

**Introduction:** The greatest gift God has given humanity IN His Son, THE Savior King is life: eternal, abundant and with purpose (John 3:16-18; 10:1-10; 15:9-17). We are all born with dead spirits that must be brought to life by hearing about Jesus and believing IN Him. Jesus said these are the two conditions necessary to cross over from death to life (John 5:24-25). When this happens we become complete human beings with a body, soul and living spirit. Moreover, The Holy Spirit, who brought our dead spirit to life, now dwells in us to teach us what The Word He inspired means, and to enable and empower us to live by His Word. As we daily practice God's will, expressed in His Word, we begin to think His thoughts, feel His feelings and desire His desires. Only God can heal a soul. \*\*\* Today's passage in Ezekiel is about a vision he received from God of a resurrection. God's Spirit stirred dead bones and restored physical bodies, but they still needed The Spirit of God to be in them. This is a dramatic example of how God's Spirit can bring life to people who are dead.

### **God raises 'dead bones' by His Spirit**

Jesus declared He IS God and He IS both life itself and the one who brings resurrection from death to life. \*\*\* After He ascended to His Father's Throne in heaven, The Holy Spirit He and The Father sent to His followers revealed to the apostle Paul the nine-fold fruit of The Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The first three are, love, joy and peace – three of the four character qualities we consider in Advent. \*\*\* Let's now go deeper into our passages.

### **I. The Spirit brings Ezekiel to a valley of bones to prophesy life, they come together with muscle and skin; then, he prophesies breath to blow on them to come to life. (Ezekiel 37:1-10)**

A. Ezekiel is brought by The Spirit to a valley of dry bones and commanded to prophesy life. (Verses 1-6)

1. The hand of Yahweh was on Ezekiel to carry him out, His Spirit made him rest in a bone-filled valley and He made him pass round and round many in the open, behold – they were very dry. (Verses 1-2)

**Army of Judah:** Ezekiel ('strengthened of God') is brought by The Three-in-One Covenant God to a valley full of very dry bones. This was after the third, and last, Babylonian invasion of Judah in which Jerusalem was totally destroyed. Most of Judah's army was slain in the battle and left unburied. Their flesh would have been eaten by birds and animals of prey. In a climate with less than ten inches of rain a year, the hot sun would have dried and bleached the bones.

2. He said to Ezekiel, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'; and he answered, 'Adonai Yahweh, You (only) You know'. (Verse 3)

**Humanly impossible:** It is impossible for people to bring life to these dry bones; but, Ezekiel knows that all things are possible with The Lord, The Covenant God (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; 14:36; Luke 18:27)

3. Then, Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy to the dry bones to hear The Word of Adonai Yahweh: I am causing breath to enter you and you have lived, I have given you sinew, I have covered you in skin, and given breath in you, and you have lived and know I (am) Yahweh. (Verses 4-6)

**Hear:** First, the bones must hear The Word of Yahweh.

**Three stages:** Yahweh God raises these bones to life by giving them muscles, covering them with skin and giving them breath.

### **God raises 'dead bones' by His Spirit**

**Experiential knowledge:** When they have come back to life they know He is The Covenant God because they have experienced a humanly impossible resurrection, passing from death to life.

B. He does so and the bones rattle together with sinews and flesh, but no spirit; then, he prophesies to the wind and they come to life: an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:7-10)

1. Then he prophesied as he was commanded, and then there was a noise, and – behold, a rattling, then bones came together; he looked and – behold, sinews and flesh had come upon them, then skin covered them, but not breath in them. (Verses 7-8)

**Lifeless bodies:** The bodies were perfectly put back together, but there was no soul or spirit in them. They were still lifeless.

2. Then Yahweh said to Ezekiel: prophesy to the breath Son of man, 'Thus says Adonai Yahweh: Come breath from the four winds and blow on these slain and they will live'; and I prophesied, then breath came into them and they lived and stood on their feet – a great army, much exceeding. (Verses 9-10)

**One word:** The noun translated as breath can also be translated as wind and spirit.

**Must be born again:** This is the background for Jesus telling Nicodemus he must be 'born from above' (John 3:1-21).

For all people who come to the end of themselves, God's Holy Spirit brings their dead spirits to life when they turn to God in the faith of the faithful Savior Messiah. This is for all who confess their failure to Father God, crying out to Him in faith.

**Stood on feet:** These slain soldiers now all stand on their feet, an exceedingly mighty army for God.

### **II. Yahweh tells Ezekiel the bones are Israel, whom He will bring back to their land with His Spirit; and, Jesus says whoever is believing IN Him will never die. (Ezekiel 37:11-14; John 11:25-26)**

A. Adonai Yahweh tells Ezekiel the bones are the house of Israel, whom He will take from their graves to their land to receive His Spirit. (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

1. Then Adonai Yahweh says to Ezekiel: These bones are the whole house of Israel – behold, they are saying our bones have dried up and our hope has perished, we have been cut off, us. (Verse 11)

**Interpretation:** God gives the interpretation of the vision: All twelve tribes of Israel are experiencing 'dryness' in their lives. Judah has begun seventy years of captivity a thousand miles from home, and the rest of the tribes in the north were dispersed to the nations one hundred thirty years before this. They have no hope of restoration.

2. Therefore prophesy: Thus says Adonai Yahweh – behold, I (am) opening your graves and, My people, I have caused you to rise from your graves, and I have brought you into the land of Israel. (*Verse 12*)  
**Restoration:** Speaking as if it has already happened, and it will happen when Cyrus issues his decree (Ezra 1), The Lord, The Covenant God will restore the remnant of Israel to the land He spoke of to Abraham concerning his descendants.
3. You have known that I (am) Yahweh when I open your graves to bring you up, My people. (*Verse 13*)  
**Knowledge:** For emphasis, Yahweh repeats the truth that experiencing God’s life-giving power brings people to know of Him. This is true of the first advent (coming) of Jesus. We will fully know Him experientially when He comes a second time. His second coming is our hope in 2022.
4. And I have given My Spirit in you and you have lived and I have made you rest in your land; and, you have known that I, Yahweh, have spoken and I have done it. (*Verse 14*)  
**Indwelling Spirit:** The indwelling of The Holy Spirit, to all who are believing in God through Jesus, is the result of the first advent (coming) of Jesus. Eternal life in God’s Spirit is the fulfillment of all Jesus instructed His disciples while He was on earth (Galatians 6:2-8). All who have God’s Spirit in them have been raised by God from ‘dead bones’ to life in God’s Spirit.

**God raises ‘dead bones’ by His Spirit**

B. Jesus says whoever is believing IN Him may in no way ever die – do you believe? (*John 11:25-26*)

1. Jesus said to her [Martha], I AM The Resurrection and The Life; the one believing IN Me, even if he may be dead, he will live. (*Verse 25*)

**I AM:** Jesus uses for Himself The Name of The Trinity Covenant God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-Israel.

**Resurrection and Life:** He is telling Martha, the sister of Lazarus who has been dead four days, that as The Eternal God, He has power to raise her brother from death to His Life. Lazarus was believing in Jesus up to his physical death, so he will live.

**Faith:** As Jesus had said earlier, by believing IN Him, Lazarus’ dead spirit came to life, so he will be raised at the Day of The Lord – if not sooner.

**God raises ‘dead bones’ by His Spirit**

2. And, each one living and believing IN Me may in no way ever die into eternity. (*Verse 26a-b*)

**Living and believing:** Jesus’ promise is for all who continually, day after day, for all of their life are believing IN Him.

**No way die eternally:** In the strongest possible language, Jesus declares such people will NEVER die, into all eternity.

In other words, from now until forever, those believing IN Jesus have a life of peace with God IN Him, and will be guarded by God’s peace (Philippians 4:4-7).

*Peace comes from believing IN Jesus so as to no way ever die*

3. [Jesus concludes His words to Martha:] Are thou believing this? (*Verse 26c*)

**Life and death question:** This is the life and death question we must all be always answering. Do I have a continuous life-giving, life-changing humble, dependent, obedient faith in Jesus? May our answer always be ‘yes’!

**Bottom line:** The world is a challenging place. No one can live a stress-free life, loving and being loved, in his or her own strength. When a person comes to the end of his or her own efforts to live meaningfully, making a difference, he or she is ready to come to God by Jesus. Jesus is the only miraculously conceived and born man. He lived a life of power AND love to God and to people. He healed broken people and taught about the Person and Ways of God. He gave His life as payment for our brokenness and failures. Then He came back from the dead, appeared to His followers for forty days and returned to His Father. He sent The Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection. Whoever confesses his or her failures to Father God and asks to be forgiven because of what Jesus did, will be forgiven, cross over from death to a life of: love, joy and peace; and, to be adopted into God’s family to live with Him from now until forever. Believe it!

**Conclusion:** Ezekiel is given a powerful vision of the dry bones of conquered Israelites coming back to life in body, soul and spirit to be an army for God. Six hundred years later Jesus declares Himself to be The Resurrection and The Life AND that any and all who are hearing Him and are believing Him will in no way ever die: keep believing.

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