

Ezekiel 37 – Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones

By Holly Effiom

VV1-3

Where else in Ezekiel was God's hand heavy upon the prophet? Eze 3:1-14; 33:1-10

How are Ezekiel 3 and 33 related? How are they different?

What was Ezekiel's attitude in Eze 3:14?

What was the significance of Ezekiel 7 in differentiating Eze 3 from 33?

Where does God take Ezekiel in this moment?

Was it coincidental that God took Ezekiel to this valley of dry bones? How do you know?

What is significant about the bones being *many* and *very* dry? And what does the bones being "very dry" tell us?

From where did all of these bones come?

Jeremiah 7:1-8:22

VV1-7

Where is Jeremiah to stand specifically? Why this place?

To whom is he to speak specifically? Why these people?

Where is Jeremiah at on the timeline of Jerusalem's time of dominion?

What is God's message to these people? Is it too late for them?

In what way did he want these people's attitude and behavior to change?

What promise is God making, even at this point in time of Jerusalem's dominion?

Does God call for a "Jeremiah" to prophesy to the Gentiles at the end of their time? Mal 4:5; Matt 11-14; Rev 10:8-11

What should be the message be at this same point at the end of the time of Gentiles?

Is it different from Jeremiah's message?

Who is giving this message at the end of the time of the Gentiles? Rev 11:3

LESSON: This section of scripture is confirmation on an observation made in our studies of Ezekiel 33 and 34, God is not calling out Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, for they did not sign onto the covenants of the Old and New Testaments. He is taking exception to the attitudes and behavior of His "chosen" ones – those "...which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev 12:17) These ones have wreaked havoc on society. Nonetheless, God's message to these ones is, *It's not too late... repent!*

VV8-12

What does God announce in V8 of this chapter (considering what He said earlier in the chapter)?

When does God say Israel began as a nation exactly? Upon establishment of Jerusalem?

What was Shiloh? When was it established? Josh 18:1

Is following the commandments *more* closely the natural progression of choosing to believe lies?

How are VV9-11 related to God's words in Ezekiel 36:19-23?

Is God speaking to the wicked behavior of the Canaanites?

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Does God seem unaffected by the behavior He is calling out against the children of Judah? How do you know?

LESSON: This section of scripture begins with it being known that despite everything said earlier, the children of Judah *choose* to believe a lie. And because they made that poor choice, they would be willing to break the other 10 commandments instead of *adhering* to them, and *then* to show up at temple and stand before God seeking favor, as if they were *His servants!*

God tells them to revisit Shiloh, and remember the judgment that fell because of the wickedness of the children of Israel, shortly after taking possession of the Promised Land.

VV13-15

In what ways did God try to communicate with His children?

What would be considered rising up early?

In what ways did God personally call to the children of Israel?

Why is God going to do to Jerusalem what He did to Shiloh?

What did he do at Shiloh? 1 Sam 4:1-22; Psa 78:51-72

Why did he destroy Shiloh? Jud 18:31

Did God find anything worth redeeming among the children of Ephraim? Why is it noteworthy that it was the “...whole seed of Ephraim...” that was being cast out? Gen 48:10-14

LESSON: What happened at Shiloh? Shiloh was where God fulfilled His promise to bring the children of Israel into their own promised land. Joshua picked up the leadership from Moses, who was not allowed to enter in, and subdued the land and divided up the portion among the 11 tribes. This is when Israel began to exist as a nation.

Shortly thereafter, the people backslid into idolatry (Jud 17-21), which leads to another *Sodom and Gomorrah* story, except among the children of Benjamin, and in 1 Sam 4:1-22, Israel, the new nation, lost the battle against the Philistines, even with the ark of the covenant. In fact, the Philistines *captured* the ark of the covenant and placed it in their own temple of Dagon, *next* to the image of Dagon, which leads to *another* funny story in the Bible in 1 Sam 5.

It is noteworthy that God mentions rising early in order to give the children of Israel warning. I wondered what He meant by that? And I understood that God sent His prophets to warn the people, well in advance of disaster. But also, when God says, “...I called you, but you answered not...” I understood that He was saying I, *personally*, called you – He had spoken to the hearts of individuals.

It is a mistake to think that God created Adam and then left him to his own devices. His walk with the children of Israel, as described in the Bible, is an example of this fact and affirms that He is a very *involved* Father. It is a lie to say otherwise.

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VV16-20 Don't pray nor intercede before me for them...

Who is speaking?

To whom is He speaking?

What were the children of God doing to cause this response in Him?

What does God say is the purpose in their actions?

Why would God see it as a provocation? Maybe people were *ignorant* of the covenant.

What were the children of God actually *doing*?

What will be God's response to all that the children of God are doing?

How is this similar to our study of Gen 3:17?

LESSON: It is noteworthy that God is making it clear that those who sin will be destroyed, and this will *affect* Adam's domain, but not bring it to an end altogether. The whole earth will not be destroyed, as God had promised, marking His *vow* with the rainbow.

VV21-24

What does God mean to "...Put your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat flesh..."?

Why would God tell these people to *go ahead and commit your sins*?

God says something interesting here, "...I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifice..." See Ex 19:5-8. What do these words mean?

Why are these words placed here in Jeremiah?

What do they tell us about God? Does He judge people for things that were *not* specifically agreed upon?

Does this section of scripture imply that offerings made to some other god are OK?

What *commandment* was God holding against the children of Israel?

In what way were the children of Israel breaking this commandment?

What were their *evil hearts* cause them to do?

LESSON: Several years ago, when we were studying Ezekiel 16: 48-52, I wrote something that I had learned about God in describing the nature of sin from *that* section of scripture.

Here's an excerpt from the **LESSON:** Symptom v. Disease.

"...I've always taught this section of scripture as an object lesson in the nature of sin. The "iniquity" of Sodom was pride, greed, idleness – the *disease*. The manner in which that disease was manifested is in the sinful behavior, the things Sodom did – the *symptom*. Treating the symptom does not cure the disease; and if you want to eliminate the symptoms, *cure the disease*. You cannot make a person less prideful or greedy by getting them to drink less; to steal less; to lie less; commit fewer murders; to be less lascivious. God is showing Jerusalem His judgment is "the treatment" for her disease of pride, greed, and idleness. This is will be the same for that final Gentile world power."

This section of scripture in Jeremiah 7, is similar, in that God is differentiating the *symptom* of sin – making sacrifices to other gods – from the *disease* of sin – *not* obeying

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the commandments of God, and upon which of the *two* He is bringing judgment, the *disobedient*.

But a further note to consider is where we are in Ezekiel that invokes this revisit to a lesson learned in Ezekiel 16 regarding Jerusalem, Ezekiel 37, regarding the final Gentile power – the end times.

VV25-28

How long has God been trying to get the attention of His people?

Who did God use to try and speak to these people?

In what way had He arisen early to warn these people?

Did His people incline their ear to the word of God?

Was the behavior of His people better or worse than their forefathers?

Does God tell Jeremiah to *not* warn His people?

What does God predict the response to be? Will they treat Jeremiah the way they treated their God?

What does God tell Jeremiah happens to the disobedient? Do they receive correction?

What happens to truth?

Lesson: Would you say that “truth” being cut off from mouths is an accurate description of what is happening in our nation today? Could this mean that we are currently living in the final Gentile power, i.e., in the end-times?

VV29-34

What is God’s message for this “...generation of his wrath”?

Why does he use the term “generation of his wrath”?

What had the children of Judah done, in the time of Jerusalem? How did they pollute God’s sanctuary? V30

What would be comparable to such an action in the final Gentile power?

What is Tophet?

What does God predict regarding Tophet or the valley of Hinnom? V32-33

What would be comparable in the final Gentile power?

What will God cause to happen to Jerusalem?

What would be comparable in the final Gentile power?

- What is the implication of the cessation of mirth and gladness?
- What is the implication of the cessation of the voices of the bride and bridegroom?
- What is the implication of the land being desolate?

LESSON: In reading this last section of the scripture, we understand the *burden* placed upon people by the sins of these leaders will cause *mirth* and *gladness* will cease – people will lose joy in their lives. What is the importance of joy and happiness, and *laughter*? When one finds joy in hard work, hard times, hard experiences there is hope, and hope is needed to *seek out* and *work* toward solutions. Hope makes a man or woman take a

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chance on a life with another human being, and brings together two families that may or may not be on good terms; and produces children who grow up and chart their own paths because of the hope that they have witnessed. These children take a chance on other men or women, on a business venture, on an idea, on children, on anything productive.

Without hope, the voices of the bride and bridegroom cease.

It is this natural course of Adam and Eve's lives and productivity that bring productivity to the land. All the good things in Adam and Eve's lives are born from hope. Without hope, the land becomes desolate.

So, who benefits when the earth is unproductive? Satan. Don't forget, he is homeless, and seeking a place to live. His strategy was to corrupt Adam and Eve's leadership, convincing them that his way will make them rich, will make them *gods*.

The story of Ezekiel and Revelation... the *whole Bible* is Adam and Eve's unshackling *themselves* from lies and lying liars, and the realization that they were already gods, for they were made in the very image of *God Almighty*, their *Father!*

VV Jer 8:1-2

What is meant by bringing out the bones from the graves of previous leaders?

What is significant about the bones being laid before the sun, moon, and the host of heaven?

What is meant by the bones not being gathered, nor buried, but treated like dung on the face of the earth?

LESSON: In reading this section of scripture, I pictured cable news hosts, consulting with historians (and some of the hosts themselves), picking over bones, seeking answers to current problems in how they were handled and resolved on the past. How did the wise ones in the past deal with such issues?

Yes, the information discovered is being laid before an audience, but none take the words to heart, nor even pays attention, as they focus their worship on their own gods, leaving the *oracles of God* out there, unaddressed, like *dung* on the face of the earth. And can godly people judge idolators? No, why? Because *godly* leaders paid no heed as *they* transgressed the *oracles of God* – *they*, in their *own* actions, *treat* the word of God like *dung* on the face of the earth. How do they expect the *ungodly* to treat it?

Consider the question of abortion rights, we feel quite justified in saying that a baby is a human life, worthy of life and liberty. That is the *godly* attitude to have, no doubt. *Everyone* is a precious child of God, made in God's image. What commandments are being transgressed when forcing one's abortion rights will on another? Is that not *slavery*?

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VV3-7

Who is being discussed in this section of scripture? Was it everyone in Jerusalem; or in the end time?

Who will be choosing death instead of life?

In what ways might they have chosen death?

Why will death be chosen instead of life by these ones?

What is the significance of the questions posed in VV4-5?

Was God looking and listening for righteousness in these people? Did He find it?

What did He find?

What observation is being made about these people in V7?

VV8-9

What is the saying among the leaders of the day?

What is God's response to such a saying?

How does this section confirm our understanding from VV1-2?

LESSON: I have to stop and level-set, and ask to whom these prophecies are being given, and towards whom are they directed? It's important to remind ourselves that it is not everyone in Jerusalem (in temple days) that is under judgment. There are some people trying to do right, and such is the case today, in the final days of Gentile times. There will be Gentile people and nations trying to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Mic 6:8

The term "herd immunity", which is the concept that enough people in a community are immune to a disease, such that the infection can't spread from one person to another¹, was introduced into the American lexicon with the advent of Covid 19. If *corruption* is a disease, the concept of *herd immunity* can aid our understanding of *what* is taking place in the world today, and *why* God has given us the *tool* or *weapon* of the Bible to fight it.

One of the things the Bible seeks to do is keep the "*corruption* herd immunity" numbers high through education and thus, keep the level of *corruption* in check.

This section of scripture let's us know that our interpretation of VV1-2 is correct. The leaders of the day made the decision to reject the word of God, making the efforts to bring and impart the words of God to a people... *these* people at *this* time, in vain.

VV10-13

What will the subsequent result be of rejecting the word of God? Eze 7:21-27

Will only the leaders be affected?

What do the leaders fail to do?

What is meant by the term "...daughter of my people...?"

¹ <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22599-herd-immunity>

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Were the faithless leaders ashamed of their actions?
What will happen to them because of their lack of repentance?

VV14-17

What is the convey in the question and answer posed in this section of scripture?
Why would they want to go to a fortified city?
So, what are they suggesting that they do? Why?
What is implied by the sound of the “...snorting of horses was heard from Dan...”? Josh 19:40-48; Jer 4:6
Will they be able to escape the coming punishment by laying low in the city?

VV18-22

How does this news affect Jeremiah?
Why is the “...daughter of my people...” crying? Jer 5:15
Is the prophet unaffected by her cries? Is *God* unaffected? How do you know?
How is this section of scripture related to Jer 51:8? How do they contrast?

LESSON: The daughter of my people. Jeremiah uses this term a lot throughout his writings and I’m not sure I understand what it means. I do know that it is women who bear the burden of children physically in their bodies, carrying all of Adam’s future in their bodies, but there is no doubt, men physically participate in child bearing, too.

Women are probably at their most vulnerable when carrying a child, therefore they need additional protection from attack or harm during that time – they need *peace* – and historically, this has been one part that men played in the process. But God, through Jeremiah, is telling men that they have not *healed* the “...hurt of the daughter of my people...” or only partially healed it in speaking words of comfort (Jer 6:14; 8:11). Men have not done the *work* to deal with the *cause* of the hurt in the first place. Instead of doing that, they either cause wars with themselves or with women, to create a distraction, or they look around for someone else to blame.

Is this not a sad commentary on what we are seeing today? Men have created an environment in which women do not feel safe enough to allow themselves the *vulnerability* of child bearing.

VV Eze 37:1-3 continued

What does God ask Ezekiel?
What is Ezekiel’s answer? John 21:15-17

LESSON: The valley of dry bones. These opening verses of Ezekiel 37 are so encouraging, even as it discusses all the dry bones. I had heard many uplifting sermons on the dry bones, but the question that occurred to me when commencing this study was, *Where did all these*

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dry bones come from? There is a scriptural cross reference to Jeremiah (Jer 7:31-8:22), which reminds us of Tophet.

Tophet was a “high place” located in the valley of the children of Hinnom (Gehenna, Matt 5:22). The use of the term “high place” informs us that this is a place of idolatry, and the fact that the Greek translation of the location is Gehenna, says it is synonymous with “lake of fire” Rev 20:14, the second death.

When the children of Israel conquered and apportioned the land of Canaan among its tribes, the valley of the children of Hinnom, a place known for human sacrifice even then, was allotted to Judah’s possession, just south of the Jebusites’ land, i.e., Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8) and thereabouts. And even after the children of Israel resided in the Promised Land for a while, they still had bouts of backsliding into worshipping other gods and human sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6).

In Isaiah 30:33, the prophet tells us that Tophet was “...ordained of old...” Why is God reminding us of this *now*?

When the children of Judah took over the valley of the children of Hinnom, that was back in Joshua’s day, after Moses had died, and they had spent some years conquering the land of Canaan. And note, this very same valley was *still* being used in the same way by the time Jesus arrived in Matthew, and is used synonymously with the “lake of fire” in Revelation 20. There might not have been human sacrifice in Jesus’s day, but human bodies, along with the trash, were being *burned* there.

Isaiah not only tells us the age of Gehenna, but it further explains for whom the site was being prepared – for the king – and that God Himself was the one stoking the fire with His breath, like a “...stream of brimstone...” It has been God preparing Gehenna for his chosen ones. I can’t help but believe that our studying Ezekiel 37 is tracking with what is happening today.

It is time to talk about Tophet, Gehenna, the lake of fire. We are coming to the valley of slaughter, which had been taking place since before the land was apportioned to Judah, and by the end times there will have been so much slaughter, there would be no more room for bodies. The wicked leaders that caused such slaughter are being prepared for the ultimate judgment. God’s wrath will be poured out upon the wicked, such that nothing but human bones will be left, and yet, God calls for the question, from the midst of all the destruction, “...Can these bones live?”

Reading Ezekiel’s response to God’s question in V3 put me in mind of Peter’s response to Jesus, after He had been resurrected.

When God asked Ezekiel if those dry bones could live, Ezekiel said, Lord God, You know the answer (paraphrase). He was uncertain of himself. In Ezekiel 3:14, he was angry with God and was going along on the journey out of “...bitterness, in the heat of...” his spirit, and now, here is Ezekiel 37, the prophet is humbled under the mighty hand of God, and is fearful of speaking out in false pride.

In John 21:15-17, Jesus asks Simon Peter an easy question, Do you love me? And Peter was feeling uncertain of himself after vowing to remain by Jesus’s side even to death, and then

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denying he even knew Him, *three times*, a short time later. Jesus, in this exchange, forgives each and every denial, and gives Simon Peter a job to do.

I believe that this is what God is doing in Revelation 10:11, for the two witnesses who are killed after the 1,260 days (Rev 11:3) and 1,290 days (Dan 12:11), respectively. We, today, are being given a job to do – to *continue* with the sacrifice and oblations, to *continue* to stand for the truth and righteousness, no matter the iniquity or destruction we see going on all around us.

Even when all the bones are dried out, and it seems all hope is lost, God can and will empower His witnesses to stand and to *live!*

VV4-10

- What does God want Ezekiel to do, despite the dryness of the bones?
- What is Ezekiel directed to say? What does God promise to do to these bones?
- What happened when Ezekiel spoke over these bones?
- What is significant about the fact that Ezekiel could speak a man into being?
- Does this mean Ezekiel had the power produce men?
- How does God direct Ezekiel to prophesy next? Why?
- What does this section of scripture teach us?

LESSON: This section of scripture is such a wonderful example of the crown of life – power, position, and authority (Rev 13:2) – that has been given to Adam. The action of the prophet makes the reader understand, that while Adam is *empowered* to make men, *only* God can help men *live* – providing men with *position* and *authority*.

God gave Adam the power to be fruitful, multiply (reproduce himself), and fill the earth (Gen), only God can make man live, i.e., provide him position (purpose) and authority (right). Jesus Christ, the *first* of many brothers, is born with *both* flesh *and* God's Holy Spirit – Adam 2.0.

VV11-14

- What do the dry bones represent?
- How do these people feel about themselves? Why do they feel this way?
- What is God's response to their words? Is He angry with them? Does He focus on what they have done?
- What will God do for these people?
- What will placing them back in their own land do for them?

VV15-23

- What does God instruct Ezekiel to do?
- What do we know about Judah, among all the children of Judah? Gen 37:26-27; 38; 49:8-12
- What do we know about Joseph's youngest son, Ephraim, among the children of Judah? Gen 49:22-26; 41:50-52
- What did Ezekiel's actions signify?

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In whose hand will the two tribes be made one? What did this signal:

- In the flesh?
- In the spirit?

Where will the one nation in the land be located? V22

What do we know about this location? Eze 36:1-5

LESSON: The significance of the two branches of leadership among the children of Israel being made one, in the hand of the prophet (the flesh), is showing what God is doing on a *spiritual* level... a universe-wide level. In fusing those who have been wealthy in knowledge and understanding, and subsequently, materially, with those who have not been blessed with such bounty, God is forming them into one people for His *own* purpose. "...They shall be one in mine hand." V19

Under Gentile world rule, the haves and have nots have been divided based upon *skin-color*, black relative to white, and the many *shades* between the two. We don't exactly know why this was the construct for the Gentiles, but we *do* know the reason for the schism in leadership among the children of Israel, because we have studied their story.

God accepted David's offer to make the City of David, *Jerusalem*, His home in the earth because He loved David (2 Sam 7). And the son of David, Solomon, built the *temple* in Jerusalem. Judah, over whom Israel prophesied that "...the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come...", became the *keeper* of Jerusalem by *lot* (Josh 15:1, 8). It has just occurred to me, Jerusalem has not ceased from existing, even to this day, *unlike* Samaria, over whom Ephraim (Joseph) reigned.

God was working out His own purposes in leading the children of Israel into the promised land as one people, but the *one people* decided to *divide* in a struggle for supremacy (1 Kings 12:25-27), and as a result of Solomon's sin (1 Kings 11:11-13).

So, on a spiritual level, might God be working out His own purposes in getting *all* of Adam to actually *behave* as brothers and sisters of *one family*, and not just *say* they are *one family*? Might God be working out His own purposes in getting *all* of Adam to *choose* to govern themselves, instead of handing over their power to one person (with his/her own agenda) because it is easier than disciplining one's self? This reminds me of Deut 5:22-29, when the children of Israel *chose* to make Moses their mediator instead of taking on the responsibility of directly interacting with God Almighty themselves.

Choosing dictatorship, when the option of a personal relationship with God Almighty is available, is *regressive* – it is looking... no, actually, *choosing to go backwards!* Jer 8:5

It is noteworthy, that God specifically says that there would be one nation in the land upon the "mountains of Israel" in V22 of this section of scripture. This is a term we studied in Ezekiel 36 to mean the "mountains of he whom God rules" (Gen 32:28) – they are the mountains over which God rules, God's own habitation or *domain*, the place of *leadership*.

If the Jerusalem of the time of Judah was indeed the "mountains of Israel", why did God allow it to be conquered by the heathens? It was proposed in our study, at the time, that the

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“mountains of Israel” is not talking about the *physical*, but rather the *spiritual* domain of leadership, which is the domain of God Almighty.

VV24-28

Who is God saying will be king, after He has cleansed all of Israel and has brought them into “...the land upon the mountains of Israel”?

What else does God promise to do during this time? What is the significance of each of these promises?

- Everlasting covenant of peace
- Will place them and multiply them
- Set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever
- My tabernacle also shall be with them

Why is it important that the heathen know God is the one sanctifying Israel? How will they know?

LESSON: What are the promises being made in the mountains of Israel?

- An everlasting covenant of peace. Eze 34:24-31; Heb 8:7-13

When we studied Ezekiel 34, the message of *safety* was repeatedly conveyed in discussion of the covenant of peace in God’s holy hills. So, in this section of Eze 37, we understand that there will be nothing in the mountains of Israel that will cause people to *fear* because of God’s covenant of peace. Rev 21:8; 22:15

Who is the embodiment of God’s everlasting covenant of peace with Adam? Jesus.

- God will place them and multiply them. VV4-10

Recall the discussion above about the “crown of life” in which God has provided Adam a domain, which *is* a crown representing the *power* to be fruitful and multiply; *position* or place that *belongs* to Adam alone; and *authority*, the absolute *right* to operate freely within this domain. The *same* is the case for those who aspire to gain *more* in the kingdom, the *domain*, of God. These ones want nothing more than to serve God and participate in His purposes.

There is nothing wrong with striving for excellence or for additional *crowns*; however, one’s ambition should never be at the expense or *oppression* of another human being, who is *no less* than anyone else. That is not *right*, from God’s perspective.

Who is the embodiment of one striving to excel through *obedience*, seeking to do the will of His Father, i.e., fulfill the commandments of God? Jesus.

- God will set His sanctuary in the midst of them forever. 2 Sam 7:12-15

David offered to build God a house or sanctuary in the City of David, and God accepted, because He loved David. As we have studied this book of Ezekiel, we know what happened to that sanctuary built by Solomon, and the eventual eviction of that leadership. Nonetheless, God promised David that He would be a Father to his progeny, which included disciplining as needed, but that He would never withdraw His mercy from David’s house and his kingdom, which will stand forever.

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Who is the living embodiment and *descendent* of David? Jesus.

- My tabernacle also shall be with them

What is the difference between a sanctuary and tabernacle? According to this section of scripture, the tabernacle is the place of worship of one's God, where God addresses the needs of His people.

Who is the living embodiment of Priest over the people of God? Jesus.

Fear of failure kept the leaders of the 12 tribes from stepping forward into the relationship God was offering in Deut 5:22-29. God addresses this fear in this section of Ezekiel 37, assuring all people that he will provide them the strength needed to *not* stumble and fall, and *should* they stumble, His own beloved David will stand in the gap and intercede on their behalf... forever.

The heathen, one who does not know God as the children of Israel do, will *know* and have this *confidence* in the God of the Bible because they have witnessed and know the lengths to which God went to perform His will in Israel.

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