

Ezekiel 37:1-14

I took a physiology class in high school. In the classroom, there is a human skeleton. Nobody was scared of it and for sure it would be crazy to think there is life in it. In that case, it is only good for education purpose. In the book of Ezekiel, chapter 37, there were lots of human skeletons. Today we study Ezekiel 37 and see what to do with just bones?

Ezekiel was a priest in Judah. During the second invasion (597BC) that Babylonians took thousands of Jews with them including Ezekiel to Babylon. He then started to prophesize for God. Prophet Ezekiel is around the same time period as Daniel where Daniel was deported in the first invasion. The book of Ezekiel was written by Ezekiel and it's mainly about 1) God allowed the Babylonians to destroy what remains of the Jewish nation and to exile Jews to Babylon, and 2) God would eventually send the Jews back home to rebuild their nation with His mercy. Chapter 37 is more like a vision Ezekiel had but with interaction with God. God through that interaction gave him the prophesy.

### 1) Seeing the dry bones and spiritual death

#### a. Seeing the dry bones

God want Ezekiel to see the many dry bones (verses 1 &2). God led him back and forth among those bones. God emphasized the many deaths. There were some Jews dying physically during that invasion period, but the vision focused mainly on the spiritually hopeless and "death" situation of the nation of Israel. A reflection of a lost nation.

#### b. Seeing the spiritual death

Today, God want Christians to see the people around them are hopeless and have no eternal life. Many nations are close to spiritually death to the true God. In order to see the spiritual death and hopeless of many, we often need to be close to God first. We are often distracted by our daily physical lives and not able to see what God wants us to see. Matt. 9:36-38 "When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask

the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

## **2) Revival of death needs God’s word and power**

In verse 3 God asked Ezekiel “Can these bones live?”. Ezekiel replied “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” Note, God posed the same question to the prophet Jeremiah in Jer. 32:27: “I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?”. What is your answer when God asks you do you have faith in me that I can work on people’s heart and revive them spiritually?

Verses 4 to 10 described the revival of life from bones. God can bring physical death to life. John chapter 11 shows Lazarus was dead and alive again through Jesus’ power as an example. More important, God wants eternal spiritual life for all the people (see John 3:16, II Peter 3:9). The Good News of salvation should be delivered through you. God is powerful and can change people’s heart like a miracle. God is with you when you deliver His message (see John 5:24, John 11:25).

## **3) God provides hope and will lead them home (Vs. 11- 14)**

The valley of dry bones is a prophecy. This resurrection of the dead bones to life is a metaphor for God’s promise. It is primarily about God would bring Israel out of captivity and back into the Promised Land. The Israelites were hopeless and lost at that time (Vs. 11). However, this promise was fulfilled years later when King Cyrus of Persia defeated the Babylonians in 539 B.C. In the following year (538 B.C.), the Jews could return to their home land (Verses 12-14). (also see Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chronicles 35:22-23)

Those people that are spiritual death are hopeless. God give them hope. In the NT, spiritual re-born is the key message. Once those people repented and accepted Jesus as Savior, they become citizen of His Kingdom. God leads them home. Verse 14 is very important “I will put my spirit in you”. Without the Holy Spirit in you, you can not be alive.

Revival is not just about re-born. It is also about spiritual renewal of those that are already Christians. Many Christians have drawn away from following God closely by Satan's temptations. Those Christians need to pray to God and let the Holy Spirit to guide them back to follow God. Verse 13 states "Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord...". Knowing the Lord requires one to seek Him and obey Him like study the Bible and obey His commands, and the result will lead him/her closer to God.

In conclusion, bones and skeletons are useless in the sense that they have no life. God wants all to have eternal spiritual life. Thus, revival of a nation as well as individual revival are God's will. John Wesley is a famous evangelist in the mid-1700s that he led a great revival in England. One of his quotes is "I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions." He prayed a lot and have a very eager spirit to save people's life. May you have the same.