

Prophesying New Life

Key Verse: *“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.”*
—Ezekiel 37:1

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 37

THIS SCRIPTURE WAS AD-ressed by the Lord, through the prophet Ezekiel, to fleshly Israel then in captivity in Babylon. The dry bones represented the Israelites themselves. As a people, they had lost heart and hope, and said, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.”—Ezek. 37:11

They had been ‘cut off’ from all tribal and national union. When they looked at their present condition, they were strangers in a strange land. They lived as foreigners without an opportunity for patriotic feelings. If they looked backward, and remembered Divine intervention on their behalf, they would have to focus on the good things. They would recall their deliverance from Egypt and their favor as a nation under the great kings, David and Solomon. If they looked ahead, they could see no possible hope of ever becoming a nation again. As far as they were concerned, all of the precious promises made to Abraham, that they would rule and bless all of the people of the earth, were dead. The condition of Israel, scattered throughout Babylon, is illustrated by the dry bones of the vision.

The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel, causing him to see this vision. In the vision, he was made to pass

among the dry bones, so that he might get a full view of the situation. He saw bones lying strewn all over the valley. These dry bones are being used to represent the whole house of Israel. In the Divine providence, they are being viewed as a united nation. Their reunion is shown in Ezekiel 37:15-22, by the miraculous uniting of two sticks into one in the hand of the prophet. "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

The Lord directed Ezekiel to prophesy, to declare the Divine message of foretelling the things that would come to pass under Divine providence. The message to be declared was that God had the power and would use it to give life again to these people who were as dead, dried bones. Their national hopes would gradually be revived, and would lead them to become a people or nation in their own land. The people's hopes, that were once dead and were represented by the Lord as buried, receive hope with the words, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."—vss. 12,13

As a further part of this symbolic picture the prophet shows the process by which the dry bones would be gathered. He says that there would be "a noise" and "a shaking." (vs. 7) This refers to the fall of Babylon and the transfer of the empire to the Medes and Persians. Following this demonstration the bones came together.

Not only would the bones come together and have flesh and skin, but they would also receive the breath of life. God would allow them to once again have a homeland and live and prosper into a great nation. ■