

ON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL

EZEKIEL 36-37

We've all heard advertisers and politicians offer more than they can deliver. It's been said, "The only person who makes more bombastic promises than a politician is a young man proposing marriage to his sweetheart." *Probably so!* Some promises are *too good to be true!*

Yet God made a promise... and He repeated it throughout the Old Testament. God promised that He would **return** the scattered Jews from the four corners of the world - **regather** them to the land He gave to Abraham - and **re-establish** His Kingdom on earth.

Yet for centuries respected Christian scholarship scoffed at such an idea. Roman Catholic theologians assumed God was through with the nation Israel. They spiritualized God's promises to the Jews, and applied them to the Church... Only a few faithful voices dared to take the Bible literally. The Puritans and some of the Reformers were early advocates of a Jewish restoration. They wrote of "the calling of the Jews."

But most scholars rejected God's promise. In fact, the 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica said of the Hebrew language, "The possibility that we can ever again recover the correct pronunciation of ancient Hebrew is as remote as the possibility that a Jewish empire will ever again be established in the Middle East." Yet today go to Israel and you'll witness regathered Jews speaking a revived Hebrew in their ancient homeland.

As it turns out God's promise to the Jews was **not too good to be true!** For after nineteen centuries of waiting, today that promise is being fulfilled *before our eyes!* Modern Jews are *making Aliyah* (a-lee'-ya, or immigrating to Israel). God and Zionism are bringing Jews from all the world back to their ancestral home.

On the mountains of Israel God is working a modern day miracle, and for the next two weeks I want us to look at the exciting prophecies in Ezekiel 36-39.

Chapter 36 begins, "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: "Because the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession,' therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Because they made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you are taken up by the lips of talkers and slandered by the people" - therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God!"

God through Ezekiel speaks to Israel's mountains and in one sentence summarizes 1900 years of history. *“Because they made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations...”* He speaks of what’s known as the Jewish Diaspora or *Dispersion*. How the Jews became the possession of the rest of the nations.

The Jewish Diaspora began with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans. Like Babylon six centuries earlier, Rome sacked the city of Jerusalem, burned the Temple; then stole its treasures. In the process the Romans killed a million Jews - the final few died at Masada near the Dead Sea. The rest of the Jews were scattered throughout the empire.

And for the next 1900 years the Jews lived as strangers in a strange land. *“The wandering Jew”* went from country to country seeking a place where he would be welcome - a home where he could live out his religion in peace - but everywhere the Jews went they encountered prejudice, hatred, and persecution.

Tragically, whether living under *the Muslim crescent* or *the Christian cross* they experienced a similar plight.

In 135 AD Roman Emperor Hadrian made it a capital offense to practice Judaism... Later emperors made it illegal for Jews to intermarry Christians... banned Jews from holding high office in the empire... massacred Jews who tried to re-entered Jerusalem to settle in the city... Yet as the Church’s persecutor, Rome, passed away from history’s pages, Jewish society lived on.

The same was true of muslim rulers. Over and over Jews were given an ultimatum *“convert to Islam or die.”*

And tragically life for Jews was no better under the Church. In 1096 Pope Urban II ordered the first Crusade to rid the Holy Land of muslims, but as the Crusaders traveled to Israel they practiced fighting on Jews. They killed Jews, burned synagogues, and assumed they were doing God a favor by ridding the world of Christ-killers... In 1215 at the fourth Lateran Council the Church ordered Jews to wear a badge distinguishing them from Christians. A scornful practice started **not** by German Nazis, but by the Roman Catholic Church... In 1290 Jews were ordered out of England... In 1306 banished from France... In the late 1400s the Spanish Inquisition slaughtered thousands of Jews... And in 1660 Jews were falsely blamed for spreading the Black Plague, and all over Europe panicked people spilled Jewish blood in retaliation.

Sadly the world’s rejection of Jews crescendoed in the early 20th century with the rise of Nazism and the horrors of the European Holocaust... Even today, a spike in anti-Semitism has again raised it’s ugly head.

In "Fiddler On The Roof," the old Jew, Tevye, prays, "I know, I know, we are the chosen people. But God once in a while can't you choose somebody else?"

For when God chose Israel for *special privileges, special obligations* were part of the deal. He promised the Jews *enormous blessing* if they kept His Law, but *enormous curses* if they rebelled. Sadly, rebel they did.

Their revolt came to a head by rejecting God's Son and their Messiah, Jesus. Jewish leaders stood at Pilate's judgment seat and cried, "His blood be on us and on our children." And it **has been** for 1900 years.

Once, a Jewish rabbi appeared before the Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. He said, "You cannot curse us for there is a blessing on us, and you cannot bless us for there is a curse on us." It wasn't Spain that had power over the Jews, God controlled their destiny. And for 1900 years He disciplined His people. God stood silently by as the Jews endure the pogroms, the horrors of ghetto life, even the Holocaust. As Ezekiel said of the Jews in verse 3, "*you became the possession of the rest of the nations... and slandered by the people...*" Yet, all the while, God's promise of restoration kept echoing in the background.

Verse 4 continues, "*Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and the cities that have been forsaken, which became plunder and mockery to the rest of the nations all around...*" As God dispersed His people, Israel, He brought desolation to their land.

During the 400 years of Arab rule; then the 800 years of Turkish rule, the land of Israel was never resettled. In 1881 only 300,000 people lived in Israel compared to the over two million during Roman times, and most of those people were nomadic. Under the Arabs and Turks the land was mistreated. Vast forests that in biblical times were covered with trees were denuded.

At one point, Turkish rulers taxed a landowner's trees, making it economically advantageous for him to cut them all down. Over time the land's fertile terraces eroded and its rich farmland turned into either swamps or desert. The ecological cycle was so disrupted that the plentiful rains that once watered the land dried up.

Mark Twain visited Palestine in 1867 and wrote of what he found... "A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds, a silent mournful expanse, a desolation... There was hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive and cactus, those fast friends of the worthless soil had almost deserted the country." Yet since then God has caused the desert to bloom. Isaiah 27:6 predicts, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Today Israel is one of Europe's leading suppliers of fruit. Citrus is now Israel's top agricultural export.

Verse 5, “Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country.” Here, in “*burning jealousy*,” God rebukes the nations who took the land He had promised the Jews.

Today, Arab nations accuse Israel of stealing land from the Palestinians, but the truth is before the Jews returned, biblical Israel was largely unwanted by anyone. It was untilled, uncultivated, worthless. It was only after the Jews returned and transformed the desert into a garden did the Arabs claim it as their own.

Today, Israel’s seven million Jews occupy less than 8000 square miles - the same size as the state of New Jersey - half the size of tiny Switzerland. While, their 150 million Arab neighbors live on five million square miles of land. *Yet the Arabs can't find room for their brothers?* They want Israel to give up their God-given land! This is what inflames God’s “*burning jealousy*.”

Verse 6, “Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have borne the shame of the nations.” Therefore thus says the Lord God: “I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame. But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come.” Realize, though over the years the Jews were forcibly removed from their land, they never relinquished their claim to that land, or abandoned their hope of returning.

The heart cry of the Diaspora Jew is found in Psalm 137:5, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth - if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.” Jews have always held out the biblical hope of returning to their ancient home.

One Hebrew rabbi living in Spain in 1100 AD wrote a poem titled “Ode to Zion.” “O city of the world (that is Jerusalem), with sacred splendor blest - my spirit yearns to thee from out of the far-off West - had I eagle's wings, straight would I fly to Thee - moisten thy hot dust with cheeks streaming free - in the East, in the East, is my heart, and I dwell at the end of the West...”

And God responds to this Jewish yearning of return in verse 9, “For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear

young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.”

From a human standpoint, the dream of Jewish return and regathering came about largely through the influence of a man named, *Theodore Herzl* - the father of modern Zionism. Herzl was a journalist covering a story in France, where he witnessed a mob become violent. They shouted, "death to the Jews." He realized the only hope for Jewish survival was an independent Jewish state... *Certainly, the Holocaust furthered that belief...* Yet Herzl founded the Zionist Organization, and began encouraging Jews to return to their home...

In 1881 there were 25,000 Jews in Palestine, by 1922 there were 83,000, by 1935 300,000, by 1965 the Jewish population was 2.2 million, by 1991 (*my first trip to Israel*) there were 3.5 million Jews, today 7 million Jews live in Israel... And after this latest wave of anti-semitism that number will surely grow... What Herzl saw as a secular imperative, Ezekiel saw as God at work. 2500 years ago Ezekiel foresaw God blessing the land, *and why?* He says, "they are about to come."

In 1950, two years after Israel became a nation, its Knesset enacted legislation, "The Law Of Return." So that the moment an exiled Jew sets foot on Israeli territory they become an official citizen. Now everyday at Ben Gurion airport you can watch Jews step off the plane weeping for joy, kissing the ground. Another wanderer is finally home. According to Ezekiel 36 you're witnessing the fulfillment of a 2500 year old prophecy.

Over the last century Israel has seen a massive ingathering of Jews, the desert has bloomed, fields are tilled and sown, forests planted, ruined cities rebuilt, people and livestock multiplied. *The land is in better shape than ever!* Today, Israel has a faster growing economy than the nations of Europe. It's fields are the bread basket of the Middle East. Israel is a technology center. It harvests minerals from the Dead Sea. It has rich reserves of natural gas, and is a world leader in diamond exports... It seems whatever Israelis touch turn to gold. God is blessing His people. *Here's why...*

Verse 12 speaks to the land, "Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance."

Then verse 15, "Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore," says the Lord God." Israel will no longer suffer ridicule, but stand tall among nations.

"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols

with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name - when they said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.' But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went." Understand, God's restoration of Israel and its land is not deserved. Have the Jews sinned? Yes! Do Israel's decisions and tactics always please God? No! His favor on the Jews is all about grace. *God's blessing* has had nothing to do with *Israel's goodness*. Despite her sin God has graced Israel for His holy name's sake - to bring Himself glory!

"And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes." In many ways Israel's idolatry and insolence gives God's reputation a black-eye. But in regathering the Jews He is glorifying His "*great name*."

Remember, at the time of Ezekiel, the Jews were living in exile, captives in Babylon. Yet in their darkest hour, God now shines His brightest light. He makes a NC with Israel that includes three huge blessings: A **regathering** to the land, a spiritual **regeneration**, and the **re-establishment** of His earthly Kingdom... And in the next verses Ezekiel lays out this New Covenant.

First, **the regathering** of Jews to their land. Verse 24, "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land."

Second a spiritual **regeneration**. Verse 25, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

Remember, the OC consisted of a set of rules. The pressure was on us to obey - to live up to God's laws. But ultimately, God was proving we can't do it on our own. The very best human efforts are never enough to measure up to God's perfect standards. And this is why the OC failed. The Jews were unable to fully keep it.

But the NC - *the covenant you and I have been made part of* - worked differently. Rather than be based on man's performance, under the NC God does the work. **The**

OC was back-breaking, the NC is knee-bending. **It's faith.** We trust God's Spirit to work in us.

Realize, at the heart of man's problem is a problem in his heart. Our basic instinct is sin. We're sinners by nature. Rebellion lies inside us. **It's not sinning that makes a man a sinner, he sins because he is a sinner.**

So often we focus on the symptoms, but the problem lies deeper... Every Sunday an old man would stand up in church and pray, "**Lord, clean out the cobwebs. O Lord, clean out the cobwebs.**" Finally one Sunday a young man stood up after him, and prayed, "**Lord, forget about the cobwebs, just kill the spider.**" And this is what the NC does. It goes below symptoms, and deals with the source of our sin, our rebellious heart.

Under the NC *God's Spirit* cleanses us. In the manner of a Jewish priest, Jesus our High Priest, spiritually sprinkles us with clean water. Ezekiel says God "**put(s) His Spirit within us.**" God takes out our heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh. Before you come to Jesus your heart is hard, callous, stubborn. But believe in Jesus and receive His Spirit and God gives you a soft, sensitive, repentant heart.

Under the NC God takes out a *defiance* and replaces it with *compliance*. *Here's how you know you're a Christian, is your instinct now to love God and others?*

But the NC includes one more promise... not only *a regathering, a regeneration*, but also **a re-establishing** of God's Kingdom. Ezekiel says in verse 28, "**Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.**" As in days of old God will rule over Israel in their ancient home...

In the first century, after the Jews returned from Babylon they saw their regathering as a fulfillment of the NC. Which made it a prelude to God bringing about His Kingdom. In John 3 this was the train of thought that prompted Nicodemus to approach Jesus. He was a teacher of Scripture. Nicodemus knew the NC. He understood God's kingdom was on the horizon. This is why Jesus said to him, "**Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.**" He'd witnessed the regathering, and was expecting the Kingdom, but the NC had a second clause - **a spiritual regeneration.**

Perhaps Nicodemus mistook the Pharisees' zeal for this experience. But Jesus says the NC is more than conforming to a Law, it's a transformation of the heart. We're changed from the inside - made alive spiritually.

God wanted to give Israel His Kingdom. Jews were *regathered*. Jesus would die to *regenerate* them. In fact, in the Upper Room He took the cup, and said, "**This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.**" He wanted to give the NC, the problem though was pride. The Jews wouldn't admit their need.

And they should've **known** of their heart of **stone**. Jesus asks Nicodemus, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" Then He told Nicodemus, "Unless one is born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God..." Jesus was taking this rabbi back to Ezekiel 36 and the NC.

Fast forward a few months after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. In Acts 3, Peter preaches the Gospel to the Jewish leaders. He tells them, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things..."

They'd been **regathered**. If they had repented they would've been **regenerated**, which would've opened the door for Jesus' return to **re-establish** the Kingdom. Sadly though, the Jews rejected Peter's message and refused to bow to Jesus. Thus, the Kingdom didn't come. Instead, God offered the Gospel to the Gentiles. And for the last 1900 years God has overseen a great harvest of souls and the building up of His Church.

Yet the provisions of the NC remain for Israel. And in the last days God will turn back to the Jews. This time Israel will repent and believe in Jesus, and God will take out their heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh. Romans 11:26 says, "All Israel will be saved."

In fact, Isaiah 11:11 makes a phenomenal promise. "It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again a second time to recover the remnant of His people." Israel will be regathered a second time.

And this is happening today! The first time was their return from Babylon. But today, it's occurring a second time. And this time the Jews will put their faith in Jesus. Zechariah 12 puts it, "They will look on Him who they have pierced." It'll take a great tribulation to open their eyes, but they'll see their need for Jesus; then their King will return and re-establish God's Kingdom.

Verse 29 continues, "I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations." This has now happened in Israel. Their fields are now fertile and prosperous. Verse 31, "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

But this is the part of the prophecy that hasn't happened. Nationally, Israel has yet to repent of their sin. Today, Israel's success are attributed to *the Jewish spirit* and *their will to survive* - not *God's mercy and grace*. Repentance won't occur until the last days...

And in Ezekiel 38-39 we'll study the event God uses to finally point His wayward people to their Savior.

Verse 33, "Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and **the ruins shall be rebuilt.**" Today, all over Israel you find cities rebuilt on **Tels** (*which are mounds of ancient ruins*). Tel Aviv is the largest. Yet it's true, "*the ruins have been rebuilt.*"

"The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.'" And this is happening... Early Jewish pioneers in the late 1800s, early 1900s drained swamps, stopped erosion, dug wells, enriched soil, developed new forms of irrigation. Jewish farmers turned a desert into *a garden of Eden*.

Visit Israel today and you'll see once-barren fields fertile, and once-vacant cities now bustling with traffic.

Verse 36, "Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it." "Thus says the Lord God: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the Lord." Jerusalem's population exploded during the prescribed feasts. But Ezekiel predicts Jews won't just flock to Jerusalem on *feast days*, but *every day!*

Chapter 37, "The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones." God is about to show the Prophet a strategic vision. God will regather the Jewish people to their homeland, **but here He shows Ezekiel how...** He takes the Prophet to an enormous graveyard. It's a valley full of human skeletons - decaying bones.

"Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry." The bones have been there a long time. That's why they're dry and brittle. And Ezekiel's vision is for the end times - *after the bones have been lying in the valley for a long time*.

"And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" This was a tough question. Ezekiel isn't sure what God is up to... what he sees is strange and confusing, yet I

love his reply. His response **lacks details, but it's full of faith**, "So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." His faith rests not in *what he sees*, but in *who He knows!* And this is the nature of true faith.

Verse 4, "Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! God orders Ezekiel to preach to a graveyard of bones! I heard of a pastor who complained of having to preach to a dead church, *but this takes the cake!*

Yet he obeys... "Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live." The Hebrew word for "breath" is "ruach." It's often translated *wind* or *spirit*. The Lord is going to breathe spirit or life into these skeletons - *but not yet...*

For He says first, "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone."

Remember the song, "The toe bone connected to the foot bone. The foot bone connected to the ankle bone. The ankle bone connected to the leg bone." The dry bones rattle, reassemble, and skeletons form, but...

Verse 8, "Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them." Once the bones rejoined, they were clothed in muscle and skin. The valley is now full of human bodies, but they're not yet alive. As we're told, "*There was no breath in them.*"

"Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army." And there's no need to guess the interpretation of the vision. It's given to us.

Verse 11, "Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' That's what the Jewish people themselves and their Gentile observers have said for 2000 years!

But here's how the Lord replies, "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from

your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.

Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord." Once the NC comes to Israel - the **regathering regeneration**, and **restoration** of God's Kingdom - all will know it was done by God.

Again, the importance of Ezekiel's vision is that it explains **how** the NC comes to Israel - **in two phases**... God regathers a secular nation. Dry bones assemble, are clothed in muscle and flesh, but with no breath, no life of God. This is the case with modern Zionism. Herzl was an agnostic and had a disdain for the Bible. He envisioned Israel as a secular state run by "**an immoral band of Free Thinkers.**" And that sums up Israeli leaders today. They pay lip service to biblical words and themes, but there're political pragmatists.

One of those leaders, Israel's inaugural Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, on May 14, 1948 declared to the world from Tel Aviv, the establishment of the modern state of Israel. The Jews were back - the dry bones had come together and had sinew and muscle. The first act in Ezekiel's vision had been fulfilled.

Yet now we wait. But at some point in the near future, perhaps in our lifetime, God will breathe His Spirit into His people the regeneration promised in the NC. Jesus foreshadowed this after His resurrection when He breathed on His disciples, and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**" **One day, He'll breathe on a nation!**

Then the remainder of Chapter 37 describes the Kingdom of God that follows. Jesus will unify Israel's fighting factions. Verse 22, "**one King will be King over them all.**" Today, Israel is a parliamentary democracy. But when the Jews embrace their Messiah, Jesus will return to sit on David's throne and rule the world as King of kings. **His kingdom come** will finally be a reality.

When the famous Count Zinzendorf stood trial for his faith in Jesus, the Prussian infidel, Frederick the Great, asked him, "**Give me one infallible proof that the Bible is the Word of God?**" Zinzendorf replied, "**The Jew.**"

The survival of the Jew has been nothing short of a modern-day miracle. No people group in history has been exiled and scattered for 2000 years - endured countless persecutions - the Inquisitions, the Crusades, even the Holocaust - yet still manage to retain their identity, language, religion - then be regathered as a nation twice in their ancestral home.

It was Mark Twain who wrote, "**The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they**

sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts.... All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains. *What is the secret of his immortality?"*

The secret is that the Jew is a beneficiary of God's never-failing promises. It's taken 2500 years and counting, for us to see Ezekiel's prophecies begin to be fulfilled, but God always completes His promises. No matter how preposterous they seem - no matter who might scoff - His promises are always sure and certain. That's true of His promises to the Jew... **and to you!**