



## Lesson 194

# Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones

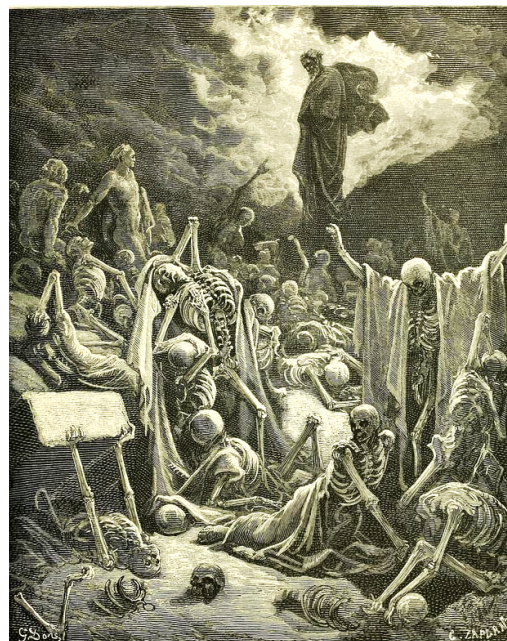
### Story Elements

- **Text:** Ezekiel 37:1-14
- **Setting:** ca. 592 B.C. in Jerusalem
- **Main Characters:** God and Ezekiel
- **Plot:** Ezekiel receives a vision that graphically reveals the extent of Judah's idolatry and the subsequent departure of the LORD's glory cloud from the temple.
- **Key word(s):** "\_\_\_\_\_ " — Bones are enigmatic things. They remind us of life and death at the same time. They point towards a bygone life and a forthcoming death. They are symbols of humanity's powerlessness against death, an antidote for which is as hidden to us as our own skeletons. Ezekiel's vision of dry bones evokes at once the specter of death and faith in the God who overcomes death.

• **Climax:** *Ezekiel 37:8* And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. In this verse we see the amazing spectacle of dead bones becoming living bodies – except for one important element: *life*. How will the newly arranged bodies become living souls? The rest of the story illustrates the importance of the Spirit in rebirthing a dead soul to living one.

## The Prophetic Scene

1. (vv 1-2) Once again the LORD transported Ezekiel away in a prophetic vision, this time to a valley full of bones. The scene suggests two details about this valley:
  - (a) It was scene of \_\_\_\_\_. The bones were scattered in the valley, not buried. The bodies of the fallen had lied exposed to blistering weather and picking scavengers. That they lie as they did suggests they were the defeated – none came to collect their remains.
  - (b) It was scene of \_\_\_\_\_. There were no survivors – all life had vanished long ago, because the bones were *very dry*.
2. (v 3) *Can these bones live?* asked the LORD. Ezekiel responded, *O LORD God, thou knowest*. Often, God asks rhetorical questions to...
  - (a) solicit \_\_\_\_\_ (*Adam where art thou*, Gen. 3:9; 4:9)
  - (b) instill \_\_\_\_\_ (*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding*, Job 38:4)
  - (c) build \_\_\_\_\_ (*Can these bones live?*)



## The Prophet's Sermon

3. (v 4) God then commands Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones. ("Prophesy" does not meant "to foretell the future" but to "\_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God.") Ezekiel's sermon to the bones was to command them to obey the LORD in coming together and becoming alive again.
  - (a) (vv 5-8) *So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone*. Here we see a demonstration of the great truth that **God's Word never fails**.

**Isaiah 55:11** *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: It shall not return unto me void, But it shall accomplish that which I please, And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

- (b) (vv 8-10) The reconstituted bodies lacked on vital detail: \_\_\_\_\_. So the LORD commanded Ezekiel to prophesy unto the wind, *breathe upon these slain, that they may live*.
- (c) (v 10) As the bones and flesh obeyed the Word of God, so the wind also did as it was commanded, and *breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army*.

APPLICATION➔ Matthew Henry sees the preacher's double duty in Ezekiel's vision: the duty to preach and the duty to \_\_\_\_\_. "See the efficacy of the word and prayer, and the necessity of both, for the raising of dead souls. God bids his ministers *prophesy upon the dry bones*. Say unto them, *Live*; yea, say unto them, *Live*; and they do as they are commanded, calling to them again and again, *O you dry bones! hear the word of the Lord*. But we call in vain, still they are dead, still they are very dry; we must therefore be earnest with God in prayer for the working of the Spirit with the word: *Come, O breath!* and breathe upon them. **God's grace can save souls without our preaching, but our preaching cannot save them without God's grace, and that grace must be sought by prayer.**"<sup>1</sup>

---

## The Prophecy Explained

4. (v. 11) The vision of the valley of dry bones is explained plainly by the One who gave it:
- (a) The bones are the people of Israel, judged by God and scattered among the nations, who say, *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost*.
  - (b) (vv 12-13) As with the bones in the vision, so Israel will be brought back from the dead (a metaphor for their \_\_\_\_\_) and brought back into their land.
  - (c) (vv 14-15) And like the bones were made alive with the wind, so God would give His Spirit, *then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord*.
5. Notice Ezekiel's vision came in two parts:
- (a) The reassembling of the bodies, which represented the return of the captives in Babylon. This was fulfilled in \_\_\_\_\_ BC.
  - (b) The enlivening by the Spirit, which represented the pouring out of the Spirit on believing Jews at \_\_\_\_\_ (cf Acts 2:1-13).

Note➔ This time of the Spirit indwelling God's people is a common theme in Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10). **The New Testament shows that these prophecies were fulfilled through Christ's redemptive work, culminating at Pentecost.** (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 2:16-18, 33; 10:44-45; Romans 5:5; 8:9-11; Galatians 3:14; Titus 3:5-6)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "bones" • 1. a) battle; b) hopelessness • 2. a) confession; b) humility; c) faith • 3. forthtell; b) breath ➔pray • 4, b) expulsion; • 5. a) 539; b) Pentecost

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1412.