

Ezekial 37:3

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- [0 : 0 0] We will turn with you again to the chapter that we read in Ezekiel, chapter 37. And we will look for a few moments at verses 3 and 4.
- And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.
- Now 600 years before Christ was born, Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians. And 10,000 of the children of Israel were carried away captive.
- And with them was a young man called Ezekiel. He was only in his mid-twenties, and he was in the midst of training for the priesthood.
- He was training to be a priest, but of course the exile, the way that he was taken away into exile, meant the end of his hopes of becoming a priest.
- [1 : 0 8] But at the age of 30, that is five years later, he had a vision of God. And he was called to be a prophet of the Lord.
- And the vision was something like Isaiah's vision, which Isaiah had about 150 years before that. It colored the whole of Ezekiel's ministry.
- What he saw in the vision affected his whole ministry for the rest of his days. He saw God in his awesome majesty.
- He saw him above and beyond the world and the understanding of men. He saw that he was all-seeing and all-knowing.
- It was a vision of fire and glory that he saw. And the dazzling brilliance of the glory of God made him see the utter blackness of man's sin more clearly than ever before.
- [2 : 2 0] And because he saw the majesty of God and the purity and the sheer whiteness of God, he knew and he understood as he had understood never before the inevitability of judgment upon sin.
- So for six years he preached this. He preached the inevitability of judgment coming upon sin.
- Because God was a holy God that could not stand the sight of evil. But after those six years, the temple in Jerusalem was utterly destroyed.
- That was back in the homeland of the children of Israel. The temple was utterly destroyed. And the Israelites, the children of Israel, lost their hope. Because their religion was tied up with the temple.
- So from then on, from the time that that happened, Ezekiel was instructed by God to change his message to the people. And instead of preaching the inevitability of judgment constantly to them, he began to teach a ministry of restoration and hope.
- [3 : 4 4] Where the restoration would lead to an ideal form of worship. Where there would be a new temple and a new David.

Now the book of Ezekiel is very difficult to read and difficult to understand. But it is one that we should be frequently looking at because there is no other book that sets before us so clearly the majesty of God.

This chapter that we read, we joined the children of Israel after they had been ten years in exile. And as I say, Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed.

The temple had been razed to the ground. So as I said about the religion of the Jews being tied up with the temple. As long as the temple was standing, they had hope and they were looking forward to being restored.

But the day the temple was utterly razed to the ground, they lost all hope. There was no hope on the horizon for them. They were a depressed, despairing people.

[4 : 49] And Ezekiel, with his message of restoration and hope beginning now, was treated with tremendous skepticism.

Because the people just couldn't accept that anything good was going to come to them because of the desperate condition that they were in at the time. The circumstances were so bad that they couldn't believe that there was anything good going to come out of it.

And is this not the way with a lot of us? That when things are really bad, we tend to become poor Christians. We tend to almost sink under all the trouble and all the mess that their lives are in.

It is good or it is easy to be a good Christian when things are going well. And everything that you lay your hand to seems to work out fine. But when your whole world is falling in on top of you and things are not just going right for you.

And you seem to have the very providence against you as it were. Then it is often easy for us to take the easy way out and just fall under it.

[6 : 03] And deny our very Christian outlook. And deny even sometimes that there is a God. And walk away from all the things that we believed in before. But although the children of Israel saw that there was no hope on the horizon for them.

And if you asked them if there was any hope for them, they would have said no because the circumstance was so bad. If you asked them, are your bones living?

If we go on to the chapter as I say, are our bones living? They would say no, no. Our very bones are dried up. There is absolutely no hope whatsoever.

The bones that you are talking about, they cannot live. Because it is the end for us. But although the children of Israel were saying that, Ezekiel was going on and on telling them.

Out of all this mess, there is going to come a good time. When God will restore his people to Israel. And although this is a temporary bad time, a temporary law, you will be restored.

[7 : 11] And Jerusalem will be restored to its former glory. And the temple will be built. Because it will be a new form of worship. And he kept pointing forward to a new ideal worship.

Now the people to understand and believe this would be saying, well, if that happens, it will be a miracle. And a miracle was provided for them to show them the power of God to do those things.

That if the citizens have demanded a miracle, then a miracle was commonplace for God. For God's purpose must one. So that we have in verses 1 to 10, we have a vision that God showed Ezekiel.

In order that he would be able to pass on the message to the people with the authority. That he had seen this miracle. So verses 1 and 10 tells us that a vision concerning the restoration and giving hope to the people.

And then verses 11 to 14 gives us an explanation of that vision. So let us look for a few moments at the vision itself. It said, Now there is a beginning.

[8 : 32] The hand of the Lord was upon me. Ezekiel wasn't just going for a stroll in the valley. He wasn't going for an afternoon walk. He was going because the Lord's hand was upon him.

And he was instructed to go. And he had no option to go. The authority was upon him. The hand of the Lord was upon me. And carried me out in the spirit of the Lord. And set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

Full of bones. That gives us a tremendous picture that the valley was full of bones. It wasn't just a few odd carcasses here and there. The valley was full of bones. There was bones everywhere.

You could hardly step in the valley without stepping on those bones. But these bones were dry. They would have been dead for ages. And they were dry.

Later on it tells us that they were bleached dry in the desert sun. So it would be a very gruesome, horrible place. Because of the very death that was all around in those dry bones.

[9 : 36] And they were all in a heap everywhere. Scattered. And God says to Ezekiel. Son of man. Can these bones live? There is the challenge from God.

We are constantly being challenged by God. Every time you open the Bible and read something. If you read it with the attention that it deserves and demands.

Then it challenges you. It's not something that you can read and just put down. There is something there every time you open it. To challenge you. To awaken you. To make you see things that you haven't seen before.

And this is God's challenge to Ezekiel. Son of man. Can these bones live? And Ezekiel looked about him and saw these dry bones. Tired everywhere. Can these bones live?

Absolutely impossible. They were bleached dry in the desert sun. The Bible tells us. It stresses it. It says. Lo. They were very dry. It gives us the idea that they were bleached.

[10 : 35] Absolutely dry. Can these bones live? Can these bones be brought together? If you had a team of doctors and surgeons. Maybe working for years and years and years.

Maybe they could be brought together. Because remember. They weren't just lying there as skeletons. In their proper order. They were scattered everywhere. So if you had a tremendous team to bring them all together.

It would still be impossible. Because of the magnitude of the task. And because of the dryness of the bones. Because of the lack of recognition. There would be in each bone. Because of the wear and tear of the weather.

And everything like that. Can these bones be brought together? No. Not really. Can these bones be put together bone to bone? That is to fit exactly? Absolutely impossible.

Can these bones be made to live? These three bleached dry bones? No. Not a hope. Not a hope. Can these bones be put in working order? Absolutely impossible.

[11 : 35] So imagine yourself looking in a valley of dry bones. Bleached. Fine. Every one of those answers would have been no. Impossible. But that is from the human viewpoint. The human viewpoint says that it was impossible.

But remember Ezekiel's vision that he had. Remember how he saw the majesty of God. How he saw the power of God. How he saw the utter ability of God. To do everything.

And Ezekiel gives a very guarded answer. He says. O Lord God. Thou knowest. His instinct. His intelligence.

His education. Everything that he possessed. Said. No. These bones cannot live. But he remembered the vision. Of God. And he says. O Lord God.

Thou knowest. Well here we have an example. A prime example. Of how we are to behave. In times of bewilderment. And puzzlement.

- [12 : 33] When things have gone beyond us. And we don't know what's happening. There is somebody who knows. We say. I don't know. I'm confused.
- Perplexed. Everything that I understood is wrong. And yet. O Lord God. Thou knowest. Circumstances can blind us.
- But remember that God is omniscient. Omnipotent. He is all seen. So our answer. Must be. O Lord God.
- Thou knowest. Because we measure things. With a human eye. The area of the possible. Is always measured. By our knowledge.
- And by our eyes. And by our human viewpoint. But let us acknowledge. That things. That are beyond us. Are not. Beyond.
- [13 : 31] God's. Ability. To take charge. Of everything. Do the same. As Ezekiel. Refer it back to God. And say. O Lord God. Thou knowest.
- And this wasn't. A lack of faith. In Ezekiel. We shouldn't think. That Ezekiel. Should have said. Straight away. Yes. They can be brought together. Because thou art God.
- Ezekiel was acknowledging. His own weakness. Acknowledging. That he didn't understand. That he didn't have a clue. How this was going to happen. And yet.
- He acknowledged. God's power. He says. O Lord God. Thou knowest. God. He allows. Things into our lives.
- He orders. Circumstances into our lives. In order to bring us. To this state. He asks the questions. In order that. When we are completely.
- [14 : 26] Flummoxed. Completely out of our depths. That we are brought to see. Our own. Utter. Inability. And when we see that. Then.
- We say. O Lord God. Thou knowest. We may be short of answers. But God. Never is. We have many questions.
- As we go through life. Questions that we cannot answer at all. But in our need. We rest on thee. O Lord God.
- Thou knowest. O Lord God. O Lord God. O Lord God. Please don't write this up. As a part of the sermon. That just fits into the text. Take this home with you.
- Take it throughout your lives. This is the pillow against. All worry. All despair. This is the comfort.
- [15 : 25] This is what holds you up. When things get beyond you. That you are able to say. O Lord God. Thou knowest. And when Ezekiel said that.
- God immediately speaks to him. And says. Gives him something to do. God never. Sort of. Gets man. To admit something. And then.
- Perform something. In front of him. The way he does it is. That he gets. Man involved. The human agency. Is important. For God's purpose.
- So that God. Came immediately. To Ezekiel. As soon as Ezekiel. Said. O Lord God. Thou knowest. God came to him. And says. Prophecy upon these bones. And say unto them. O ye dry bones.
- Hear the word. Of the Lord. Ezekiel was asked. To do something. He had no idea. How things were going to work out. But God didn't pass him by. God uses.
- [16 : 23] Ordinary human beings. To carry out. His own purpose. So let us always. Be available. Let us be available. To the Lord's service.
- Let us always. Be listening to the voice. That tells us. What to do. That makes us. Servants. Of the living God. Prophecy upon these bones.

Prophecy upon these bones. These dry. Bleached bones. Say unto them. O ye dry bones. Hear the word of the Lord.

Now that makes sense. Prophecy upon these bones. With your own words. Ezekiel. And nothing would happen. Call the finest. Orators of the land. And prophecy. And speak over them.

For years. And nothing will happen. But Ezekiel. Prophecy upon these bones. And tell them. Hear the word of the Lord.

[17 : 20] That's. Where the power is. That's where. The depths are reached. And the heights are reached. Because of the power. That goes out. With the word of God.

God asks us. To do many strange things. In our lives. From the human viewpoint. What could be stranger. Or more ludicrous.

In. Man's. Own eyes. Than the foolishness. Of preaching. The foolishness. Of preaching. Where a poor.

Stuttering. Stammering man. Who has no particular gifts. Is suddenly. Touched. On the shoulder. By God. And said. Go. And tell. Others. Touched. About the babe.

That was born. In Bethlehem. The babe. That grew up. To be a carpenter. That grew up. To be crucified. On the cross. At Calvary. That died there.

[18 : 17] That rose again. On the third day. And is now. At the right hand. Of God the father. Making intercession. For us. That is. Pleading our cause. In front of him. A babe.

That was born. Over. Close to. Two thousand years ago. And yet. What is the result. Of that. What is the result. Of that. Poor man.

Coming. To tell people. About. The Lord Jesus Christ. Multitudes. That no man. Can number. Brought into. The kingdom.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ. To many pictures. God says. That. Can these. Dry bones live. Can these. Worldly people.

All their lives. They have lived. In sin. And iniquity. Maybe if not. Outwardly. Certainly. Inwardly. And privately. Maybe decrying.

[19 : 13] And miscalling. The church. Maybe swearing. Blaspheming. And rejecting. Christ. Can they. Come. One day.

On. Bended. Knees. And pray. Lovingly. And sincerely. And sincerely. With the name. Of Jesus Christ.

So often. Before. On their lips. In blasphemy. Now on their lips. With tenderness. And love. And love. Eyes.

That were once. So hard. And so cynical. As they scoffed. At everything. That the church. Stood for. Now. Filled. With tears.

Of love. And joy. We give thanks. That all preachers.

[20 : 13] And all Christians. Are able to say. From our point of view. It is impossible. But. O Lord God. Thou knowest. It is beyond us.

That the word of God. Can reach the driest. And the oldest. The most bleached. Bones. And make them live. There is nobody.

Too young. There is nobody. Too old. There is nobody. Too far gone. In their own sins. That the word of God. Cannot reach.

The word of God. Can make people see. Blind people. They can see. Deaf people. Who have never heard. A word of the gospel. Suddenly. They can hear. And it is not.

The church. It is not. The preacher. It is not. The number of times. You have gone to a free church camp. Or gone to anyone. It is. The word of the Lord.

[21 : 11] That is. Our whole. Argument. The whole. Preacher's case. The word. Of the Lord. That is why. That. Teachers.

Sabbath school teachers. Ministers. Elders. Christians. Of all. Ages. Wives. Who have husbands. That haven't been converted. Husbands. Who have wives.

That haven't been converted. When they look. At their own family. And they are praying for them. And they look at themselves. And they see. That even their prayers.

Are so hopeless. They look at it. And they say. I can't even pray. Often enough. For somebody that I love. And they look at it. And you shudder. To think that any member. Of your own family.

Your own close circle. Will be lost. And you think it is impossible. And you become despairing. And then you remember. It is the word of God.

[22 : 06] The word of God. That gives. Christian vitality. To dead. Dry. Bones. And we are told.

That Ezekiel. So I prophesied. As I was commanded. As I was commanded. There is the power. Of the preacher. As I was commanded. Not his own words.

A message. Direct. From the king. Of kings. Anybody watching. Ezekiel. Would have said. Ezekiel. Has gone mad. Ezekiel.

Is shouting. Over dry bones. They've been dead. Lying there. Bleached in the sun. For years. And years. And years. But Ezekiel. Prophesied.

The word of the Lord. Above them. And. He knew. That by prophesying.

[23 : 06] The word of God. Above them. That God. Had said. My word. Shall not. Return unto me. Void. It shall accomplish.

The thing. Where to. I sent it. So. Ezekiel. Prophesied. As he was commanded. And that is what.

The preacher does. To this day. He prophesies. He preaches. The word of God. And that is why. He looks for conversions. Because of the power. Of the word of God.

That goes out. And because God. Has promised. That his word. Will not go out. And return to him. But it will. Accomplish. That for which it was said. There are souls. In here.

This morning. That have been promised. To the Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. And he will have them. Because of the power. Of the word of God. It's the power of the word.

[24 : 01] That will bring them in. And not a single one. Who has been promised. To Christ. Will be lost. So Ezekiel prophesied.

He could do. Nothing else. The issue. And the result. Belonged to God. He was carrying out. God had commanded him. To do something. And he was obeying. And see what happened.

There was a noise. And behold. A rattling. And the bones. Came together. Bone to his bone. And sinews. And flesh. And skin. Everything came together.

The body was complete. But you'll notice. That it wasn't alive. There was no breath. In the bones. The scattered bones. Came together. And fitted. And made bodies of them.

But there were still corpses. Now that. Is the first miracle. And the first miracle. There are people here. This morning. Who are.

[24 : 58] In that state. It is the first miracle. That has been performed. In their lives. They have come to church. They have come to sit. Under the word of God.

Oh yes. They're still dead to it. They're still like corpses. Because they cannot hear. The word of God. As it should be heard. But we give thanks to God. In his mercy. That the first miracle. Has been performed.

And that you're sitting here. Under the word of God. And we pray God. For the second miracle. God told. Ezekiel to prophesy again.

Thus saith the Lord God. Come from the four winds. Of breath. And breathe upon those slain. That they may live. And Ezekiel did so. And the breath came into them.

And they lived. And stood up upon their feet. An exceeding. Great army. Ezekiel prayed. For the animating spirit of God. To come into those corpses.

[25 : 54] And immediately. The animating spirit of God. Came into them. And they stood on their feet. An exceeding. Great army. And noticed. The word.

Army. It wasn't just. A sort of multitude. Milling about. With no order in them. It was God's. Way of working. Where he has.

An order. To everything he does. They stood up. In ranks. They stood up. At attention. Because. They were acting. On the animating. Spirit of God.

Animating means. That it put life. Into them. And they stood up. Because they couldn't do anything else. Because the spirit. Was in them. And they stood up. In ranks.

In order. Standing straight up. Not. Lying about. Or lounging about. They stood. An exceeding. Great army. And those that were dead.

[26 : 52] Were now alive. So that is it. We pray. We pray. For the animating. Spirit of God. To work in the hearts. Of all those. Who are here in body. But do not hear.

The word of God. Now we find. That the children of Israel. Were given a vision. Of hope. Of restoration. In this way. They were given. A hope of restoration.

By God. Showing this vision. To Ezekiel. And because. Of the lessons. That we learn. From seeing. The word of God.

Working in people's lives. And because. Every single Christian. In here. This morning. Is able to say. Yes. The spirit of God. Does. Wake. Looking dead people up.

Because. He's able to. Give his own testimony. I was dead once. Oh yes. I was fit. Young. Active. But I used to sit. Under the gospel. And hear. Not a word.

[27 : 46] Some of us. Sat under. Maybe a thousand sermons. And never heard. A single word. And then. The animating. Spirit of God. Breathed. Into our lives. And suddenly. We heard. And understood.

What the word of God. Was about. And because of that. Because we know. That this happens. We are encouraged. To reach out. To the unconverted.

To those. Who are still. As it were. With their dry bones. Who are still lifeless. And we are able to say to them. Hear the word of the Lord.

We hide the preacher altogether. We hide everything else. But we demand. That you hear. The word of the Lord. That you hear it.

That you listen to it. Because that. Is where the power is. Oh my friend. Come often. To the house of Christ. Where the word of God.

[28 : 45] Is spoken. Go often. To the houses. Where they discuss. The word of God. Where they speak about Christ. Where Christ. Is never present. In the group.

Keep away. From the places. That never. Never mention. The word of God. And that never mention. The Lord Jesus Christ. But you might say. What is the word of God saying?

What is it saying? Well my friends. We could spend. A long time. Studying that. But we'll just have. One or two thoughts. From what the word of God says. And listen to them.

And remember them. Oh ye dry bones. Hear the word of the Lord. It says. And the word of the Lord. Says today. Loudly and clearly.

To every one of us. Believe on the Lord. Jesus Christ. And thou shalt be saved. There is salvation. Offered to everybody.

[29 : 45] Believe on the Lord. Jesus Christ. Christ. And thou shalt be saved. What also does it say? It says. The blood of the Lord. Jesus Christ.

Cleanseth from all sin. From all sin. Yes. It reaches your state. You might think. That you've gone for 60. Or 70 years. And you haven't paid. Any attention.

Whatsoever. To church matters. Or to religion. Or to Jesus Christ. Or to Christianity. Or anything else. And that you're too dead. And too far gone. It says. The word of the God. Says.

That the blood of Jesus Christ. Cleanseth from all sin. All sin. You cannot wriggle away from that. And then.

We must remember. The great. Text. The text. That probably.

[30 : 39] Will be. The most. Awful. Haunting. Thing. Thing. That can happen. To anybody. Who has heard it in this life.

And rejected. Christ. When. In the world to come. He is able to recall. For God.

So loved the world. That he gave. His only begotten son. That whosoever. That whosoever. Believeth in him.

Should not perish. But have. Everlasting life. I believe. That the walls of hell.

Are lined. With texts like that. To add. To the suffering. Of those. That reject Christ. Christ. It were far better.

[31 : 40] If you had never heard. Any gospel at all. Than hear it. And reject it. Listen to it.

Remember it. For God. So loved the world. That he gave. Gave. His only begotten son.

That whosoever. Believeth in him. Should not perish. But have. Everlasting life. Oh ye dry bones.

Hear. The word of the Lord. Amen. Let us pray. O Lord God.

Of heaven and earth. We plead with thee. To send thine own Holy Spirit. Amongst us. And touch hearts. That are yet untouched.

[32 : 39] We plead with thee. For the souls. Of those who have as yet. Been rejecting thee. Open their eyes. To see.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Just standing. At their door. And knocking. We pray. That today. Will be the day. When they will open the door. And receive him.

Into their lives. We ask Lord. For we know. That by. The power of an old spirit. Thou art able.

To bring. Life. To where there is only. Dead. Dry bones. We pray for the young people here.

Oh Lord God. We ask. That they would be filled. With a sense of urgency. That they would not see. And think. That they have plenty of time.

[33 : 37] But that they would see. The measurable way. That they would speak to them. In papers. In. To on television. On radio. On radio. And everywhere else.

