

Ezekiel 37

Ezekiel 37:7 the bones came together, bone to his bone

"To those of us who already believe and have a testimony that there will be a resurrection of the physical bodies of all mankind, these Old Testament scriptures seem clear enough. But that is because we have been tutored and taught by the clarity of latter-day revelation and by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, when we read these Old Testament scriptures we understand their doctrinal meaning. But many of our Christian and Jewish friends, who do not have the benefit of latter-day revelation and who do not enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost, interpret these Old Testament verses differently. They see them as figurative, or allegorical, expressions or as some-thing-anything-other than literal, plain-spoken declarations about a physical resurrection of the corporeal bodies of mankind. Many present-day Christians are not even sure that Jesus himself was resurrected with his physical body, and most of those who may believe Jesus had a physical resurrected body do not believe he still has that body today.

"As Latter-day Saints we are a highly favored people in that we have not only all that the Bible has to say about the resurrection but also the additional, more detailed, and more specific testimonies from the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Joseph Smith Translation, and the teachings of the latter-day prophets, particularly those of the Prophet Joseph Smith." (Robert J. Matthews, *A Bible! A Bible!* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 197 - 198.)

Joseph Smith

Would you think it strange if I relate what I have seen in vision in relation to this interesting theme? Those who have died in Jesus Christ may expect to enter into all that fruition of joy when they come forth, which they possessed or anticipated here.

So plain was the vision, that I actually saw men, before they had ascended from the tomb, as though they were getting up slowly. They took each other by the hand and said to each other, "My father, my son, my mother, my daughter, my brother, my sister." And when the voice calls for the dead to arise, suppose I am laid by the side of my father, what would be the first joy of my heart? To meet my father, my mother, my brother, my sister; and when they are by my side, I embrace them and they me...

All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it.

More painful to me are the thoughts of annihilation than death. If I have no expectation of seeing my father, mother, brothers, sisters and friends again, my heart would burst in a moment, and I should go down to my grave.

The expectation of seeing my friends in the morning of the resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life. It is like their taking a long journey, and on their return we meet them with increased joy.

God has revealed His Son from the heavens and the doctrine of the resurrection also; and we have a knowledge that those we bury here God will bring up again, clothed upon and quickened by the Spirit of the great God; and what mattereth it whether we lay them down, or we lay down with them when we can keep them no longer? Let these truths sink down in our hearts, that we may even here begin to enjoy that which shall be in full hereafter. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 295-296)

Wilford Woodruff

I was in Tennessee in the year 1835, and while at the house of Abraham O. Smoot, I received a letter from Brothers Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, requesting me to stay there, and stating that I would lose no blessing by doing so. Of course, I was satisfied. I went into a little room and sat down upon a small sofa. I was all by myself and the room was dark; and while I rejoiced in this letter and the promise made to me, I became wrapped in vision. I was like Paul; I did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body. A personage appeared to me and showed me the great scenes that should take place in the last days... I saw the resurrection of the dead. In the first resurrection those that came forth from their graves seemed to be all dressed alike, but in the second resurrection they were as diverse in their dress as this congregation is before me to-day, and if I had been an artist I could have painted the whole scene as it was impressed upon my mind, more indelibly fixed than anything I had ever seen with the natural eye. What does this mean? It was a testimony of the resurrection of the dead. I had a testimony. I believe in the resurrection of the dead, and I know it is a true principle... I am satisfied, always have been, in regard to the resurrection. I rejoice in it. The way was opened unto us by the blood of the Son of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, 22:332-33)

Ezekiel 37:11 these bones are the whole house of Israel

"As is common in Ezekiel's revelations, the symbolic activity or vision is followed by a clear interpretation. 'These bones are the whole house of Israel,' the Lord said. The metaphor of scattered bones well describes Israel's pitiful condition: they had been destroyed as a nation, their temple and holy city lay in ruins, thousands of their number had been killed in the Babylonian invasion (and earlier invasions as well), and their Davidic monarch and thousands of their countrymen had been taken into exile. They lamented, 'our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts' (Ezek. 37:11).

"Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones announced to ancient and modern Israel that their scattering would not be forever. The Lord would bring them out of their graves, assemble their scattered parts, give them life, and reestablish them in their own land (Ezek. 37:12-14). The image of resurrection in this passage shows that though the house of Israel were dead, it would be restored again-to life and to a renewed covenant with God." (Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 301)

Orson Pratt

It seems from the record, that the Jews, in the days of Ezekiel, had formed an idea very similar to that of many of our Christian friends now living-they had got rather infidel in their views; they had begun to say in their hearts, referring to their fathers, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts;" or, in other words, our forefather, whose children we are, and whose names are held in sacred remembrance by us, are all dead. The promises have not been fulfilled and we are cut off from the part of our inheritance, and how is it possible now that they can come to pass? They were of similar mind to the Sadducees-they did not believe in the resurrection. But the Lord, in order to encourage them in the belief that it would be fulfilled, gives the interpretation of this vision. I have heard the Methodists give their version of this vision. Whenever there was a revival among them, I have seen them get down on their knees and exclaim, O Lord, make a shaking among these dry bones; believing that the sinners were the bones, and the resurrection, the conversion of sinners. The same interpretation is given by a great many of the Christian sects of the day. But hearken, O Latter-day Saints to the Lord's interpretation, and judge between them: "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." What can be plainer than that? And which is the better of the two, the Lord's interpretation or that of the sects of the day?

(*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 20: 17 - 18)

Parley P. Pratt

Did you ever hear the Lord's own explanation of this vision...? It so far surpasses all other comments, I am inclined to believe it; I will therefore write it in preference to any other, and run the risk of becoming unpopular by so doing. The Lord says, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; 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, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." Thus you have the whole vision unfolded plainly, if the Lord's authority can once be allowed, which is seldom the case in this age of wisdom and learning. The fact is, all the seed of Israel are to be raised from the dead, and are to be brought into the land of Israel, which was given to them for an everlasting inheritance. And in order to do this, their old dry bones are to be brought together, bone to its bone, and every part of their bodies is to be reinstated; and it will make a great noise, and a wonderful shaking when they come together; and surely when they stand upon their feet they will make an exceeding great army.

This just explains the promise so oft repeated in scripture. "My servant David shall be their prince forever"; indeed this same chapter makes the promise to them, that his servant David shall be raised up, and shall be prince among them, while the Lord shall be their King; while both they that are alive, and they that are dead, shall be restored, and become one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; while David comes forth and reigns as a prince and shepherd over them forever; and the Lord Jesus reigns as King of kings, and Lord of lords, in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. (*A Voice of Warning* [New York City: Eastern States Mission [189-?], 99.)

Ezekiel 37:14 ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land

Matthias F. Cowley

Thus there shall be a real, actual resurrection of the body, a complete reunion of the spirit with the body.

After the resurrection, those whose bodies and spirits are thereby reunited will join their living brethren, receive revelation from God, including the everlasting covenant, be gathered to their own lands, and continue to multiply and increase, with the sanctuary of God in their midst, and with His divine approval forevermore.

How beautiful, how joyous to contemplate, and how real and tangible is this, as contrasted with the poor, rambling, uncertain theories of uninspired men, who are controlled by the systems of men rather than guided by that "more sure word of prophecy," the revelations of God. (*Cowley's Talks on Doctrine* [Chattanooga: Ben. E. Rich, 1902], 176)

Ezekiel 37:16 take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim

The world wants proof of the Book of Mormon. They want to see the Gold Plates. They want Biblical proof that the Book of Mormon is true. Well this verse is the best missionary scripture prophesying of another record to come forth (see also Isa. 29:4, 11-12; John 10:16; Gen. 49:22-26). What is the stick of Ephraim? It is the Book of Mormon. The world is going to have to deal with this truth-sooner or later.

"For more than a century, members of the Church have taught that these two 'sticks' represent the Bible (the stick of Judah) and the Book of Mormon (the stick of Joseph or Ephraim). Recent research has revealed that the word stick refers to a wooden, folding writing tablet (see *Ensign*, Feb. 1987, pp. 4-13), although the Prophet Joseph interpreted what the sticks represented long before the discoveries of modern research. (See D&C 27:5.)" (George A. Horton Jr., "Prophecies in the Bible about Joseph Smith," *Ensign*, Jan. 1989, 22)

Wilford Woodruff

The revelations of Jesus Christ... are recorded not only in the Bible, or on the stick of Judah, but also in the Book of Mormon, or stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, as well as in the New Testament, and those revelations of modern date as those of ancient time, have been sealed with the blood of him who brought them forth, and this testimony therefore is in force to all the world. The Lord is not trifling with this generation, neither is he trifling with the Saints or with the world of mankind. During the last 48 years the Gospel has been

preached to this generation, and this work will continue preaching to the Gentiles, until the Lord directs otherwise. (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:296)

Brigham Young

[The Book of Mormon] proves that the Bible is true. What do the infidel world say about the Bible? They say that the Bible is nothing better than last year's almanac; it is nothing but a fable and priestcraft, and it is good for nothing. The Book of Mormon, however, declares that the Bible is true, and it proves it; and the two prove each other true. The Old and New Testaments are the stick of Judah. You recollect that the tribe of Judah tarried in Jerusalem and the Lord blessed Judah, and the result was the writings of the Old and New Testaments. But where is the stick of Joseph? Can you tell where it is? Yes. It was the children of Joseph who came across the waters to this continent, and this land was filled with people, and the Book of Mormon or the stick of Joseph contains their writings, and they are in the hands of Ephraim. Where are the Ephraimites? They are mixed through all the nations of the earth. God is calling upon them to gather out, and He is uniting them, and they are giving the Gospel to the whole world. Is there any harm or any false doctrine in that? A great many say there is. If there is, it is all in the Bible. (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:175)

LeGrand Richards

We were holding a street meeting, and the Gospel Hall people were holding a convention a short distance away. They adjourned their meeting to come and try and break up ours. I said, "You men would like to be gentlemen, wouldn't you?" As I recall, there were about sixteen ministers there that night. I said, "You give us twenty minutes to finish our meeting and then we will stay thirty minutes and listen to you." I said to the crowd, "Won't we?" There were between two and three hundred there, and they indicated they would. During their thirty minutes they painted the Prophet Joseph as black as anybody could. "Why," they said, "if you would let them, the Mormons would bind the Book of Mormon in the same cover with the Bible and ask us to take it and like it." I did not like to see that meeting close right at that point, so I stepped up to this minister and said, "You would not mind if I made an announcement before the meeting closes, would you?" He said, "No, go ahead." So I turned to the crowd and said, "If you will come back next Tuesday night at 7:30 we will tell you why we bind the Book of Mormon in the same cover with the Bible and ask you to take it and like it." And I said, "Bring your Bibles along with you because you will not need them after next Tuesday night if you are not willing to accept the companion volume of scripture, Ezekiel said the Lord would bring forth the record of Joseph which He would join to the record of the Jews

and the two should become one in His hand" (Ezek. 37:15-20). When they came that night, and the crowd was larger than the previous one, I said, "How can any of us stay the hand of God from bringing forth the record He has promised?" As I remember we sold sixteen copies of the Book of Mormon that night. (*Conference Report* October 1949, pp. 175-179)

Ezekiel 37:17 join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand

Wherefore, the fruit of [Joseph's] loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. (2 Ne. 3:12)

Russell M. Nelson

Saints of modern Israel throughout the world are blessed to hold the Bible and the Book of Mormon as one in their hands. The worth of this privilege must never be underestimated. Isaiah described the spirit of the Book of Mormon as "familiar." It resonates with people who know the Old Testament, especially those who are conversant with its Hebrew language. The Book of Mormon is rich with Hebraisms-traditions, symbolisms, idioms, and literary forms. It is familiar because more than 80 percent of its pages came from the same time frame as parts of the Old Testament. ("The Exodus Repeated," *Ensign*, July 1999, 10)

Boyd K. Packer

The stick or record of Judah-the Old Testament and the New Testament-and the stick or record of Ephraim-the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ-are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel's prophecy now stands fulfilled.

With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will.

The older generation has been raised without them, but there is another generation growing up. The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and of Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him. ("Scriptures," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53)

Ezekiel 37:22 they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all

After the ten tribes rebelled against the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah became two separate nations (1 Kgs. 12). As the two kingdoms became more estranged, they even fought against each other (2 Chron. 13). Like a father watching his children fight, the Lord must have been pained by the division he saw among the tribes (1 Kgs. 12:24).

Part of the redemption of Israel is the resolution of this conflict-the rift between the kingdoms must be absolved. The sticks of Judah and Ephraim becoming one in our hand is symbolic of the day when the two kingdoms will no longer be divided. Peace must replace enmity. All 12 tribes must have the same King, the Holy One of Israel.

The Book of Mormon clearly teaches that the first sign of reconciliation will be the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

"The Lord... said that the appearance in the last days of Joseph's record would be a sign of the Gathering:

I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place-that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion. ... When these things which I declare unto you ... shall be made known unto the Gentiles ... it shall be a sign unto them, that ... the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. (3 Ne. 21:1-7.)

"When Christ's words were published in the Book of Mormon in 1830, the things that he had declared to the Nephites were made known to the Gentiles.

Thus, the appearance of Joseph's record-which made possible the joining of that record with Judah's-was a sign that the gathering had commenced.

"Mormon, the editor of Joseph's records, also saw the latter-day appearance of his abridgement as a sign of the gathering of Israel: '*When* the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gentiles ... *then* ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled.' (3 Ne. 29:1; italics added.) His 'when-then' prophecy is as clear as the 3 Ne. 21:1-7 prophecy by Jesus just mentioned: the publication of the Book of Mormon signals the beginning of the gathering." (Keith Meservy, "Ezekiel's Sticks and the Gathering of Israel," *Ensign*, Feb. 1987, 10-11)

Orson Pratt

The Lord will gather the ten tribes from the north, and the House of Judah from the four quarters of the earth whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, making of them one nation under one king never more to be divided, neither, says the Lord, shall they any more defile themselves with their detestable things, etc. "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto my servant Jacob, wherein your fathers have dwelt, etc." It is not a spiritual thing, it is natural, and will take place even as it is written. How will He accomplish this work? In the very way He has pointed out in this chapter? He will take the stick, or records, of Joseph written upon for Joseph, and join it with that of the Jews, written upon by the Jewish nation; and when they become one in His hand, then He will bring Israel from the four quarters of the earth and fulfill all that has been said concerning them. (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:173)

Ezekiel 37:23 I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned

Bruce D. Porter

The eldest [and only-Begotten of the Father] is filled with compassion. "I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them" (Ezek. 37:23). He journeys the long distance to find and bring home the prodigal ones. And there he finds us weary, hungry, and downtrodden. He feeds us and gives us drink. He lives among us and shares our burdens. Then, in a final act of supreme love, the eldest son takes of his own wealth and, one by one, he ransoms us. In order to pay the fulness of our

debt, he is compelled to sacrifice his own fortune, yea, all that he has, every whit.

There are those who refuse the proffered ransom. Chained by pride, they prefer bondage to repentance. But those who accept of his offering and forsake their errant ways receive healing at his hands and liberty as his gift. These he leads back to the Father with songs of everlasting joy. ("Redeemer of Israel," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 15)

Ezekiel 37:26-27 I... will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore

Joseph Fielding Smith

Today the words of the prophets are being fulfilled. Judah is being gathered. Jerusalem is being rebuilt and the Lord is preparing to redeem his ancient people. Eventually they will be sitting under their own vine and fig tree, enjoying the fulness of the Gospel, and the blessings of the house of the Lord, in fulfilment of the words of Ezekiel:

"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.-" (*The Progress of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], 129.)

Bruce R. McConkie

The temples of the Lord will dot the earth during the Millennium. In them the living will receive the ordinances of exaltation, and the work will be wound up for the worthy dead of all ages. "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." How sweet and lovely is this thought! When the Lord's true tabernacle is with men; when they assemble therein to worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit; when their lives at long last conform to the divine will and pattern-then they are his people and he is their God. "And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." (Ezek. 37:15-28.) David reigns; how glorious is the day! (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 608)