

Can These Bones Live? Ezek. 37

Today I would like to look at one of the most interesting chapters in the Bible. In fact, there's a kids song that I learned many years ago that describes what happened in Ez 37 and it goes like this.

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Now hear the word of the Lord. How many of you know that song?

In the Bible, God will sometimes use unique ways to capture people's attention. Heb 1 says, "God, at various times spoke in various ways."

In Ezekiel 37, God's is going to send a message through a pile of bones. Before we get into the lesson lets some time to learn some background information.

The book begins with Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army invading the Southern Kingdom. They had reduced Solomon's Temple to ashes and have taken many of the Jewish people back to Babylon as captives. It appears that the nation is dead and that's the picture we have in Ch 37. In verse 11, God explains the vision. God says to Ezekiel, "these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'"

Sometimes when a Christian falls we try to win them back. We call and we plead. Afterwards we might ask ourselves what happened? I thought they were doing so well. Perhaps one of the best things we can do is look at the autopsy and examine how they fell away from Christ. In the case here, we are going to look at some of the bones to figure out what happened.

I. Tailbone:

What does the Bible say about tailbones?

1 Cor. 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

James 2:14, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

Eph 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

2 Cor 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

In Ez 37:3, God asked, "Can these bones live?" The answer is yes, as soon as they get off their tailbones!

2. The Finger bone:

Can pointing our finger at others drag us down spiritually? Do we have any examples in the Bible where individuals refused to take responsibility for their own actions? Instead of saying, "yes, I made a mistake and I'm sorry for it," they blamed it on someone else.

In Gen. 3, God confronted Adam and Eve for their sin and what did Adam do? Adam said, "It's the wife's fault, she's the one who had me eat from tree." Eve said, "It's that serpent who deceived me." In the end it did not matter who's finger was pointing at who, both of them were kicked out of the garden.

What happened with Adam and Eve is also a good lesson for us. God asked Ezekiel "Can these bones live?" The answer is yes, as soon as they start pointing at themselves.

3. Jawbone:

Sometimes what we say can be hurtful because we didn't take the time to think about our words.

Proverbs 12:18 says, "Reckless words pierce like a sword."

Prov 10:19 says, "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."

Prov 13:3 says, "He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin."

God says to Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Yes, when our jawbones are used to speak words that are wholesome.

Ephes. 4:29 – "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

4. THE BACKBONE:

When Ezekiel was looking at all of those bones I think it's safe to assume, there wasn't many backbones in the bone yard. What was it that led the Israelites down the road of ruin?

No one had the backbone to stand for what was right. Can you think of some Bible characters that had some backbone? How about Daniel.

Dan 1:8, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

Did you hear the first part of that verse? Daniel purposed in his heart that he wouldn't defile himself with the world. He did this at an early age, maybe when he was a teenager. And he continued to live right throughout his entire life.

God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Yes, just as soon as we get a backbone.

5. THE KNEEBONE:

As Ezekiel surveyed the valley of bones, I imagine he saw quite a few knee bones.

If we were to look at the knee bones of those Israelites who fell into captivity, I bet their knee bones looked a little too good.

Jesus knew the importance of prayer. We are commanded to pray. 1 Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing. We are to pray for one another (1 Th 5:25). Paul says, "Brethren, pray for us."

James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

"Can these bones live?" Yes, but only if we use those knee bones.

Close: In verse 4, Ezekiel is told to preach to these dead, dry bones.

Can you imagine, preaching to a bunch of bones? Ezekiel begins to preach to these dead, dry bones. He says, "Dry bones, listen to what God has to say."

Imagine the noise, as the bones begin to rattle and reattach themselves to a skeleton. Next, through the message of Ezekiel, God puts flesh and breath into the bones. Keep in mind, this is a prophesy about how God is going to restore the nation. After being in Babylonian captivity for 70 years, the Israelites will be allowed to return home.

What can we take away from the chapter when we think about those who have died spiritually? Can God give new life to these old dead bones? Can new life be given to someone who has fallen away from God? The answer is yes. Look at verse 24.

"David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them."

What is Ezekiel talking about? The days of having kings are over. David is long gone. The only logical conclusion is that this verse is talking about Jesus, the seed of David (Matt 1:1). He's our King.

Without Christ we are in a hopeless situation and it's only through Christ that dead bones can live.

4. Then you have the HIPBONE CHRISTIAN

A. This describes the Christian who keeps their wallet in their back pocket for padding. I have to confess some people have called me cheap.

1. Kari will tell you that I'm so cheap that when I take my wallet out and open it, moths fly out, but I don't want to be that way when it comes to giving.

2. Try to imagine this scenario in your mind. A man walks up to God, pulls out a gun and says, "Stick em up!" Hard to imagine that isn't it? Someone trying to rob God, but look at Mal 3:8.

3. Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, When have we robbed you? God answers, by your tithes and offerings.

4. Our giving or lack of giving is a reflection of how much we love God.
Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

5. If you love God your giving will flow out of your soul with joy, not grudgingly.

6. 2 Cor 9:7 "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

7. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.
"Can these bones live?" Yes, when the heart is converted, the wallet will be converted too.

5. THE DRY BONE CHRISTIAN

A. This Christian is one who becomes spiritually dry because they don't spend time in the Bible.

1. Water is essential to life. You can live a lot longer without food than you can without water somewhere around four days. Do you know any Christians like that? Spiritually dry

2. Psalm 1:1-3, When a tree is planted by rivers of water; not a single leaf will dry or wither.

3. Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

4. You need to take a good long drink of the Word. You need to get back your thirst for God. Psa 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

5. "Can these bones live?" Yes, when we immerse ourselves into God's Word, the Water of life.

6. THE WISHBONE CHRISTIAN

A. Remember when you were a kid, and you got to pull on the wishbone of the Thanksgiving turkey?

1. If you got the bigger piece, your wish was granted (supposedly). For some of us, that describes our prayer life ... gimme, gimme, gimme.

2. We come to God with our "wish list" ... AND ... that pretty much describes our prayer life.

3. Let me ask you parents this, what if the only time your child talked to you was when they wanted something? How would that make you feel?

4. How would you like it if the only time they talked to you was when they said I want this, or I need that.

5. Let me ask you this, how do you think God feels when His children only talk to Him when they need or want something? Not very good.

B. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with going to God with our needs and wants;

1. Psa 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give you the desires of your heart.

2. There is nothing wrong with going to God and asking Him for our hearts desires as long as those desires are Godly. But shouldn't we be praying for more than what we want?

3. God wants us to come before Him and tell Him how much we love Him, how thankful we are to have Him there for us. He wants to get to know Him better, and love Him deeper.

4. He wants us to tell Him when we hurt and don't understand why things are going wrong in our lives. And even when your mad at God tell him about it.

5. Don't you think He knows how we feel anyway? Talk to God about everything, don't be a wishbone Christian.

6. "Can these bones live?" Yes, when we realize that prayer involves, not only asking, but thanksgiving, praise, fellowship, and worship.

7. But not all bones in the church bone yard are bad bones, some are good bones.

6. "Can these bones live?" Yes, they do live, as a testimony of the grace of God.

3. This is my picture of a church graveyard made of bony Christians. Some are negative some are positive. Can you identify with one or more of these bones?

4. Are you a TAILBONE, a FINGERBONE, a JAWBONE, a HIPBONE, a DRY BONE, a WISHBONE, a BACKBONE and a KNEEBONE CHRISTIAN

Close: Ezekiel gives us the Plan Of God, to bring life to these bones.

Illustration - In 1982, "ABC Evening News" reported on an unusual work of modern art--a chair affixed to a shotgun. It was to be viewed by sitting in the chair and looking directly into the gunbarrel. The gun was loaded and set on a timer to fire at an undetermined moment within the next hundred years. The amazing thing was that people waited in lines to sit and stare into the shell's path! They all knew the gun could go off at point-blank range at any moment, but they were gambling that the fatal blast wouldn't happen during their minute in the chair. Yes, it was foolhardy, yet many people who wouldn't dream of sitting in that chair live a lifetime gambling that they can get away with sin. Foolishly they ignore the risk until the inevitable self-destruction.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, Heb 9:27

Then when its time comes, desire gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is of full growth, gives birth to death. James 1:15

Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

Extra

Have you ever felt you were in a hopeless situation?

5. Everything seems to have gone wrong. A relationship went bad, the job at the workplace is not working out to well. Heaths not doing good.

6. Your life is a mess OR ... at least it's not what you want it to be.

C. You see yourself in a valley of dead, dry bones.

1. As Ezekiel is looking at millions of dead, dry bones God asks him, "Can these bones live?" How would you answer that question?

2. When you look at your situation ... AND ... all you see is a valley of dead, dry bones ... you don't see much hope, do you? It's hard to imagine those dead, dry bones having life.

3. It's hard to imagine your situation ever getting better. It's hard to imagine life, beyond our present circumstances.

4. Israel has been taken captive by Babylon ... Ezekiel can't see much hope for his people.

BUT he answers God's question ... 37:3. "Can these bones live?" "I don't see how ... if they do, it will be up to You, Lord!"

5. Ezekiel is telling God that you are in control and that you can do whatever you want to do. With God, nothing is impossible. If God wants these dead, dry bones to live, they'll live!

6. Let's get to some APPLICATION here. This is the chapter where we get the kids song the hipbone is connected to the leg bone.

7. What kind of bones do we see in the Church today? There are some who I call bony Christians.

BUT THE DRY BONES IN THE TEXT represented the people's spiritually dead condition. It was also a clear intimation of the resurrection of the dead; and it represents the power and grace of God, in the

conversion of the most hopeless sinners to himself

At God's command, Ezekiel cried out for the bones to hear the Word of the Lord

GOD TOLD EZEKIEL TO PREACH TO THE BONES

EZEKIEL REVEALS TO US THAT HE prophesied as he was commanded: and as he prophesied, there

was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

EZEKIEL TELLS US IN THE TEXT THAT WHEN THE WORD OF GOD WENT FORTH THAT HE HEARD A RUMBLING IN THE VALLEY

HE HEARD A SHAKING IN THE VALLEY A QUAKING IN THE VALLEY

HE SAW BONES RISING IN THE VALLEY

HE SAW THE TOE BONES CONNECTING WITH THE FOOT BONES

HE SAW FOOT BONES GETTING TOGETHER WITH ANKLE BONES

AND HE KEPT ON LOOKING

AND HE SAW THE ANKLE BONES CONNECTING WITH THE LEG BONES

AND THE LEG BONES UNITING WITH THE THIGH BONES

THIGH BONES WERE CONNECTING WITH THE HIP BONES

HIP BONES JOINING UP WITH THE BACK BONES

BACK BONES TO THE SHOULDER BONES

SHOULDER BONES TO THE ARM BONES

ARM BONES TO THE WRIST BONES

WRIST BONES TO THE HAND BONES AND

EZEKIEL KEPT ON LOOKING

AND THE SHOULDER BONES CONNECTED TO THE NECK BONES

AND THE NECK BONES CONNECTING TO THE HEAD BONES

NOTICE --NOTICE --NOTICE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS

THAT WHEN THE WIND BLEW UPON THEM THE BONES CAME TO LIFE

AND THERE STOOD AN EXCEEDINGLY GREAT ARMY

AND IT'S SOMETHING AMAZING WHEN THE LORD BREATHES ON YOU

YOU SEE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

THERE WAS A TIME OUR LIFE THAT WE WE'RE LIKE THE BONES IN THE VALLEY

WE ALL WAS LOST IN SIN BUT JESUS TOOK US IN
AND THEN A LITTLE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN FILLED OUR SOUL
HE FILL OUR HEART WITH LOVE AND WROTE OUR NAME ABOVE
THAT WHY JUST A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS WILL MAKE IT RIGHT
ANYBODY HEAR KNOWS JESUS WILL MAKE IT RIGHT

If you are struggling ... if your Christian life seems dry & dehydrated ... if you are spiritually thirsty THEN ... dive into the Water of God's Word. That's where you'll find spiritual refreshment..

1. If you're LOST there's only 1 way to come to faith in Christ.

Rom 10:17 – “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

3. Do you know someone who is struggling ... who is discouraged ... who is all dried up ... who is in need of a friend, or a word of encouragement?

4. God is calling YOU to be his instrument to bring life to their thirsty soul by showing them his Word. Do you know someone who is lost, who is without hope and without Christ?

5. God is calling YOU to be his instrument to bring His Word, and life, to their lost soul.

C. Can dead, dry bones live? With God, nothing is impossible.