

## **DEAD BONES MADE ALIVE**

### **Ezekiel 36-37**

After suffering invasions, destruction and death, the people gave up!

God had apparently abandoned them.

Nothing was left. The nation was as good as dead.

In the midst of this sad reality, God speaks to them again.

This time the message is a *positive* message.

It's a message of comfort and hope. It contains the promise of restoration.

He sent His messenger to tell them He isn't done with them.

God promises to restore them

God will take those old, dead, dried up bones, and give them new life.

[First message (36:1-15) addressed to the mountains on which Israel is established]

### **JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS 36:1-7**

The other nations were laughing at Israel

Neighboring nations rejoiced and exploited every defeat.

They desired their destruction, so they might possess their land.

Israel's restoration starts with nations that wanted to see them destroyed.

These enemies will be destroyed by God.

Israel will no longer be a laughingstock.

The nations that were making fun of them will be embarrassed.

God will make His Name great in them, before the eyes of the nations that were laughing at them.

### **PROSPERITY IN THE LAND 36:8-15**

Even the land itself will experience God's blessing!

The land will be productive 8-11

It will be *fruitful* again!

In contrast to judgment on other nations, Israel will receive blessing

God informs the mountains (=> all the land), He is going to make them fruitful again, because He will be on the side of His people.

Abundant harvest will cause both people and animals to multiply.

Israel will again enjoy prosperity

The land will be Israel's inheritance 12-15 12, 15

God will bring Israel back to take possession of the mountains again.

Never again will God use the land to judge His people

The land will belong to them and no one will take it from them.

### **SIN OF THE PEOPLE 36:16-21**

God's people brought shame to God's name. 17-20

*People knew they were God's people; they were chased out of His land*

According to the pagan idea of the relation between a country and its gods, the nations would have thought that this God they had defeated must be a pretty weak god! Even worse than that image was the idea they'd have gotten from Israel's lifestyle.

Pagan nations imitated the character of their gods. What would other nations have thought about God's character when they saw how Israel was acting?

Pagans would have assumed that the god of Israel was this kind of god.

He wants them to see seriousness of the sins they've committed and the shame it has brought to His Name.

He reminds them of the punishment He sent to correct them

He sent it because they had shamed His Name.  
*God's Name suffered more damage than the people.*

*His name was disgraced!*

***What about OUR lifestyle?***

***If the only evidence about God's character is what people see IN US, what will they think about OUR God?***

***Does OUR lifestyle give people a good idea of what kind of God WE serve?***

See what happens to God's image when people take their eyes off of God—when we focus on ourselves.

God's action is based on concern for His own Name **21**

**CLEANSING OF THE NATION 36:22-38**

*For the sake of the glory of His Name,*

**God is going to restore them 22-32**  
**God will gather His people** again--from all nations  
 where they've been spread  
**God will cleanse His people.**  
**God will restore His people.**

**He's going to give them a new heart.**

–not a *hard* heart–hard like rock.

–but a *soft* heart–soft like the skin of a baby–a newborn.

**He's going to relocate them in their land**

–a new home –in the same land.

**He's going to make their land fruitful.**

**God is NOT going to do this for their sake!**

**God IS going to do this to glorify HIS Name! 36**

Because God will change them, they will DO what God wants

God will do what they could never do themselves.

Human heart isn't capable of obeying His demands.

*Only God can enable us to do that.*

Popeye: When enemies attack, Popeye battles fiercely, but efforts aren't enough. He's always defeated. Weak and defeated, he pulls out trusty can of spinach.

He is suddenly empowered with super strength and wins the battle.

Similarly, without magical implications,

God's power enables us to win battles we could never win on our own.

When we struggle with sin, in our own strength we are defeated.

But when we acknowledge our weakness and submit to the control of God's Spirit, He empowers us to defeat sin and win the battle.

As long as Israel tries to live in *their* strength, the result is rebellion.

Power to live by God's standards comes from a new heart, which God Himself promises to provide for us.

His Spirit enables us to recognize Him as God and submit to Him.

Based on this transformation, God will bless His people.

[ **2 object lessons** clarify **His promise to restore them** ]

### **THE VISION OF THE BONES 37:1-14**

**God takes a pile of old, dead bones**--Actually a valley full of bones!

Bones represent the dead nation; NOT dead people.

Though they're dead, they can still hear His voice. **37:1-2**

Remember the old spiritual about "dem bones"?

God brings old dead bones together again: "the toe bone connected to the foot bone; the foot bone connected to the ankle bone, the ankle bone connected to the leg bone," and so on.

Eventually, it tells us, "dem bones, dem bones going to walk around!"

They got it right!

**God's going to take them old dead bones,  
bring them together and breathe life into them**

That's what God's going to do for Israel:

God asks if Ezekiel thinks the bones can come back to life. **3**

Ezekiel knows he doesn't have the answer.

Only God knows the answer to that question.

God commands him to preach restoration. **4-7a**

He's going to bring the nation back to life.  
 Ezekiel believes the message and obeys God;  
 suddenly the bones begin to come together  
 –eventually become full bodies again. **7b-8**  
 –*but still no life!* **9-10**

The Spirit (*the breath => the life*) comes over them  
 and gives them life.

**God brings them together, and breathes life into them.**

So, what's this old spiritual about?

What is God going to do? **11-14**

**God is going to restore life to Israel!**

**But that's not the only pile of old, dead bones God is  
 able to give life to!**

The Bible tells us **WE'RE** dead in trespasses and sin.

Our condition is just as helpless as that pile of bones.

That pile of bones has as much chance of rising up and dancing,  
 as we do of walking into heaven. *We're that dead!*

God's Word promises that when we stop trying to make it on our own,  
 and trust Christ, who died on the cross to pay what we owe,

He takes that dead "pile of bones" and breathes new life into  
 us, just like He did for Israel!

[ **2nd object lesson** God uses to depict Israel's restoration: ]

**THE SIGN OF THE TWO STICKS 15-28 15-17**

**One stick represents Judah and its people.**

**One stick represents Ephraim and its people (N.  
 kingdom)**

2 sticks represent 2 houses of Israel, => N. and S. kingdoms.

What does the sign mean? **18-22**

God is going to reunite the 2 nations and make them into 1 nation

They will be God's people 23

He will establish David as their king 24-25

He will make a peace treaty with them 26a

Of greater importance: *He will dwell in their midst again!*

He will establish His dwelling place among them forever 26b-27a

He will be their God 27b

and they will be His people. 27c

Everyone will know that God did it! 28 HE is God.

**WHAT ARE THE LESSONS IN THIS PASSAGE FOR US TODAY?**

God's promises to ISRAEL are still true.

He is still waiting to do what He promises for them.

***Don't write off Israel!***

God is going to take those old, dead bones,  
reunite them,  
give them a new heart, a new spirit,  
and bring them back to Himself

**Before 1948 no one thought that was possible.**

When you told people God was going to bring Israel back to life, they'd laugh at you.

Not any more! They're very much alive.

But God isn't done with them yet!

He's going to give them a new heart, a new spirit,  
and draw them back to Himself!

God is faithful!

God keeps His promise!

The **nations will be amazed** at what God has done!

*WE* shouldn't be among the amazed.

We have His promise in writing!

**God's promises for His people today (the church)  
are just as true.**

He has promised to give life to OUR dead pile of bones!

When we trust Him, He promises to breathe HIS  
life into us.

London businessman was selling a warehouse.

Building had been empty for months and needed repairs.

Vandals had damaged doors, smashed windows, and strewn  
trash all over.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property,

he offered to replace broken windows,

bring in crew to correct structural damage, and clean out garbage.

The buyer said, "Forget about the repairs.

When I buy this place, I want to build something completely different.

I don't want the old building; I want the site."

*That's what God wants to do for US!*

God has promised to make US a new creature.

—give us new life

—change our heart

—empower us to live for Him

—for HIS name's sake.

It's not about US!

It's not OUR glory

It's about HIS name and HIS glory!

But it's just as true! We can trust Him.

*Will YOU trust Him, and let Him rebuild your life?*

**For those who have trusted Him,**

God assures us He is faithful to fulfill His promises to us today, as He was to fulfill promises to His people in Ezekiel's time.

In uncertain times, we know Who's in charge.

We can trust Him with our future.

Whatever problem we may face this week, we can entrust it to Him.

He is faithful.

He will provide everything we need!