

# VALLEY OF DRY BONES

## Int.

1. Aim: To show some valuable lessons from this story in Ezekiel
2. Ezekiel 37 introduces us to a rather unusual lesson that God taught through the prophet Ezekiel.
3. At this time the Jewish people were in Babylonian captivity.
  - a. The reason for their captivity is because of their sin
  - b. It is possible that many of the valleys in Palestine were marked by the bones of people who were slain by the invading armies of Babylon.
  - c. In his early life Ezekiel may have seen some of these battles and seen his people being killed
4. Now God is speaking to Ezekiel telling him about the things that are going to happen to his own nation and his own people.
5. We will notice the text, the application and some lessons from this experience of Ezekiel

## Discussion

- I. **THE BIBLE STORY - Ezekiel 37:1-14**
  - A. Ezekiel was taken into a valley full of dead men's bones - v. 1-2
    1. God took him on a spiritual trip - not an ordinary trip - vision
    2. Valley was full of bones - set down in the midst of this valley - very many bones
    3. These were the bones of people who had been killed - v. 9
    4. They were very dry indicating that they had lain exposed to the elements for many years. They were not skeletons, but scattered bones

5. The bodies of these killed had not been buried

B. V. 3

1. God asked Ezekiel if those bones could live - to human reason and power it was an impossibility
2. Ezekiel's response was, **"O, Lord God, you know."** - the prophet knew that God alone had the power to do such a wonder.

C. V. 4 God then instructed Ezekiel to go preach to those bones.

1. Go prophesy to these bones
2. Tell them the word of the Lord

D. V. 5 & 6

1. Will cause breath to enter - spirit shall inhabit them
2. Gen. 2:7 **And 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.**
3. Tells how the bones will be revived with flesh and skin and muscles

E. V. 7 & 8

1. When Ezekiel did as commanded, the bones took on ligaments, muscles and flesh.
2. A noise and shaking as the bones came together - rattling
3. The bodies were restored but they had no life in them

F. V. 9 & 10

1. After preaching more, the bodies became alive again.
2. The finishing stage brought breath or spirit to these bodies
3. A great army is now alive and restored - they had been killed in battle now they are restored to life.

## **II. THE APPLICATION**

- A. V. 11-14
1. In this context God was informing Israel that God could raise them up out of their spiritual graves and restore life to them once again.
  2. The Northern kingdom of Israel had been destroyed and taken captive.
  3. Now the Southern Kingdom of Judah had been taken captive and their land left desolate.
- B. The survivors felt that all hope was lost that they could ever be restored and be a nation again.
- C. But the prophet told them about this vision to give them hope and encouragement.
- D. In the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah these prophecies were fulfilled and the nation of Judah was restored to their homeland.

## **III. PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM EZEKIEL 37**

- A. **One needs to obey God, regardless**
1. Ezekiel's instruction did not seem to be a very rational thing to do.
  2. But God commanded it, and it needed to be obeyed.
  3. There are yet many commands that give people problems today because they seem to lack explanation
    - a. Baptism - Acts 2:38
    - b. The cross - 1 Cor. 1:18 **For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.**
    - c. The Lord's Supper - Mk. 14:22-25

4. Jer. 10:23 - **O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps.**
5. Isa. 55:8-9 God's ways are not always our ways. ---- **For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

**B. Nothing is impossible with God.**

1. There is no hopelessness with God.
2. Ezekiel preached to a bunch of dry bones and was successful.
3. We need to preach and let the gospel do its work - Rom. 1:16
4. 1 Cor. 3:5-6 - we are to plant and water while God will take care of the growth
5. Look at what God did with Paul - Acts 22:3-5 **I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.**

**C. Ezekiel preached what he was told to preach**

1. Ezek. 37:7 **"I prophesied as I was commanded** and v. 10
2. Jonah 3:2 **"Preach the preaching I bid you..."**

3. Would they have had results if they had preached something else?
4. "Preach the Word " 2 Tim. 4:1-5
5. A watered-down gospel that appeals to social and recreational concerns will not convert the lost.
6. 1 Pet. 4:11 - we must speak the oracles of God.

#### D. **There is a need for self examination**

1. Could we be like those dead, dry bones of Ezekiel?
2. Could we look alive outwardly, but in reality be dead - Sardis - Rev. 3:1?  
**"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."**
3. Israel was dead in their graves, but was promised revival by God if they turned back to Him.
4. This is exactly the message that is needed today.
5. Remember, repent, and return - Rev. 2:5

#### E. **We Can Become Discouraged**

1. Just like Israel in these days of Ezekiel we can become discouraged
2. We see sin all about us - we see some of our own fellow Christians who have fallen away -
3. We think that it may be an impossible task to save anyone
4. Gal. 6:9 **"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."**

5. 2 Thes. 3:13 **"But ye brethren, be not weary in well doing.**
6. God is with us and we can succeed. **"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."** Phil. 4:13

#### F. **We will be Resurrected**

1. God was able to bring these bones together again and put flesh and breath back into them and make them live.
2. So God can resurrect our bodies after death.
3. The body is the only thing that dies when a human dies.
  - a. The soul, the spirit, the inner man, that which is the offspring of God does not die and therefore it cannot be resurrected.
  - b. In the resurrection the body will be brought back to life and returned to that part of us which did not die.
4. 1 Cor. 15 describes what it will be like when we are resurrected

#### **Conclusion**

1. We today, have a seemingly impossible task, much like that of Ezekiel - world dead in sin
2. We have been told to go preach the gospel of Christ to a dead world.
3. All can be made alive through the gospel - 1 Cor.15:22 **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**
4. We become A part of God's living Army
5. The gospel is God's powerful means of saving man - Rom. 1:16-17
6. The gospel moves people to do as God commands, if they believe it.
7. May the lessons discussed inspire us to do our part, and the power of God's word will do the rest.

## Sources

1. Annual Lesson Commentary June 23, 1957 P. 137 ff
2. Annual Lesson Commentary Sept. 20, 1964
3. K & D Commentary and other commentaries

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