

CAN THESE BONES LIVE

EZEKIEL 37

Text: Ezek. 37:3

(Ezekiel 37:3) "And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest."

Introduction:

The prophet Ezekiel lived in desperate times. The nation of Israel had been carried off into captivity by the Babylonians. Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel. While Jeremiah stayed behind in Jerusalem to prophesy to those who were not carried off into captivity, Ezekiel and Daniel were prophets to the Jews in captivity. He was taken as a captive to Babylon. There he settled in his own house in a village along the river Chebar. His ministry lasted approximately 22 years.

Ezekiel was a prophet. Every true prophet of God was given divine revelation and then it was his responsibility to share that message as God directed. There he is told that a man who is given a message of God and fails to deliver it is likened to a man who is a watchman on the wall who sees the enemy come upon the city but he fails to sound the alarm. That

watchman would be guilty of the blood of the people he failed to warn, just as the prophet who fails to give the people God's message is guilty of the blood of those people.

There were times when these prophets would have experiences in which God would give them a visual revelation of something that had a spiritual lesson or message. The idea was that they would be so impacted that the message would become a part of them.

God gave the responsibility to Ezekiel of keeping before the captives the sin that brought God's hand of judgment upon them. Ezekiel was constantly saying ... you are here because you rebelled and disobeyed and did not keep the covenant of your God. If you would have only listened to God as He spoke to you through His prophets we would not be in this mess. To counter balance that negative message God also gave him the responsibility of sharing that the future was bright. In the future God had plans for these His people. The captivity is set, it would be for a full 70 years but understand that God is in control and at the end of those years of captivity He has a plan to bring you again to Palestine.

Isn't encouraging to know that God never forgets us? You may have strayed from God; sinned against God and experienced the chastisement of God, but God wants you to know that he still loves you. Some have

questioned whether or not that is true. There were those that questioned that truth in times of captivity. God gave the prophet Isaiah this message.

(Isaiah 49:14-16) "But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. {15} Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. {16} Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

This visual message that Ezekiel received spoke of the condition of the people as they were, but it also was a message with hope for what God was going to do.

Notice:

1. THE WILL OF GOD FOR EZEKIEL

A. The placing of the prophet – “The Valley

The valley can be:

- Where the enemy lay

Joshua 7:8

⁸ O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

- Where the giants live

Joshua 15:8

⁸ *And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:*

- The enemy's stronghold

Joshua 17:16

¹⁶ *And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.*

The valley could also be:

- Where weeping is converted to a well

Psalm 84:6

⁶ *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.*

The truth is we are all at times going to travel through the valley.

Note:

Ezekiel 37:1

¹ The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

1. It is very obvious from what is written that God had put Ezekiel in this place.
 - a. "... the hand of the Lord was upon me..."
 - b. "... the spirit of the Lord ... set me down..."

2. I'm a firm believer in the Providence of God.
 - a. People have the idea that things just happen by chance in their life.
 - b. It was God's doing that brought this nation of people to Babylon to experience captivity.

c. It was God's doing that this prophet was given the responsibility of giving them God's message.

Illustration:

God said to Paul shortly after his conversion

Acts 9:15-16

¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: ¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

3. God has a plan for your life.

a. If you are saved you should seek to allow God to direct your path everyday so that you are where God wants you to be.

b. If you are lost you need to understand that God loves you and wants to save you.

Not only do we see "The Placing of the Prophet" but note also:

B. Passing of the prophet

Ezekiel 37:2

² *And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.*

1. Notice their condition
 - a. Their number - “very many”
 - b. Their appearance - “very dry”
 - c. Their hopelessness - “Can these bones live?”
2. God had to open Ezekiel’s eyes to see these conditions.
3. God was saying to Ezekiel what do you see?
 - a. We too must see the reality of many lost, dead in their trespasses and sin, damned and doomed for Hell.
 - b. This is not a pretty picture

Notice not only “The Will of God For Ezekiel” but also:

2. THE WORD OF GOD TO EZEKIEL (VS. 3-6)

Ezekiel 37:3-6

³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. ⁴

Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Note:

A. God's Clarification – "Can These Bones Live"

Remember –God never asks a question for an answer but rather for our acknowledgement.

This was a picture of the condition of the nation of Israel.

At that moment they were as far away from God as they possibly could be. As far as God was concerned it was a nation in ruin and expressed best by the picture of dry bones.

Note not only God's clarification but also:

B. Ezekiel's Confession

His confession was:

- An Admission of Futility

No matter what God intended to do in this valley, Ezekiel KNEW he was powerless to cause anything to happen of himself!

John 15:4-5

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

His confession was:

- A Submission to God's Ability

Ezekiel was powerless, but He was aware that God was not!

Mark 10:27

²⁷ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Luke 18:27

²⁷ *And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

Mark 11:22

²² *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.*

Note not only God's Clarification, and Ezekiel's Confession, but also:

C. God's Command – Prophecy

Ezekiel 37:4

⁴ *Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.*

What this world needs is not the words of men but rather the Word of the Lord.

Notice not only The Will of God For Ezekiel, and the Word of God to Ezekiel but lastly:

3. THE WORK OF GOD THROUGH EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 37:7-8

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. ⁸ And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

A. He Gave Them Life

1. There will be no life for these dead dry bones unless God decides to move.

God has chosen to use men in His plan and program.

- For every Pharaoh there is a Moses.
- For every Goliath there is a David.
- For every David there is a Nathan
- For every Ahab there is an Elijah
- For every Herod there is a John the Baptist.

God chose Ezekiel for this project

God give us some Christians.

- Christians who are not awed by the odds.
- Christian who are not conforming to the culture, but men who are impacting the culture

Close:

We see in this story many great truths

- A miracle from God

Only God can make dead bones live.

Ezekiel 37:5-6

⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

- A message from God

God told Ezekiel what he should do and what he should say.

The message that will revive the nation, the message that will revive the church and make dead bones live is the message from God