

**YHWH's Original and Ultimate Vision
for Israel as His Covenant People**

Ezekiel 37:15–28

Veritas Sabbath School

May 1, 2021

The Renewal of YHWH's Eternal Covenant with All Israel

¹⁵The following message of YHWH came to me: ¹⁶As for you, human, take a single piece of wood and write on it, ‘Pertaining to Judah and to the sons of Israel who are associated with him.’ Then take a second piece of wood and write on it, ‘Pertaining to Joseph and to the entire family of Israel associated with him.’ ¹⁷Set them side by side for yourself to create a single piece of wood. They shall form a single entity in your hand. ¹⁸Now when your compatriots ask you, ‘Will you not explain to us what these things mean to you?’ ¹⁹then you shall respond, ‘Thus has the Lord YHWH has declared:

‘Look! I am taking the wood of Joseph—which is in Ephraim’s hand— along with the tribes of Israel, which are associated with him, and placing them upon it, that is on the wood of Judah, and I will make them into a single piece of wood. And they will form a single entity in my hand.’

²⁰Let the pieces of wood on which you write lie in your hand for them to see.”

²¹Now declare to them, “Thus has the Lord YHWH declared: ‘Look! I will take the descendants of Israel from the nations among which they have gone. I will regather them from all around and bring them back to their own land. ²²I will make them into a single nation within the land, on the mountains of Israel. Then a single king will be king for all of them. Never again will they be two nations, and never again will they be divided into two kingdoms. ²³Never again will they defile themselves with their pellets of dung, with their disgusting practices, or their rebellious actions. I will rescue them from all their apostasies, by which they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. ²⁴And my servant David will be king over them, and there will be a single shepherd for all of them.”

Then in my stipulations they will walk and my ordinances they will observe and put them into practice. ²⁵They will occupy the land I gave to my servant Jacob, and in which your ancestors lived. They, their children, and their grandchildren will occupy it forever. And David my servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶I will make with them a covenant of peace; it will be an eternal covenant with them. I will give to them [the land of Israel] and multiply them. I will place my sanctuary in their midst forever. ²⁷My residence will be over them, and I will be their God and they will be my people. ²⁸And when my sanctuary is in their midst forever, then the nations will know that I am YHWH, the one who sanctifies Israel.

Exposition**Introduction**

The Relationship between 37:1–14 and 31:15–28

1. The sign-act involving two pieces of wood representing the southern and northern kingdoms answers directly to the first objection raised (v. 11).
2. The reference to “the whole house of Israel” in verse 16 deliberately picks up the same expression we saw in verse 11, except that now it refers unambiguously to the northern tribes of Israel.
3. YHWH reiterates his promises in verses 12b (“I will bring you into the land of Israel” and 14b (“I will place you in your own land).
4. This is another example of “halving” prophecies by presenting them in two comparable panels (here 14 verses each; 212 words vs. 236 words), with the second presenting a response to the first.

Theological Progression in Ezekiel 37:15–28	YHWH unites the unified nation with himself in a permanent covenant relationship (vv. 24b–28).
	YHWH unites two kingdoms in a political and spiritual union (vv. 21–24a).
	YHWH unites two sticks in a physical union (vv. 18–20).
Ezekiel unites two sticks in a physical union (vv. 15–17).	

A. Ezekiel’s Sign-Act Performance (vv. 15–17)**B. YHWH’s Sign-Act Performance (vv. 18–20)****C. YHWH’s Interpretation: The First Tablet (vv. 21–24a)**

1. The Restoration of Israel’s Ethnic Integrity (v. 21a)
2. The Restoration of Israel’s Territorial Integrity (v. 21b)
3. The Restoration of Israel’s Political Integrity (vv. 22, 24a).
4. The Restoration of Israel’s Spiritual Integrity (vv. 23–24a).
 - a. YHWH will rescue the Israelites from their “apostasies”
 - b. YHWH will purify them.

D. YHWH’s Interpretation: The Second Tablet (vv. 23b–28)

1. The Evidence of Israel’s Renaissance (vv. 24b–25)
 - a. The nation will have a new commitment to the will of YHWH, their divine patron forever.
 - b. The Israelites will occupy their hereditary homeland forever.
 - c. Israel will enjoy the rule of David, YHWH’s servant, forever.
2. The Source of Israel’s Renaissance (vv. 26–27)
3. The Impact of Israel’s Renaissance (v. 28)

E. Theological Lessons from Ezekiel’s Last Sign-act (37:15–28)

1. This oracle reinforces Ezekiel’s exalted view of God.
2. This oracle reinforces Ezekiel’s realistic view of God’s people.
3. This oracle reinforces Ezekiel’s complex view of the Messiah.