**Ezekiel Sermon #6 Merced**

**Ezekiel 37 The Valley of Dry Bones**

**Themes in Ezekiel:**

1. The sovereignty/glory of God.

2. The utter sinfulness of human beings.

3. The inescapability (and justice) of God’s judgment.

4. The return of the King and the restoration of God’s remnant to glory.

So far: **I Ezekiel commissioned as the Watchman of Judah.**

**II Powerful Symbols: God is coming in judgment on his people because of their sin.**

**III. Ezek 18 God’s Justice.**

**IV. Ch 19-24 The End of the Road**

**V. Ch 34-36 The Messiah is coming. God Will Call a Remnant.**

Ezekiel 34 Shepherds, sheep and the Good Shepherd.

What is the job of the shepherd?

1. Ezek 34:2 To take care of the flock.

2. 34:4 Take care of the weak.

3. 34:4 Bring back the strays.

4. 34:4 Bring in the lost.

34:22-31 God’s shepherd—the Messiah—is coming!

Ezekiel 36 God is calling a remnant.

36:24-29

Ezekiel 37 Valley of Dry Bones.

The promise of a future 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?

God has given up on me. I am a hopeless person.

Context:

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.

Devastation! Hopeless! God has abandoned his people. The city and temple are destroyed.

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 37:1-3 These bones aren’t just dry, they are “very dry”. The situation is hopeless. God loves a hopeless situation. So should we.

Dry bones as far as the eye could see…

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,

What about your spiritual life

What about your children

What about your family Can these bones live?

What about your addiction. Can these bones live?

Do you need resurrection in your life? Or maybe not right now…

God’s plan for hopeless situations:

I. Ezekiel 37:4-8 Step one: Hear the word of the Lord!

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? What have you done this week/month specifically, to hear the Word of the Lord?

Are you listening? Are you earnestly seeking his will? (Isaiah 6:9-10, James 1:22-25)

And what is the message: There is hope! v. 5 “you will come to life.”

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!!! Hearing is not enough. They need to be born again. Right, Mulero?

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, rem Ezek 36:26-27)

We 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.”

I will bring you back. God wants to restore his people and he wants to restore you. God wants to open your grave.

Ezek 37:15-28

v. 15-17 No, these two sticks are not the Bible and the Book of Mormon!

v. 20-21 Restoration imagery

37:22 One King. A clear messianic prophecy. (but a double or even triple kingdom prophecy. Remember: Restoration of Judah, church, final kingdom of God)

Let’s create a picture of what God has in mind for us:

**One nation v. 22**

For the early church (and the book of Romans) This is about joining Jew with Gentile. Ephesians 3:2-6.

For us, it is about restoring marriages, families, friendships, communities.

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 Zech 14:16

Summary:

As long as we are alive, no situation is truly hopeless to God.

God is in the business of giving life to dead bones.

The solution?

Hear the Word of the Lord.

Let God breathe new life in us through the Holy Spirit.

The Messiah, King David, is coming and he will dwell among us.

Ezekiel 38-39 God and Magog—the enemies of God’s people—come to attack God’s people in unwalled cities. But God destroys Gog and Magog. God’s people are saved.

The message: God is in control. It may look bad. It may look like God’s enemies are winning, but God is in control and he will win.

Some of us feel like we can’t make it. Can I really make it all the way to the end? Will I be overcome by sin and go back to the world?

It seems like our enemies are lined up against us.

Q: Has anyone felt this way at one time?

Jim McGuiggan: Gog is a grand illustration of any and all who oppose God’s people.

Magog is the forces of evil arrayed against us

Gog is the evil person working against us.

38:1-6 I am against you Gog, and your people Magog.

Meshech and Tubal are two tribes in Asia Minor. Herodotus tells us that they were involved in the slave trade. Gog and Magog have allies from Persia (east), Cush (Ethiopia, south), Put (North Africa, west) and Gomer and Togarmah (north) In other words, Israel is surrounded!

Q: Have you ever felt “surrounded” by the world/by forces of evil? What thoughts came into your mind at the time?

38:7-12

v. 8 You will invade the Promised Land “gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel”

v. 10-12

v. 11 unwalled cities. God’s people living in security. No problem. God will destroy them without a shot. The world will (foolishly?) think you are defenseless.

39:1-10 God will defeat our enemies and give their things to us. Do not fear.

We can live in great confidence

2 Cor 10:3-5 We have powerful weapons. They demolish strongholds.

Hebrews 13:5-6 What can man do to me?

Eph 6:10-20 Full armor. Mighty power.

Ezekiel 39:25-29 This is what it is about. This vision is to encourage God’s people that he will protect them.

Q: What will God do for you/us?

v. 26 We can forget our shame and our unfaithfulness.

v. 27 God will prove himself holy through us.

v. 28 Sure, I sent them into exile, but I will restore them to their proper place with me.

v. 29 I will pour out my Holy Spirit on them.

This is the same Holy Spirit which is a deposit, guaranteeing our salvation until the appearing of Jesus.

**VI. Ezekiel 40-48 God has restored his remnant.**

Ezekiel 40-48 The temple rebuilt. The remnant is reestablished.

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the Kingdom of God/God with his people. Do not get caught up in the details. It gives very precise instructions for building the restored temple.

Is it about the restoration of the kingdom and the temple in 516 BC? Yes

Is it about the church and the heavenly tabernacle? Yes

Is it about the ultimate embodiment of the tabernacle/Kingdom of God/Heaven? Yes.

This section is about God’s holiness—his perfection, and about dwelling with God.

Ezek 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile and the 14th year after the destruction of Jerusalem (572 BC)

Sample passage Ezek 40:20f

Ezek 43:1-5 The glory of the Lord returns to the temple (after leaving it Ezekiel 10:18). He enters through the East Gate (as he had exited it through the East Gate).

Application: God comes and dwells in us as a temple. This is our spiritual resurrection (Ezek 37)

We sinned. God left us, but now, we have been restored and God is entering his temple.

a. Individually we are the temple of the Lord 1 Cor 6:19-21

Q: How does this knowledge affect how you think about yourself?

b. Collectively we are the temple of the Lord (Eph 2:19-22)

Q: How does this knowledge affect how you think about yourself?

43:10-12 Why is God giving us all this precise details? “that they may be ashamed of their sins.”

What a strange statement. Why does God say this to Israel? To us?

Hebrews 8:3-6 “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” (or in Ezekiel 40-48).

43:12 All the area on top of the mountain will be most holy.

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.

[44:2 The East gate is to stay shut (because only the holy can enter through the East gate.]

[46:1-3 Except on Sabbaths and New Moons.]

[44:15f Only the Zadokites (also 43:19) (a particular family of Levitical priests) have been righteous (for example when they supported Solomon when others were opposing him). They can minister in the temple.

Point: We are the spiritual Zadokites.

v. 23 teach the difference between the holy and the common.

v. 28 I am to be their only inheritance. They will have no possessions in the land.

Q: Application to us? Are you prepared to have God as your only inheritance?]

Ezekiel 47 A vision of the future.

The river from the temple. Parallel Revelation 22:1-5, This is about God taking care of his people in need. It has imagery from the Garden of Eden.

v. 1-2 It comes from the temple—from God.

v. 3-5 It gets deeper and deeper.

v. 8 It is living water (Zech 14:8, John 7:37-39) How has God given you life?

John 7:38 Whoever believes in my, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. (by this he meant the Holy Spirit)

Ezek 47:12 God will provide food in abundance.

Parallel:

Revelation 22:1-6 Perfect Provision.

Q: What do you feel that you need?

John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, streams of living water

End Ezekiel 48:35 We are back in the garden and “The Lord is There.”