

FPFWC Christian Development



The Prophets Proclaim God's Power

June 2023

Summer Quarter

June 17, 2023

Lesson #3 – God’s Servant-King

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Ezekiel 37:21-28

ICE BREAKERS-

1. What habits can you cultivate that will make you more likely to see hopeless situations from God’s perspective?

Key Verse: “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”—Ezekiel 37:27

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Ezekiel lived at the time Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC (Ezekiel 1:1–2; 33:21). That destruction and accompanying exile was preceded by two other deportations. The first of those came in 605 BC, when Daniel and his friends were taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1–2; Daniel 1:1–6). Ezekiel’s relocation to Babylon became part of the second deportation as he found himself among the 10, 000 of the elite citizenry taken in 597 BC (2 Kings 24:12–14). Daniel and other Jews were taken to serve “in the king’s palace” (Daniel 1:4), while Ezekiel found himself “among the captives by the river of Chebar” where “the hand of the Lord was there upon him” (Ezekiel 1:1, 3).

The book of Ezekiel features many astonishing word pictures. One of the most famous is that of the valley of dry bones, in Ezekiel 37:1–14. It is followed by the much less famous illustration of two sticks in 37:15–28. Both of these metaphors speak of the restoration of Israel while emphasizing different aspects of that reunification. Today’s lesson explores the significance of the metaphor involving the two sticks. As our text opens, Ezekiel had just been directed to show to an audience the stick on which he had written “For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions” and a second stick on which he had written “For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions” (37:16). The explanation follows.

LESSON COMMENTARY

37:18–21. The Lord explained the lesson. This would be a future event, **when the sons of your people ask what you mean**, God will give the answer. He emphasized His role in the restorations: **I will take ... I will put ... they will be one in My hand.** The Lord Himself will unite **Ephraim** and **Judah** into **one in My hand**. God will **gather them from every side and bring them into to their own land.**

37:22. God **will make them one nation in the land** with **one king**, and they **will ... no longer be divided into two kingdoms** (cf. Hs 1:11). The uniting of the sticks pictured God’s restoring and reuniting His people **in the land** as a single nation.

37:23. At that time the nation will **no longer defile themselves with their idols**. They will be transformed because the Lord will **deliver them** from the places where they **sinned** and **cleanse** them, not just wash away dirt, but also make them morally pure (cf. 20:42–44). Then **they will be My people, and I will be their God** (cf. 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:27). This spiritual rejuvenation and reunification will occur in the millennial kingdom.

37:24. The reunited kingdom will be ruled over by **My servant David** as **king over them** (see comments on 34:23–24) and as their **one shepherd** (cf. 34:23).

37:25–28. The key idea of this passage is that the blessings will last forever. The Jewish people **will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant** (cf. 28:25). There are several aspects of the eternal quality of God’s blessing: the Jewish people will inhabit their land **forever** (v. 25); the kingship of Messiah, David’s Son is **forever** (v. 25); the **covenant of peace** (cf. 36:15; 34:25; Is 54:10; Jr 31:31–34) is **everlasting** (Ezk 37:26; cf. 16:60); God’s **sanctuary** will be **in their midst forever** (vv. 26, 28). This prophecy concludes with the promise of God’s presence: **My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people**. Israel’s restored relationship with their God and the literal structure of the **sanctuary in their midst** will be a testimony to **the nations** (the Gentiles) who **will know** (cf. 36:23; 38:16, 23; 39:7) **that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel** (cf. Lv 22:32). This **sanctuary** that will be **in their midst forever** is described in detail in Ezk 40–43.

LESSON NUGGET - Not only will the dead nation receive life, a divided nation will be united in a covenant of peace. There will be no more Ephraim and Judah, but one nation with one king and one temple. According to Ephesians 2, God is doing this today. He is raising lost sinners from the dead (Ephesians 2:1–10) and reconciling Jews and gentiles into one people. The spiritual miracles take place when you and I share the life – giving word in the power of the Spirit of God.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary