

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part LVIII: God's Reuniting The Ancient Nation Of Israel In Her Land (Ezekiel 37:15-28)

I. Introduction

- A. British-Israelism is a cult that claims that though the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned to the land of Israel after the Babylonian Captivity, the ten northern tribes of Israel were lost, ending up in North America so that Britain is the tribe of Ephraim, the United States the tribe of Manasseh and the throne of David is the British throne. (Jan Karel Van Baalen, The Chaos of Cults, 1973, p. 162-176)
- B. This cult has influenced Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism and the Jehovah's Witnesses, *Ibid.*, p. 162, 257.
- C. Ezekiel 37:15-28 is one passage in Scripture that corrects this error, so we view it for our insight (as follows):

II. God's Reuniting The Ancient Nation Of Israel In Her Land, Ezekiel 37:15-28.

- A. The Lord directed His prophet Ezekiel to take a stick and write on it, "For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him," and then to take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim" and all the house of Israel associated with him," Ezekiel 27:15-16 ESV. Thus, the stick of "Judah" represented the Southern Kingdom of Judah, what included the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, and the stick of "Joseph" that consisted of the two powerful tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh along with the rest of the ten northern tribes. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1299; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Ezekiel 37:16)
- B. [Some say these sticks represent the Bible (stick of Judah) and the Book of Mormon (stick of Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism), but this claim violates the context of Ezekiel 37:15-28; *Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T.]
- C. God then told Ezekiel to join these two sticks together in his hand that they might look like a single stick, presumably grasping them end-to-end in one hand to make them look like one longer stick, Ezekiel 37:17.
- D. Fellow Hebrews in Babylon would wonder what this illustration signified (Ezekiel 37:18), so Ezekiel was to tell them that God was going to take the stick of Joseph and the fellow tribes of Israel with him and join them with the stick of Judah, making them one stick, and they would be one stick in God's hand, Ezekiel 37:19-20.
- E. Ezekiel was then to explain that God would take the children of Israel from among the Gentiles where they had gone and gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land, Ezekiel 37:21 ESV. God would make of them one nation on the mountains of Israel in their land, with one king being over them all, and they would no longer be divided into two kingdoms as they had been since Rehoboam's reign, Ez. 37:22.
- F. The people of Israel would no longer defile themselves with idols, the cause of the original division of the Davidic kingdom (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-39), and God would save them from their backslidings, cleansing them so that they would be God's people and He would be their God, Ezekiel 37:23.
- G. Furthermore, God's servant David (in the resurrection) would be king over this reunited kingdom of Israel, and there would be blessing and peace and righteousness forever in this arrangement, Ezekiel 37:24-25.
- H. The Lord would make a covenant of peace with the reunited kingdom, an everlasting one, and, upon placing His people back in their land, God would multiply them and set His temple in their midst forever, Ezek. 37:26.
- I. This restoration of the united kingdom would testify before the Gentile nations that Israel's God was the Lord who sanctified Israel, putting His sanctuary in her midst forever, Ezekiel 37:27-28.
- J. [Additional Biblical passages that reveal the fallacy of the British-Israelism view are as follows:
 - 1. When the exiles had returned to Israel from Babylon, Ezra 6:17 and 8:35 report that 12 sin offerings of male goats were made for the 12 tribes, requiring via Leviticus 4:22-26 all 12 tribes to have returned.
 - 2. In Luke 2:36, the elderly lady Anna who greeted Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus in the temple, was from the tribe of Asher, one of the ten northern tribes of Israel, indicating they had returned to the land.
 - 3. Paul in Acts 26:7 told king Agrippa that "our twelve tribes . . . **are earnestly worshipping (*latreuon*, present participle of *latreuo*, "worship;" U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 518; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 248) in "hope in the promise made by God to our fathers." Israel's ten northern tribes were not then lost, but had returned to the land and were a functioning part of the nation Israel in Paul's days!]**

Lesson: *God promised to gather His people of the ten northern tribes and of the two southern tribes back into the land of Israel, uniting them into one kingdom under a resurrected king David, sanctifying and blessing them.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice in God's future program that will fulfill His kingdom promises to David. (2) May we realize the error of British-Israelism and its resulting errant offshoots and hold to a blessed future for Israel.*