



**CAN  
THESE  
BONES  
LIVE?**

## “CAN THESE BONES LIVE”

Near Jerusalem, for nearly 4,000 years, deep in ancient tombs lie Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca. For nearly 4000 years, revered alike by Jews and Muslims and Christians. Their bones rest on in the hope of a resurrection.



Jerusalem—Jerusalem the golden; Jerusalem the invaded—by Assyrians, by Babylonians, by Medo-Persians, by Seleucids, by

Romans, by Mamelukes, by Crusaders, by Ottoman Turks, and by assorted Arab hordes.

Jerusalem—laid to rest in countless tombs carpeting the western slopes of Olivet. Jerusalem—its bones dried and scattered, bones dead for nearly 2000 years, bones resting on in the hope of a resurrection.

## **Can These Bones Live?**



Many years ago in the city of ancient Babylon the Jewish prophet Ezekiel was asked this very question in a vision.

“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.

And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many bones in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me “Son of man, can these bones live?”

“And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

“Again he said unto me

“Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

“So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and

behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone,

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Then he said unto me, “Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”

A dramatic story! Dramatically told! But what does it all mean?

As Ezekiel would say, “Hear the word of the Lord.”

“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 completely cut off.

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 ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

Since the twin destructions of Jerusalem under the mighty armies of the Roman generals Titus and Hadrian, the Jewish people entered a long period of dispersion, Diaspora, and their national hopes, like the bones in their ancient graves deep in the valley of the Kidron have been dead.

They have been dry bones. Bones with little hope of ever reviving.

They have been scattered bones. A people dispersed to nearly every country in the world with only their common faith as a bond.

They have been bones “completely cut off.”

As the prophet Hosea writes, “without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod and without teraphim.”

### **Can These Bones Live?**

It’s a difficult question!

It’s a serious question!

It’s a question worth asking!

History answers, “No!”

Babylon never came back!

Phoenicia has not returned!

Nor has Tyre; nor has Elam; or Philistia.

### **Can These Bones Live?**

Politics answers, “No!”

Not after being totally forbidden to inhabit their ancient homeland! Not after being denied access to their religious shrines! Not

after being dispersed so widely throughout the world!

Military strategists answer, “Never will these bones live! Not after their military might was so completely broken! Not after being denied responsible positions in the countries of their dispersion! Not after being so reviled in the few countries that gave them refuge!

**But the Bible answers, “Yes!”**

“These bones shall live!”

Current Events resoundingly echo: “Yes!”

In a twentieth-century miracle, the nation of Israel has been reborn—reborn in its ancient homeland; reborn against tremendous odds; reborn amidst a vastly outnumbered opposition.

Reborn and thriving!

## **Can These Bones Live?**

For over a century the history of the Middle East has been moving in steady steps toward the fulfillment of this prophecy of Ezekiel.

In 1878, after a ban of Seventeen Hundred Forty-three years, Israelis were given permission to own property in the ancient land of their forefathers.

In 1878 , they immediately established their first settlement, Petach Tikvah. Their return had begun.

In 1897, Theodor Herzl issued a world-wide call to organize the Zionist movement.

In 1917, Her Majesty's government of Great Britain endorsed a Jewish state in the famous Balfour Declaration.

From 1936 to 1945 over six million Jews were killed in the Nazi Holocaust.

In 1948, as a result of a United Nations partition, Israel became a sovereign nation.

Then, immediately challenged by an overpowering Arab force, an Israeli victory legitimized their declaration of statehood.

In 1956, an invasion led by General Nasser of Egypt was soundly repelled.

In 1967, the six-day war of Israel against another Arab coalition enlarged the borders

of the new state and Jerusalem was united once again under Jewish control.

In 1973, on the eve of the Jewish high holy day of Yom Kippur, a third Arab attack was again set back.

In 1989 the dismantled countries of the Soviet Union permitted the Jewish refuseniks to return to Israel.

In 1991 and 1992 repeated Scud attacks by Saddam Hasein of Iraq failed to dislodge the Israelis.

Dry bones returning to life. Scattered bones have become regathered bones. Bare bones have assumed sinew and flesh. Covered bones have been topped with skin.

## **But Can These Bones Live?**

What is the meaning of it all?

In the prophesy of Ezekiel the resurrection of the dry bones was a four-step process:

**First:** a thundrous noise and shaking brought the bones together.

**Second:** the regathered bones took on sinew and flesh.

**Third:** skin covered the bones and,

**Fourth:** after a lapse of time, breath came into the bones and they lived.

Let's look at these steps, one by one, and see how they have been fulfilled.

“As I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.”

- \* From Russia.
- \* From Germany.
- \* From Syria.
- \* From the United States.
- \* From England.
- \* From South America.
- \* From Yemen.
- \* From India.
- \* From Ethiopia.
- \* From China and Japan.
- \* From all over the world.

Israel - the people of history—now, the people of a miracle! Dry bones, shaking off the dust of twenty centuries. Regathering from every corner of the earth to Israel. Returning by boat, by plane and even by foot. Returning to their ancient homeland In an ever-growing stream, like the salmon to its spawning ground. Attracted like metal filings to a magnet, the people of Israel return to their native land! In one immigration after another.

- \* Lured by the promises of Zionism.
- \* Attracted by the financial investments of the Hirsches and the Rothschilds.
- \* Driven by the pogroms of unfriendly nations.
- \* Hunted by the persecutions of Nazism and the Holocaust.
- \* There was no place like home.  
And home was Israel!

“Next year in Jerusalem” became **THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM!**

However, though you may gather bones from the whole world all you really have is a pile of dead bones!

But this was only the first step in the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. Sinew, flesh, skin and life were yet to follow.

Ezekiel continues: "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them."

And so it was, even in those days when nationhood was but a vague hope, an infrastructure began to develop.

Under the encouragement of Chaim Weissman, the Hebrew University was formed. The Haganah, Mossad and Irgun formed the military muscle. Hadassah reached forth to provide medical services. Ben Yehuda resurrected the dead Hebrew language. A shadow government with such strong ambassadorial figures as David Ben Gurion, Chaim Weissman, Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir began to function in exile.

## **Bones And Sinews Were Appearing.**

But still they were just that; a government in exile. Skin had not yet appeared to give them the semblance of a nation.

## **And The Skin Covered Them From Above.**

As the close of World War II exposed the atrocities of the Holocaust to the public eye, the climate was set for the United Nations motion to partition Palestine and pave the way for a Jewish state.

On May 14, 1948, the ears of the Jewish people were pinned to their radios as the vote in the U.N. was tallied.

In Jerusalem David Ben Gurion capped the results by announcing a new state . . . the state of Israel, reborn from the dust bins of history.

Immediate recognition by world powers, beginning with President Harry Truman of the United States gave legitimacy to their claim.

Like any new birth, there were the pains of travail. Within hours an Arab coalition attacked to drive the new state into the sea. Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia from the East; Lebanon and Syria from the North; Egypt from the South. Blocked on the West by the Mediterranean Naval armadas on the Western Sea. Outnumbered, surrounded, outgunned, Israel fought back desperately.

They fought back and, despite all odds, they won!

The Bones had skin!

## **Israel Was A Nation!**

“But there was no breath in them.”

To be alive in the sight of the nations around them was one thing, to be alive in the sight of God was another!

In Ezekiel’s prophecy there was a time lapse between the bones assembling, growing sinews and flesh, being covered with skin, and then receiving the breath of life.

Notice the last step: “Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from

the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”

As with Adam in Eden, “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

In this prophecy, the breath, or life, was to come from the wind. Wind, throughout the Bible, even as in common usage, signifies trouble.

“Winds of war;” “winds of turmoil;” “winds of strife;” causing men to be as turbulent as the wind-driven waves of the sea.

Nor was it from wind alone, but specifically from “the four winds” that this breath was to come.

We read of these same “four winds” in a description of the future climactic battle of the ages in Revelation:

“I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on any tree.”

These “four winds of earth,” a virtual whirlwind of anarchy, depict a period of trouble which particularly involves the new-born nation of Israel.

This battle is described in great prophetic detail in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel.

While time does not permit an elaborate discussion of these chapters, they describe an invasion of Israel by a coalition of nations “from the north” during a time when Israel is dwelling “in peace and safety.”

A parallel account in Zechariah informs us that Jerusalem will be attacked and “the city shall be taken.”

But the defeat will be temporary for: “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”

God gives the reasons for this final battle in many places in the Bible:

Note what Ezekiel and Zephaniah prophesy:

“I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me.”

“Then will I take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride; and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies: neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

Then “they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

After trying heroically to save themselves by their own military might, Israel will learn their final lesson. It is their God alone who can ultimately bring deliverance and salvation.

The prophet Zechariah sums it up well: “Not by might, Nor by power, But by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

It is then: knowing the weakness of their own might, knowing the strength of their God, seeking and finding their Messiah, renewed in their faith in the Word of God, that breath will come upon them.

## **That Breath Will Be The Spirit Of The Lord:**

“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

Breathing, they shall live! Living, they shall teach others how to live:

“The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.”

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains,

and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow into it.

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

“In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Thus we have God’s promise that these bones shall live again.!

## **But This Will Be Only The Beginning!**

For we realize that these “bones that live” are an illustration of the resurrection of the dead.

For when these dry bones of Israel have breath and live, then the bones of Abraham

and Sarah and Isaac and Rebecca shall also live.

- \* Then the bones of ancient Jewry shall also live.
- \* Then the bones of Muslims buried near the golden gate shall also live.
- \* Then the bones of Christians buried deep in the Kidron valley shall also live.
- \* Then the bones buried in neat rows in Flanders' poppy fields shall also live.
- \* Then the bones of all who have ever died shall come to life.

### **But When Will It Be?**

The bones of Israel have been regathered!

They already have sinew and flesh!

The bones already have skin!

Thus we are on the very brink of the fourth step coming to pass: Israel receiving the breath of life. However, not only Israel but all people will receive life.

For this will introduce the greatest event in all human history—the Kingdom of God!

The kingdom of which men have dreamed.

The kingdom for which men have waited.

The kingdom for which Christian have prayed:

“Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

And what a kingdom that will be:

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened  
And the ears of the deaf shall be un-  
stopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an  
hart. And the tongue of the dumb sing: For in  
the wilderness shall waters break out, and  
streams in the desert.”

For “the ransomed of the Lord shall return,  
and come to Zion with songs and everlasting  
joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy

and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

## What a Promise!

The bones of Israel and all who have ever lived will become living bones, with flesh and blood—breathing bones, with life anew!

Yes, everyone,

\* Jews

\* Arabs

\* Christians

\* Heathen

\* and Atheists.

\* **All men** will all come forth from the tomb.

Unbelievable? Too good to be true? No!

Our faith is greatly strengthened when we realize Israel’s dispersion among the nations, and their gradual return of favor, is a direct fulfillment of prophecy given thousands of years ago.

And so we CAN be assured that God's promise of life to all who have ever lived, will also be fulfilled.

## **Rejoice!**

Rejoice in life coming to Israel's "dry bones!" Because it means that soon life will come to all the dead—regardless of their color, regardless of their creed, regardless of their nationality.

The return of Israel is the harbinger of the kingdom of God as surely as the robin is the harbinger of spring.