**Ezekiel 37 The Valley of Dry Bones**

The promise of a resurrection, and of the calling of a remnant into the Kingdom of God.

Have you ever gone through a dry time in your life?

Have you ever felt hopeless—like you might as well give up?

Context:

Ezekiel 1:1 “In the thirtieth year in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. The year was 592 BC.

[Fun fact: Ezekiel had just turned 30. This was when he could begin his ministry as a priest. He had prepared all his life. But just as he became eligible, God called him to the office of prophet instead.]

Ezekiel is in captivity in Babylon. Jerusalem lays in ruin (586 BC). The covenant appears to be annulled, as sacrifice can no longer be offered. It is hopeless.

By the time Ezekiel 37 was recorded, the temple had been destroyed, as Ezekiel prophesied many times.

Ezekiel 10 God abandons the temple due to the blatant sin and idolatry of his people.

Their situation is our situation outside of Christ. We, too, have been kicked out of the kingdom/the Garden.

We, too, were exiles from the Kingom of God. We, too, were captives. For us, as well, the temple—access to God—was shut down.

Who is this prophecy about? This is a kingdom prophecy. Its principle subject is Israel, defeated, scattered and in ruins.

Ezek 37:1-2 These bones aren’t just dry, they are “very dry”. The situation is hopeless. God loves a hopeless situation. So should we.

37:3 God: Can these bones live?

Wisely, Ezekiel says “O Sovereign Lord, you alone know”

What about your neighbor: Can these bones live? What about your marriage: Can these bones live? What about your career, your spiritual life, your children who have gone into the world. Your addiction. Can these bones live?

I. Step one: Hear the word of the Lord!

37:4 What is the solution to spiritual death? “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.”

Can it be brought back to life? Yes!!! How, by hearing (and listening to) the Word of the Lord.

Q: Have you heard the word of the Lord?

Are you listening? Are you earnestly seeking his will? (James 1:22-25, Isaiah 6:9)

37:5-8 A truly bizarre vision. “I heard a rattling sound.”

Frankenstein: He’s Alive!!!

Are these bones alive for hearing the Word of the Lord?

No! Not yet!!!

37:9-10 v. 10 Breath entered them and they came to life—a vast army.

How can we be raised from the dead? By receiving the Holy Spirit.

Breath = pneuma = Spirit

When we receive the Holy Spirit at baptism, we come to life, spiritually. (Zech 4:6 Romans 8:9-11)

Before you received the Holy Spirit at baptism:

Eph 2:1 You were dead in your sins, in which you used to live.

Eph 2:5 But God made you alive with Christ even when you were dead in your transgressions…. And God raised you up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms.

Coll 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Folks, this is your life if you will come into Christ.

If you are in Christ, this is the life you must embrace, because it is already but not yet.”

37:11-14 God interprets the vision. The primary application is to Israel. They were “dead” in Babylon, but God will bring them back to life in Canaan. “I will settle you in your own land.”

Aside: Ezekiel 36:1 The Mountain of the Lord

36:22f Good news for God’s people.

36:22-23 It is not for your sake that I do this. You were not awesome!!! It is for my holy name and for my holiness.

We need to remember this. Reminds of Deut 7:7-9 (also remember Deuteronomy 8:1-18).

It is not like we did a great job.

Q: Why does God do all these great things for us?

v. 22 “for the sake of my holy name.”

Actually, we had profaned his holy name. (v. 23)

36:24-36 You will be a remnant devoted to me. A prophecy of the New Covenant.

-from all nations 24

-cleansed with water 25

-a new heart and a new spirit (born again) 26

-receive the Holy Spirit 27

No wonder Jesus challenged Nicodemus that he should have known this was coming. (John 3:10)

-blessings (physical rather than spiritual This is the Old Testament) v. 29-30

Q: Do you “loathe yourself for your sins and detestable practices”?

-repentance 31

Q: Do you loathe your sins and detestable practices?

God is not all that concerned with self-esteem. He cares about God-esteem.

- I am not doing this because you were doing so awesome 32

-much fruit 33f …like the garden of Eden v. 35 Symbolic of being in the Kingdom of God.

Parallel to Isaiah 65:19-25 where the vision is of the Kingdom of God/restored Israel/the Church/ Heaven. Note the symbolism is of physical things.

v. 33 Q: What ruins in your life can you see God restoring and rebuilding?

v. 35 Your life was “laid waste.” Do you accept this truth?

Then….. v 36 A recurring theme in Ezekiel. We will be returned to the Garden of Eden.

Q: What did we have there? DVDs? Computers? Great sports? 401Ks?

v. 36 What will “the nations around us” see?

Ezek 37:21-28

37:22 A clear messianic prophecy. (but a double or even triple kingdom prophecy)

**One nation v. 22**

**One king v. 22**

**I will save them v. 23**

**I will cleanse them v. 23**

**My servant David will be king over them v. 24, 25**

**A new covenant. v. 26**

**My people. v. 27 (Hosea 2:23)**

**I will dwell (tabernacle) with them v. 26-27 John 1:14**

If time: Isaiah 65:17-25 This is the mountain we will live on…. In some sense we already live on this mountain, but in heaven it is fully realized.