

## 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

We are now beginning the second part of our crystallization-study of Ezekiel. Just as in the first part, we would like to begin with a storm wind to bring forth a spiritual **unrest** and a dissatisfaction with our spiritual condition. Regardless of our condition and where we are spiritually, we are praying that through this study **the wind would come again**. In this second part we come to the **corporate side** of the visions. In fact, the goal, the consummation, of the visions in Ezekiel is that God would gain a house for Himself. For this there cannot be only individuals, but there must be a body of saints standing together as God's people, the corporate Israel.

Our standing upon our feet and becoming a great **army** is not the end; rather, there is a further vision of the **uniting** of two pieces of wood. These two pieces are joined to become one. They are joined together, and there is no more division or separation. Instead, they become **kingdom in one land** with the real David, Jesus, as the King with a covenant of peace and with God's sanctuary, His dwelling place, in the midst... This present message is related to [the third section of Ezekiel], which concerns God's recovery of a remnant of His people... The [fourth section], speaks about God coming to build His beloved recovered people into His dwelling place. This is the final and consummate section of Ezekiel. In the twelve messages of this training, we will cover the last two sections of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 37 we can see these **two visions** – the vision of the dead, dry, and scattered bones being formed into an army and the vision of the two pieces of wood being joined together for the building of the house of God... In the first vision the prophet is brought by the Spirit and set down in the middle of a valley that is full of dry bones. Moreover, as if to drive the point home, the prophet says that the bones were **"very dry"**. These were not the bones of persons who had recently died. Rather, they belonged to persons who had been dead for a long time. Then the Jehovah asked the prophecy, *"Son of man, can these bones live?"* Ezekiel responded, *"O Lord Jehovah, You know"*. Often when the Lord comes to us with a question, **the answer is in the question**. It was Jehovah's desire that the bones would live; otherwise, He would not have even asked the question. We can see this in Jehovah's response to Ezekiel's answer: *"Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus says the Lord Jehovah to these bones: I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live"*.

Jehovah explained to Ezekiel that *"these bones are the whole house of Israel"*. These bones were not those of pagan Gentiles. They were **the house of Israel**. *"These bones"* here refers to God's people. Using today's term, *"these bones"* refers to the saints, to **the brothers and sisters**, as God's elect. God's people were dried up. They were even buried in graves. Nevertheless, this vision is a vision of God coming to enliven His people; to regenerate, revive, and renew them; and to put life, breath, into them so that they would come out of their entombment and their buried condition. In this valley there were dry bones everywhere. This means that God's people were not only dead, even long dead, but they were also **dismembered, cut asunder, pulled apart, divided** and strewn about the valley. In this scene we see not only deadness but fragmentation and dismemberment. There was not even a corpse. There were just bones scattered all over the place.

Surely this is the situation of the secular world, but it is also the situation of the religious world of Christendom. There is not only sin and dirtiness, or filthiness; there is also death. In 36:25 the Lord came in to sprinkle His people with water to cleanse them from their filthiness. Death is worse than filthiness. God's people have been buried under the earth in "graves" of various sinful, worldly and religious things. **Brothers and sisters, are we in**

**any kind of grave?** Many things can be graves to bury us. Our job, business, marriage, and family can all be graves to us. To be sure, these are legitimate, normal and proper things. However, all these things can become a grave to us. The actual condition of a sinner is that he is buried. Moreover, the condition of many children of God, of many Christians, is also that of being in a grave, in a buried condition, just like the house of Israel.

But praise the Lord! The Lord is the **Savior of the dead**. He is not just the Savior of sinners but He saves and gives life to the dead. God's word causes a dead person to become a living person. There is nothing that God hates more than death. **He hates death even more than sin**. This is why He came as the tree of life to be life to man. Our ultimate problem is not filthiness or sin. Our ultimate problem is death and being divided and scattered. When we were spiritually dead in our offenses and sins, we were also divided and scattered. We were not able to be one with anyone. In such a condition, everyone is just for himself and exists independently.

In serving with some brothers to care for a certain area in California, I said to them in fellowship that in order for the Lord to do a work of recovery and restoration, the first thing the bones need is **not the breath but the gathering together**. There first must be a rejoining of the parts of the body. When the parts are together, then the Lord can prophesy to the wind. On the night of the Lord's resurrection, He did not breathe the Holy Spirit into an individual disciple but into the disciples who were gathered together. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples were again gathered together, and the Spirit came as a rushing violent wind. The point here is that the Spirit comes to a body, to the place where there has been a joining together of the various parts. Although it does not yet have life, the gathering together of the parts allows the Lord to come in as the wind, as the breath, and as the Spirit.

### **The Two Lifeless Pieces of Wood**

The southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel could not be one, and in the eyes of the Lord they were thoroughly dead and dried up. **When we are dead, we also become divided**. A dead corpse gradually **disintegrates**. Division is a sign that we are dead. When we are disconnected, scattered and disjointed, we are surely dead. Death is in every division... Jehovah wanted to bring the two kingdoms [two pieces of wood] together and to make them on in His hand. When the two kingdoms were united and joined together to become one, they began to **grow together** (Rom 11). 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 to 22 are for the building of the house of God as His dwelling place.

**The revelation in this chapter (Chapter 37) 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. We need to memorize this point.** God's recovery is carried out only in life and by life. God will not take any other way to carry out His work of recovery among us but the way of life.

The Lord's recovery today still needs much life. **Life**, not zeal, works, or teaching, is what we need. We need the divine life to come to us as the wind, as the breath, and as the Spirit. We need to be full of the Holy Spirit. We need to be men of the Spirit, which is to be men of life. The Lord's recovery needs to be full of breath, full of the Spirit. This is why we need to call on the name of the Lord. We need to breathe Him in to receive more life. Only life will bring us out of the grave, cause us to be joined together, form us into an army, and build us into the dwelling place of God in spirit. Let us take **the way of life**. (*Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-study of Ezekiel, pp. 7-28*)