

## **Life-Study of Ezekiel Summary – Messages 16 to 18**

### **God's Recovery by Life**

The purpose of God's judgment is to bring in recovery. In God's recovery by life, He first sends the **watchman** to His people to repent, turn, and live, and then He Himself appears as the **Shepherd**. In Ezekiel 34, we see that Ezekiel prophesied that as the Shepherd the Lord would **bring His people, His sheep, out of the nations**. Before we were saved, we were separated from Christ. But the Lord sought us out and brought us back to **Himself as our good land**. The Lord also brought us to the **high mountains** signifying the experience of the resurrected and ascended Christ. The Lord also said that He would bring His people back to the **rivers** which signify the life-giving Spirit, the living water of the Spirit.

As our Shepherd Christ takes care of us, including all our problems and responsibilities. He takes care of us not only in spiritual things but in all things related to our human needs. When the Lord Jesus comes as the Shepherd, He comes also as the **King**. The issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship. In the Lord's recovery we have God's presence. God is with us. We are His people, and He is our God. **This is the recovery of the church life—the real mingling of God and man**. We are here on earth enjoying such a oneness and mingling with the Lord. This is the Lord's recovery by life.

In the process of recovery, **there is still the need of God's judgment**. Edom was judged in the previous section, but because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment upon the old man must be repeated. The genuine recovery of the Lord is not simply a matter of repenting, turning to the Lord, and enjoying the blessing of the Lord. There also needs to be **a change in our life and nature**. Therefore we need both the outward recovery in Ezekiel 34 and the inward recovery in Ezekiel 36. A major point in chapter 36 is the recovery of the good land, that is, the restoration of the full enjoyment of the riches of Christ. At the same time He not only brings us back to the good land, but He also recovers us inwardly. The Lord also washes us with clean water to cleanse us from **filthiness** and from **idols**, this is on the negative side. On the positive side, after the cleansing, the Lord gives us a **new heart** and a **new spirit**.

### **The Dry Bones, the Two Sticks, and the Army**

Before God came in to renew us and regenerate us, we were like **dead and dry bones**. In the sight of God, when we were fallen, we were dead and buried in a grave. Because we were dead and dry, we were also scattered. Praise the Lord that **His life can work within us to tear open our graves and cause us to come up out of the grave and be revived**. He did not leave us in our situation but came in to rescue us through the **prophesying** of His word. As Ezekiel was prophesying, God was blowing upon the dry bones, sending the **wind**, the **breath**, and the **Spirit**. When Ezekiel came and prophesied, there was a **noise and a shaking**, and all the bones came together. After these, sinews, flesh, and skin came upon the bones. When Ezekiel prophesied again, God sent the breath to enter into the dead bodies, and they stood and became an "exceeding **great army**" to fight the battle for God.

In 37:16-17 Ezekiel deals with the dry sticks. The **two dead sticks** in these verses symbolize the two kingdoms of Israel, the southern kingdom (Judah) and the northern kingdom (Israel, or Ephraim). The Lord has a way to make these dead sticks one, and His way is the way of life. His way is to **make the sticks alive and then to put them together so that they may grow together**. Whereas the bones are for the army, the sticks are for the building of the house of God.

The unique way to have the Body, the church, and the house of God is the way of life. We can become one not by gifts or teachings but by life. We all need the blowing of the wind, receive the breath, and the breath becomes in us the life-giving Spirit.

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