

Message One

**The Dry Bones Being Enlivened
to Become an Exceedingly Great Army
and the Two Pieces of Wood Being Joined Together
for the Building of the House of God**

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 37:1-28

I. The book of Ezekiel has four main sections:

- A. The first section, consisting of chapter 1, speaks of the glorious vision of God and reveals the holy God in His glory.
- B. The second section, composed of chapters 2 through 32, speaks of God's judgment to deal with all things and matters that do not match His righteousness, holiness, and glory.
- C. The third section, which includes chapters 33 through 39, concerns God's recovery of a remnant of His people; this indicates that the main idea in this section is the Lord's recovery.
- D. The fourth section, consisting of chapters 40 through 48, speaks about God coming to build His beloved recovered people into His dwelling place; this section is devoted to the matter of God's building.

II. In the book of Ezekiel there are three chapters which may be considered great chapters in the Bible—chapter 1, chapter 37, and chapter 47:

- A. Each of these chapters may be represented by a single word: chapter 1—*fire*; chapter 37—*breath*; and chapter 47—*water*.
- B. Chapter 37 reveals that the Lord comes to revive His dead and scattered people and to make them one; because they had become dead, dry bones, they needed to be enlivened and joined together.

III. Ezekiel 37 reveals how God's Spirit comes into us in order to enliven us so that we may become a corporate Body formed into an army and also built up as God's dwelling place—vv. 1-28:

- A. The vision of the dry bones shows that before God came in to renew and regenerate us, we were not only sinful and filthy (36:25) but also dead and buried in "graves" of various sinful, worldly, and religious things (37:12-13).
- B. We were like dead and dry bones, disjointed and scattered, having no oneness:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message One (continuation)

1. Whether we were an unsaved sinner or a backslidden believer, this was our situation; not only unbelieving sinners need to be delivered from their graves, but even many brothers and sisters need to be revived and delivered from death and from their graves.
 2. Today many Christians are buried in the graves of denominations, sects, divisions, independent groups, and different movements.
 3. Formerly, we were in such graves, dead, dry, scattered, disjointed, and not connected to anyone, but the Lord is the Savior of the dead; God's word here is to cause a dead person to become a living person—John 5:25; Eph. 2:1-8.
- C. Ezekiel's prophesying in Ezekiel 37 was not a matter of predicting but a matter of speaking forth, declaring, something for the Lord—vv. 4-5:
1. When Ezekiel spoke forth, God gave people the Spirit—vv. 10, 14.
 2. The main meaning of prophesying in the Bible is not to predict but to speak forth the Lord, to minister the Lord to people:
 - a. "He who prophesies builds up the church"—1 Cor. 14:4b.
 - b. "You can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged"—v. 31.
 - c. Prophesying, speaking for God and speaking forth God with God as the content, ministers God to the hearers and brings them to God; the church meeting should be filled with God, and all its activities should convey and transmit God to people so that they may be infused with God—vv. 24-25.
 - d. In order to prophesy, we must be a man of God with the breath of God—2 Tim. 3:16-17:
 - 1) Our reading of the Bible should be a kind of inhaling, and our teaching of the Bible should be a kind of exhaling.
 - 2) When we are speaking for the Lord, we should have the sense that we are exhaling God and that the recipients are inhaling God.

Message One (continuation)

- e. Prophesying makes us an overcomer; prophesying is the function of the overcomers—1 Cor. 14:3, 4b; cf. Matt. 16:18.
- 3. As Ezekiel was prophesying, God was blowing upon the dry bones, sending the wind, the breath, and the Spirit—Ezek. 37:4-10, 14:
 - a. The Hebrew word *ruach* is variously translated “wind,” “breath,” “spirit” in verses 5 through 10 and 14.
 - b. In spiritual experience, when God blows on us, His breath is the wind; when we breathe the wind, it is the breath; and when the breath is within us, it is the Spirit.
 - c. When Ezekiel prophesied, God blew the wind, the people received the breath, and the breath became the Spirit, the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.
- 4. When Ezekiel prophesied the first time (Ezek. 37:7), there was a noise and a rattling, and all the bones came together; when we come together in the meetings and make a joyful noise by calling on the Lord and praising Him (Psa. 95:1; cf. Lam. 3:55-56; John 20:22; *Hymns*, #255), we are truly one.
- 5. When Ezekiel prophesied the second time (Ezek. 37:10), the breath came into the “very dry” (v. 2, cf. v. 11) and dead bones, “and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army” (v. 10), to fight the battle for God.

IV. The two lifeless pieces of wood symbolize the two parts of the divided nation of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel—v. 16:

- A. These two kingdoms could not be one, and in the eyes of the Lord they were thoroughly dead and dried up.
- B. After being enlivened and by the growth in life, they can be joined together and become one—v. 17.
- C. This is very similar to grafting, in which two branches are joined and eventually grow together—Rom. 6:5; 11:17, 24:
 - 1. Growing together denotes an organic union in which growth takes place, so that one partakes of the life and characteristics of the other; in the organic union with Christ, whatever Christ passed through has become our history.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message One (continuation)

2. His death and resurrection are now ours because we are in Him and are organically joined to Him; this is grafting—v. 24.
 3. Such a grafting (1) discharges all our negative elements, (2) resurrects our God-created faculties, (3) uplifts our faculties, (4) enriches our faculties, and (5) saturates our entire being to transform us.
 - D. Whereas the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14 are for forming an army to fight the battle for God, the pieces of wood in verses 16 through 22 are for the building of the house of God as His dwelling place.
- V. The revelation in this chapter shows that the unique way to have the Body, the church, and the house of God in the genuine oneness is the way of life:**
- A. When the breath entered into the dead ones, it became life to them, and they lived and stood up in oneness to become an exceedingly great army.
 - B. The dry bones in verses 1 through 14 and the two dead branches in verses 16 and 17 became one not by gifts or by teaching but by life.
 - C. The dead bones and the dead branches were enlivened and became one as the issue of the dispensing of life and the growth in life—cf. John 17:2, 11, 17, 21-23; Eph. 4:11-16.