

Dry Bones

Chapter 10

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #70



Objective: To learn from one of Ezekiel's greatest sermons that only God's Spirit can give new life.



"Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

—Ezekiel 37:4-6

Ezekiel preached a sermon that came from his vision of a valley of dry bones. When Ezekiel prophesied to the bones, as the Lord told him to do, the bones came together. As he continued preaching, sinew and flesh were added to the skeletons. Then the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to the Breath—the Spirit of God—so that the bodies would come to life. God's message to the Jews was that even though they felt like they had no life, just dry bones, He would restore them from captivity and lead them back to Israel.

There is an important lesson for us in this sermon: apart from the Holy Spirit, people who share the gospel with the lost are attempting the impossible. In fact, anything we try to do apart from the Spirit is as impossible as giving dead bones new life. The church must be energized by the Holy Spirit to implement the Great Commission and take the gospel of life to the spiritually dead world. Only God's power can raise spiritually dead people to new life.



1. True or false? The bones Ezekiel saw were fresh. The people had not been dead very long.
2. True or false? Ezekiel preached long after God's people had returned from captivity.
3. True or false? The dry bones represented how spiritually dead the exiles were.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. How did Ezekiel get the idea to preach to dry bones?
 - a. He did not believe death was real, but was only an illusion.
 - b. He thought the spirits of those who had died could still accept Christ.
 - c. He wanted the spirits of the dead to speak back to him.
 - d. God told him to.
5. What was Ezekiel's primary ministry?
 - a. Preach and minister to the captives in Babylon.
 - b. Gather the bones of dead exiles and bury them.
 - c. Count the number of deaths Babylon had caused so Judah could get revenge later.
 - d. Teach the people that death and destruction would satisfy God's anger.
6. What did God mean when He told Ezekiel to preach to the Dead?
 - a. Ezekiel was to walk around and breathe on each corpse.
 - b. The wind would come and raise the dead.
 - c. The dead can be raised only by the Spirit of God through prayer.
 - d. Ezekiel's preaching would be as useless as talking to air, since everyone in the valley was dead.
7. What message did Ezekiel's vision of the bones give to the exiles?
 - a. They would all end up dead in Babylon.
 - b. God would destroy the Babylonians and scatter them across a valley.
 - c. God would one day restore the captives to their homeland.
 - d. They should avoid prophets who preach about strange visions.
8. How does Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones apply to us today?
 - a. It tells us that many people are hopelessly lost and dead and that nothing can save them.
 - b. It teaches us to preach the message of life to the spiritually dead and to do so energized in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. It shows us that no one would die if we just had enough faith.
 - d. It has no application for us today.
9. What does it mean that the prophets had both "coming" and "going" experiences?
 - a. They never stayed in one place for very long.
 - b. They kept changing their minds.
 - c. They were hard to capture because they kept coming and going.
 - d. They had experiences of coming to God and then going to the people.

10. What was Ezekiel's "coming" experience?
- a. His journey to Babylon to be with the exiles.
 - b. His vision of God.
 - c. His adventure into the valley of dry bones.
 - d. His return to Jerusalem after 70 years.
11. How is Ezekiel a good example to us?
- a. We should preach weird and wonderful messages.
 - b. We should be committed to obeying and fulfilling God's Word.
 - c. We should have visions.
 - d. We should always go for God, even if we have not come to God.
12. What did Ezekiel's vision of God reveal to him about God?
- a. That God is all-knowing
 - b. That God is everywhere
 - c. That God is all-powerful
 - d. All of the above



Have you ever tried to share the gospel without asking God's Spirit to breathe life into the person you have shared with? What were the results? Why is it impossible to bear spiritual fruit without the Spirit of God's help?



If you are a believer in Jesus, thank God that He has breathed His Spirit into you. (If you are not a believer in Jesus, if you feel spiritually like dry bones, place your trust in Him now and ask Him to save you and breathe His eternal life into you.) Ask God to empower you to do His will.



Going Deeper

1. Ezekiel was ministering to the Jews in captivity. What was the allegorical meaning of the *dry bones* and what was Ezekiel's assignment? _____

2. Show how the dry bones sermon of Ezekiel demonstrates the impossibility of just about any kind of ministry, whether it is one-on-one evangelism or preaching the Gospel to large groups of people, without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. _____

3. If you are a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, a small-group leader or any other kind of spiritual leader, how can this sermon inspire you to look at those who are the target of your ministry, as you realize the impossibility of *your* objectives for them being accomplished?

4. How should we apply the difference it made when Ezekiel prophesied to the Breath? _____

5. What are the differences between the experiences we need to have in our coming to God and the experiences we need to have in our going for God? _____

6. What are some of the dimensions of the ministry of the Spirit for which you should pray when you minister? (For example, His Presence and ministry within us, with us, upon us and through us.) _____

7. As you seriously consider Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple in the place where the original temple once stood, what has to happen for that to be fulfilled, considering that the third-most sacred temple of Islam (The Dome of the Rock) now stands on that very spot? _____
