

## Why the Rebirth of Israel Is an End Times Sign

By [Jack Kelley](#)

*“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.” ~ (Matt. 24:32-33)*

Many students of prophecy identify the Lesson of the Fig Tree in Matt. 24 as a reference to Israel. While the fig tree is often used to symbolize Israel, this is not one of those times.

The fig tree is one of the last trees to bud in the spring, so when it begins to get leaves people know that summer is right around the corner. There'll be no more false starts, no more cold snaps. Summer is now certain and soon. Jesus used this analogy to tell people who'll be on Earth at the time that when they see the things he described beginning in Matt. 24:15, they'll know that His coming is really near.

Earlier in Matt. 24 He had told them that wars and rumors of war will be characteristic of the age (Matt. 24:6), and that the earthquakes and famines they'll notice will be like the beginning of birth pangs, mild and infrequent at first but more intense and more frequent as the end approaches (Matt. 24:7-8). Then there'll be increased anti-semitism, apostasy, false prophets and deception, in the midst of which the Gospel will be preached in all nations (Matt. 24:9-14).

But when they see the Abomination of Desolation, a man standing in the Temple telling people he's God, things will begin to get serious fast and the countdown will begin on the most terrifying period of time in the history of man. This is what He compared to the fig tree getting leaves. When they see that, they know that His return is certain and soon. That's the lesson of the Fig Tree.

### Now Where Do We Go?

So then, if the fig tree isn't symbolic of Israel why are we convinced that the events of 1948 marked the beginning of the end?

First of all, you don't need the Lesson of the Fig Tree to place Israel in Matt. 24. If you read the passage carefully, you'll see that Jesus gave three crystal clear signs that there would be a generation of Old Covenant following Jews in Israel at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, and that's the generation He's speaking to.

The first clue is the Abomination of Desolation, something that hasn't happened since Jesus gave the warning. It will be seen standing in the Holy Place. (Matt.24:15) That's the Jewish Temple, and it means there will be a Temple standing in Israel again before the Great Tribulation begins.

The second clue is that the people he's telling to flee are in Judea, the name by which the Biblical land of Israel was known during the time of the Lord's visitation. (Matt. 24:16)

And the third clue is for them to pray it won't happen on a Sabbath. (Matt. 24:20) Only observant Jews would be worried about this because they can only walk 1000 paces on the Sabbath, not nearly far enough to even get out of town, let alone into the mountains.

There are lots of other places where the Bible promises that the nation Israel will exist in its Biblical lands at the End of the Age as well, but the primary one is in Ezekiel 36-37.

Beginning in chapter 36 Ezekiel shifted from his message of judgment to one of future hope. He began writing these chapters after he learned that Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians and its desolation had begun. Having earlier prophesied against the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 6) he now began speaking promises to them. Reminding the mountains that he had pronounced judgment against the surrounding nations for trying to possess them, and for plundering and ridiculing the towns that had dwelt upon them, the Lord had Ezekiel say,

"But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children." (Ezekiel 36:8-13)

While this was partially fulfilled after the Babylonian captivity, the people were driven off the land again in the first century AD, so the complete fulfillment had to begin sometime after that. Earlier, Isaiah had prophesied that there would be a second return, and his contemporary Amos said that after that one they would never be uprooted again. So that's the one we're looking for.

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. (Isaiah 11:11)

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities

and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God. (Amos 9:14-15)

According to history the second fulfillment officially began in 1948. Why did the Lord finally do this? What had they done to deserve it?

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." (Ezekiel 36:22-23)

As far back as the wilderness wanderings, the Lord had foretold of Israel's diaspora (Deut 28:64-68) and subsequent regathering. (Deut. 30:1-4) Because of their disobedience they would be driven from the land. After an extended period of time He would bring them back, not because they deserved it, but because He had given His word. Their return would be a sign to all the world. A sign that the End of the Age is upon us.

Frequently the Lord had His prophets first give a sweeping overview statement to describe a promise and then fill in the details afterward. Such is the case with Ezekiel's next declaration.

"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!" (Ezekiel 36:24-32)

Clearly the complete fulfillment of this promise to Israel is yet future to us. But its magnitude is striking. God promised that Israel would be brought back into its Biblical lands, something we see is already in process. Then the people will be cleansed from all their sins, given a new heart, and the Holy Spirit will come to dwell within them. (Obviously, this hasn't happened yet, because it can only happen when one is born again.) Then the Kingdom promises will begin coming true and the people will remember their former sinful ways and detest themselves. This is another indication of the indwelling Holy Spirit's work, convicting them of their sins. This is the same way things happened for you and me. In a general sense, we knew we were sinners in need of a Savior when we first went to the altar, but we didn't understand the full extent of our depravity until after we were saved and the Holy Spirit began to reveal it to us in depth.

### **The Valley Of Dry Bones**

Now, let's look at Ezekiel 37 where the dramatic rebirth of the nation is foretold in the vision of the valley of dry bones.

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'" (Ezekiel 37:1-6)

Picture yourself standing in a large valley whose floor is strewn with bones. They're scattered around randomly, none of them connected to another, bleached and dry. It looks like they've been dumped there some time ago and left, as if whoever did it had no further use for them.

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. (Ezekiel 37:7-8)

In what looks like an animator's dream, the bones slowly begin to rise and join themselves together from the feet up to form skeletons, each bone in its proper place. Tendons appear and begin to snake along the bones attaching themselves

to make the bones move. As each one connects you can hear the clicking sounds of the tendons conducting tests, making the bones move on command. Muscle and flesh begin to cover them and finally skin spreads out along limbs and around torsos, enclosing the muscle and flesh and giving the bodies a finished, though lifeless, form.

Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. (Ezekiel 37:9-10)

The breath that gives them life comes from the four winds, used symbolically to represent a sovereign act of God. This tells us that though they are now living beings, they are not yet possessed of the Spirit of God. That will come later, as we’ll see. The people would first be gathered together in unbelief, a secular nation. This is seen in their status today, brought back after a 2000 year absence by a sovereign act of God, but not yet a covenant people again. This is what God meant when He said it wouldn’t be because they deserved it, but because He promised it.

Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophecy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’” (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

The complete fulfillment of the Dry Bones prophecy requires two more things only God can do. He must put His Spirit in them and He must bring the faithful of their past out of the grave to join them. His Spirit will come when they’re ready to recognize Him as the Messiah they put to death so long ago. Zechariah said this would happen during their final time of trial at the end of the age.

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. (Zechariah 12:10)

(In the Hebrew language, this verse reveals an astonishing secret. After the phrase They will look on me ... it contains two untranslated letters, an aleph and a tau. They are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. So the verse

literally reads, “They will look on me, the Aleph and the Tau ...” In Genesis 1:1 the same two Hebrew letters show up after the phrase In the beginning, God ... So it reads In the beginning God, the Aleph and the Tau ... In Genesis 1 the Father is in view, but in Zechariah 12 it’s the Son. Was God planting little clues that He and the Messiah are one? Well, look at Revelation 1:8;

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

The original language of the Revelation is Greek where the first and last letters of the alphabet are Alpha and Omega. Now let’s read the words of Jesus in Revelation 22:13;

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Aleph and Tau, first and last in Hebrew. Alpha and Omega, first and last in Greek. Both languages referring to both the Father and the Son. Someone’s trying to tell us something.)

Daniel 12:1-2 says that following the Great Tribulation Daniel’s people will come out of their tombs, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. This is the Bible’s first mention of two resurrections, one for the faithful and one for the damned. Those who are resurrected to life will dwell in Israel during the Millennium, the final fulfillment of Ezekiel 37:13. From Rev. 20:11-15 we learn that the resurrection of the damned will happen 1000 years later at the Great White Throne judgment.

### **One Nation Under One King**

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, ‘Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.’ Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, ‘Ephraim’s stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.

“When your countrymen ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’ say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph — which is in Ephraim’s hand — and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah’s stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.’  
(Ezekiel 37:15-19)

Then God had Ezekiel tell us of the reunion of the two kingdoms into one. The word translated stick of wood means scepter. It is a symbol of a king’s authority. By joining them together Ezekiel was symbolizing the two kingdoms, Israel in the

North and Judah in the South becoming one again as they had been in the beginning.

Some day a couple of clean cut young people might come to your door to tell you about the Mormon church. In the course of your discussion they may offer to show you proof that Joseph Smith, the Mormon church's founder, is named in the Bible. Turning to Ezekiel 37 they'll show you this passage and tell you that the word translated stick means scroll, or book (it doesn't). They'll say that Ephraim stands for the Mormon people and the stick of Joseph is the Book of Mormon, written by Joseph Smith. They'll say the passage means that one day the Book of Mormon will be merged with the Bible (Judah's stick) so that all the world will know that both are correct. But you'll know different, and will be able to prove it from the verses below. That will probably end the discussion.

Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 37:20-23)

This is the Lord's interpretation of the passage in question and makes it clear that He'll reunite the divided Kingdom and never again will there be two kingdoms on the mountains of Israel. But look at what he says next.

" 'My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.' "

(Ezekiel 37:24-28)

A descendant of King David's will be their King. He's called a prince to distinguish him from the Messiah who will be King of the whole Earth, and to demonstrate that he's a son (descendant) of King David's, not David himself. We know this because in the Kingdom Age he'll have to give a sin offering for himself as well as the people (Ezek. 45:22) David will be in his resurrection body, no longer be

contaminated by a sin nature.

The Lord will bring His ancient people into the everlasting covenant and He'll dwell among them in His Temple forever. He had Ezekiel devote 9 chapters to explaining in detail how this would come about (Ezekiel 40-48). This demonstrates the most obvious difference between Israel and the Church. Israel is promised that God will one day dwell among them on Earth forever. The Church is promised that we will dwell with Jesus in Heaven forever. While both promises come true, the people and the locations involved are clearly very different.

There are prophecies throughout the Bible that demonstrate the need for the nation Israel to exist again as the time of the end approaches. The ones I've emphasized contain the clearest pictures of modern Israel's development from a tiny remnant of an ancient people into a covenant nation that will once again be the center of God's attention and the pre-eminent kingdom on Earth. It's something only God could do, and it's no wonder that the enemy has dedicated all of his resources in an effort to prevent it. The battle of the ages is looming and Israel is right in the middle of it. You can almost hear the footsteps of the Messiah.