher in His kingdom where you and I in Christ will experience the Kingdom of God being established as the new heavens and new earth, or the city in the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose architect and builder is God.

2 Peter 3:10-13 ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

This is our hope and the hope Ezekiel addresses which our Lord promises will come to pass.

Revelation 21:1-5 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no

longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."