

Wednesday Night Discussion

Date: 4/17/24

7:00—7:30 Teaching Overview

Chapter Snapshots: God holds leaders and nations accountable and promises future blessings to His people.

Chapter 34: Prophecy Against the Shepherds of Israel. God condemns the leaders (shepherds) of Israel who have only taken care of themselves, not the people (sheep). God promises to rescue His flock and appoint one shepherd over them, which is a Messianic prophecy (See Jeremiah 30:9; Hosea 3:5; Zechariah 14:9; John 10:1-2; Revelation 22:16).

Chapter 35: Prophecy Against Mount Seir. Ezekiel delivers a prophecy against Mount Seir (or Edom), declaring that they will become desolate due to their longstanding hatred against the Israelites. They are judged for trying to take the land and heritage of Israel. This chapter elaborates on an earlier prophecy (Ezekiel 25:12-14).

Chapter 36: Blessings for Israel. God promises to restore Israel for His name's sake. He will make the land fertile and prosperous and gather the Israelites from all nations. He will also give them a new heart and spirit to follow Him.

Text and Topics: In chapter 37, Ezekiel has a vision of a valley of dry bones, which God brings back to life as a symbol of Israel's restoration. God also shows Ezekiel two sticks representing Israel and Judah that will be reunited under one king.

1. **1** The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. **2** He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. **3** Then he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I replied, "Lord God, only you know."
2. **4** He said to me, "Prophesy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! **5** This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. **6** I will put tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."
3. **7** So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. **8** As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. **9** He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord God says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live!"
4. **10** So I prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army. **11** Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Look how they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished; we are cut off.' **12** Therefore, prophesy and say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them, my people, and lead you into the land of Israel.
5. **13** You will know that I am the Lord, my people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. **14** I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the Lord.'"
6. **15** The word of the Lord came to me: **16** "Son of man, take a single stick and write on it: Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him. Then take another stick and write on it: Belonging to Joseph—the stick of Ephraim—and all the house of Israel associated with him.
7. **17** Then join them together into a single stick so that they become one in your hand. **18** When your people ask you, 'Won't you explain to us what you mean by these things?' **19** Tell them, 'This is what the Lord God says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel associated with him, and put them together with the stick of Judah. I will make them into a single stick so that they become one in my hand.'
8. **20** "When the sticks you have written on are in your hand and in full view of the people, **21** tell them, 'This is what the Lord God says: I am going to take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them into their own land.
9. **22** I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king will rule over all of them. They will no longer be two nations and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. **23** They will not defile themselves anymore with their idols, their abhorrent things, and all their transgressions. I will save them from all their apostasies by which they sinned, and I will cleanse them. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

10. **24** My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. They will follow my ordinances, and keep my statutes and obey them. **25** “They will live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your ancestors lived. They will live in it forever with their children and grandchildren, and my servant David will be their prince forever.
11. **26** I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be a permanent covenant with them. I will establish and multiply them and will set my sanctuary among them forever. **27** My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. **28** When my sanctuary is among them forever, the nations will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel.”

Let’s Dive Deeper

One: The vision of the Valley of Dry Bones is possibly the best-known story in the book of Ezekiel. Chapter 37 contains two powerful portions of scripture, one is a vision, and the other is a parable. Both depict the rebirth of the nation of Israel after the devastation of exile. **The Vision of Dry Bones (37:1-14).** In a visionary experience, Ezekiel was taken to the edge of a valley (37:1). There he not only saw a phenomenal vision, but he also heard an explanation of it. **The Presentation of the Vision (37:2-10).** The valley to which Ezekiel was visionally transported was full of bones. Here he made two observations: **1** there were very many bones on the surface of the valley (i.e., unburied, and open to public view. Which to the Jews was unthinkable); and **2**, the bones were very dry (i.e., in an advanced state of decomposition. This also spoke to their spiritual deafness, as the dead can’t hear us). The Lord piqued Ezekiel’s curiosity about the meaning of the bones by asking a question: “Son of man, can these bones live?” A man of smaller faith would have responded negatively. Ezekiel, however, wisely responded: “Lord God, only you know.” To him, if God willed it, even those decaying bones could be resurrected to life (37:2-3). And thus, those resurrected bones would know for certain that Yahweh alone is God (37:4-6). In the vision, Ezekiel carried out his instructions; and with dramatic swiftness, things began to happen. **The Explanation of the Vision (37:11-14).** Fortunately, the explanation of the vision of dry bones is given in the text. The bones represent “the whole house of Israel.” As a nation, the captives viewed themselves as dead and disjointed. Despite the promises of restoration, which Ezekiel had been making since the fall of Jerusalem, they were convinced that their nation could not live again. They felt that they were forever “cut off” from their land, their Temple, and even one another (37:11). God assured these discouraged captives that he would resurrect people from this deathlike captivity. Then the Lord would bring them back to their land. This miraculous transformation would be accomplished through the Holy Spirit of God (the breath) which God would put within his people (See Romans 9—11). When these events transpired, they would know that Yahweh was God and that he was faithful to his word (37:12-14).

Two: After Solomon died in 931 B.C., God’s people were divided into two kingdoms, Israel (or sometimes Ephraim, after one of its largest tribes) and Judah (See 1 Kings 12-14; 2 Chron. 10-11). God now promises that the two kingdoms will be reunited as one kingdom, with one King (i.e., Christ) to rule over them. In vs 24, God promises that the coming Messiah (from the line of David) would spiritually cleanse Israel, and the people would receive forgiveness and obey God’s law. These benefits would become effective through Jesus’ death on the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34).

7:30—7:45 Think Through the Main Scripture Individually — 7:45—8:00 Tie up and Pray

Personal Study: Take a few moments to reread the main scriptures and highlight or jot down what stands out to you.

I observed in verse _____ that: _____

I observed in verse _____ that: _____

Study Questions: Take a few moments to answer the following question.

What has God promised us who are *spiritually and/or physically* dead? See Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23. _____

Contemplative questions: Take a few minutes to consider the following questions *thoughtfully* and *reflectively*.

How does Ezekiel’s *immediate obedience* challenge you? _____
