

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 REVELATION

A. The placing of the prophet

(Ezekiel 37:1) "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) "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 show 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 this morning you ought to seek to allow God to direct your path everyday so that you are where God wants you to be.

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

B. Passing of the prophet

(Ezekiel 37:2) "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

2. THE RUIN

A. Expressed as dry bones

1. This was a picture of the condition of the nation of Israel. At that moment as far as God was concerned it was a nation in ruin and expressed best by the picture of dry bones.
2. Think about where they were.
 - a. The bulk of the nation had been carried off into captivity.

b. Those that were left behind were the uneducated and the poorest of people.

c. Spiritually they have left the peaks of walking with God in the high places of his Holiness. They had forsaken the living God in the high places of his Holiness. They had forsaken the living God. The place that they now find themselves is in the valley and they are pictured as very dry bones.

B. Equated with death

1. Bones are equated with death

a. When an individual dies, the spirit departs but the body decays, and soon all that is left is a skeleton.

b. The longer the skeleton sits the dryer the bones become.

c. God was saying ... you have been dead a long time. Your rebellion

and wickedness has separated us
and I cannot fellowship with you.

C. Equivalent too destruction

1. These bones speak of what happens when a nation of people rebel and turn their back on God.

2. I wonder if God would open our eyes up to the true spiritual condition of this nation, would we not see a valley full of dry bones?

3. We are a nation of people who have known the blessing of God. Yet today this nation has turned our back on the One who has blessed us.

a. Morality is dead

- Teenagers deliver babies and then leave them to die in a dumpster or in a garbage container.
- We protect doctors who murder babies in a mother's womb and we persecute and prosecute men who kill animals.

- We want to kill our sick and aging but we want to protect the life of a man or woman who have been convicted of premeditated murder.
- We have made homosexuality and lesbianism normal and accepted behavior.
- We have accepted teenage sexuality and promiscuity as normal ... We have allowed Planned Parenthood to write the rules for teaching the American teenagers about morals. We have allowed our tax dollars to be spent on School based health clinics, that are nothing more than fronts for dispersing to teens things that they have no business knowing about or possessing. The average city public high school now has day care facilities not for the facility and staff but for the students.
- It is not uncommon for the Hollywood industry and its productions to openly attack and assault the moral values of the Bible. It is not uncommon to hear cursing while the laughter rolls.

b. Modesty is dead ... People have no problem flaunting the flesh today.

c. Churches are dead

- The average Christian church this morning has a handful of people who are sleeping through the services why a man stands before them and gives them a message as dry and stale as last week's bread and as cold as last Sunday's coffee.
- The average pastor is more concerned with making sure he is politically correct than making sure he is Biblically correct. He is more familiar with his IRA than with the KJV.
- People want to play church, they want somewhere to go to get their weakly dose of religion and then they want to live the rest of the 167 hours without God.
- The average church is nothing more than a glorified social club. People think serving God is handing out sandwiches at the church soup kitchen
- The average church member can tell you the names of leading actors and actresses and their latest Hollywood picture. They can tell you who won the Oscars, which singer won the Grammys, but they couldn't list 5 of the 10 Commandments, nor could name 6 of the 12 Apostles. They would be hard pressed to quote more than 5 verses of Scripture.

d. Homes and families are dying.

- We have devalued the home and marriage by making divorce a common occurrence.
- People are moving in and shacking up without getting married. They have all the benefits of marriage with none of the commitment.
- Husband and wives are constantly bickering and fighting
- Teenagers are in rebellion against the authority of the home. They have no respect and they do what they want to do.

4. Unless something happens soon this nation as we know it may not last another 20 years.

3. THE REMEDY

A. A moving God

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

B. A man of God

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

a. For every Pharaoh there is a Moses.

b. For every Goliath there is a David.

c. For every David there is a Nathan

d. For every Ahab there is an Elijah

e. For every Herod there is a John the Baptist.

2. God chose Ezekiel for this project

3. God give us some men.

a. Men who are not awed by the odds.

b. Rock ribbed men of convictions who have walked with God and heard His voice.

c. Men who will not compromise.

d. Men who are more interested in pleasing God than tickling ears.

e. Men who are not conforming to the culture, but men who are impacting the culture

f. Men who will stand in pulpits across this land and thunder without apology “thus saith the Lord.”

4. THE REVIVING

A. A miracle from God.

1. Only God can make dead bones live.

(Ezekiel 37:5-6) "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."

B. A message from God

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

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

3. There hope for the nation, there is hope for the church, and there is hope for the world ... It is found as God's men speak God's message and God gives life to dry dead bones.

Close:

Among those here today are some dry and dead bones. You're spiritually dead, or dying, your life is a mess. You have tried it your way and failed and yet as I have spoken today something inside of you has begun to yearn and desire God to touch your life and make you live.

Perhaps there is a young man who has sensed the call of God to be a messenger for God. To speak God's Word and do God's bidding. This nation stands in need of men of God today. Not professional clergy, but preachers who know God.