

EZEKIEL Chapter 37 (addendum)

(These additional verses only appear in the Great Wenchester Bible, and are said to be based upon a papyrus fragment brought back from the Holy Land by Baron de Boeuf in 1206. It is believed that William Shakespeare had sight of the fragment when writing "King Lear", for there are several phrases which he uses in Act 3, scene 2 of that play. For five centuries the papyrus was safely stored in the Cathedral but when in the 1760's parts of the building were leased to market traders, it disappeared. The story goes that a fishwife named Fanny Codpiece used it to wrap up a fresh haddock for the Dean.)

After verse 14:

And the Lord said unto me, Son of man, take thou more of the root that I showed thee and eat of it, and I did so, and chewed it thoroughly.

And soon the hand of the Lord was again upon me, and carried me out in a vision and set me down upon a large forested plain surrounded by mountains.

And the Lord caused a strong wind to blow, and I was embarrassed.

And then came a mighty tempest and the trees were uprooted and the floor of the plain was swept as if with a large brush, and the rocks laid bare.

And I saw in the rocks more dry bones, and these were mighty in their size and thickness, and possessed of large teeth.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, Lord, thou hast shown me this trick before, but I shall wait on thy pleasure.

And he said unto me, Answer the question, so I replied, Lord, thou knowest.

And as before he instructed me saying: Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with thick scales and skin and feathers, and put breath in you, and ye shall live.

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, (just as before, let the reader understand), there was a noise, and behold the earth shook, and the bones were raised up out of the dirt, cleaving one unto the other, each according to its kind.

And as I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin and scales and feathers covered them as befitted their kind: but there was no breath in them.

Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord; Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow O breath, and breathe upon these creatures, that they may live.

So I prophesied as commanded of me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up, and roared mighty roars, and gnashed their teeth, and fought with each other, tearing the flesh and snapping necks, whilst above soared mighty birds, long in tooth and claw.

And I said, What are these mighty Leviathans, Lord? And whither are they from?

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these creatures are those which were before the time of Noah, and which after many years of being fruitful and multiplying were destroyed in a mighty fall from the sky, and they are disappeared from the face of the earth.

And he showed me fire from the sky, such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder, such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never remember to have heard. And the creatures died and their flesh melteth away.

Then he said, But lo, see thou another vision.

And the plain with its creatures disappeared from before me as in a mist, and I saw an island whereon these creatures lived again, and I saw men, husbanding them, and enclosing them with high walls.

And all seemed in order, but then the creatures ran free and made havoc amongst the people. And I saw this vision five times.

And I said, Lord, we are lost.

And he said, Son of man, be not afraid. These are but images made to entertain those of simple minds. For the time shall come when men believe they are masters of the universe, but the earth shall remind them that I am the Lord.

And at once I found myself in my house holding a stick in my hand.

And the word of the Lord came again unto me, saying,

Write upon this stick the visions for the peoples of a land yet to be. For in that holy wood shall these things come to pass.

The Canonical text resumes at verse 15.