

## A VAST ARMY OF GOD

Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Key verse 37:10

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army."

Through the master class this weekend, we were privileged to know God's word from the letter to the Hebrews. God gave us spiritual insight into who Jesus is, namely our eternal High Priest, who gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice for us and purchased eternal redemption for us. Now we may fix our eyes on Jesus at all times and follow in his footsteps.

At this turn of the year, let us study Ezekiel 37. In this chapter, God helped Ezekiel to see the Israelites who were sunk in hopelessness because of the Babylonian captivity, who were like dead bones, with God's vision that they will come to life again by the Spirit of God and rise up as a great army of God. God wants to help us see God's hope and vision for the young people in Germany, in Europe, in America and in the whole world, that they will rise up as a great army of God for the world mission. Let us remember the life-giving work of God in the past year and prepare with God's vision for God's work in 2022.

### **1. Do you think these bones will come back to life? (1-3)**

Ezekiel came from a priestly family and was captured in 597 B.C. during Nebuchadnezzar's first conquest of Jerusalem and taken to Babylon along with the upper class of Judah. In Babylonian captivity, God called him as His prophet to preach the message of repentance to His people. About 11 years later, news reached him of the final destruction of his hometown, Jerusalem, and the removal of all the remaining inhabitants. Israel had

effectively ceased to exist and any hope of return was destroyed. The deportees sank into bitter hopelessness and despair. Yet it was in this situation that God gave the prophet a new message full of hope and vision for Israel's restoration.

Let's look at verse 1: "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones." Ezekiel was led by the Spirit of the Lord into a wide field that was strewn with bones of dead people. It looked like a deserted battlefield. Normally, one would prefer not to move at all in such a field. But the Lord led him through it all, so he had to take a good look at everything. Let us read verse 2: "He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry." It was a picture of death and utter hopelessness.

This vision was primarily a picture of the situation of the Israelites who had lost their homeland and now had to live in Babylon as slaves (v.12). They were completely hopeless. They thought that they themselves were like withered bones without any hope or future. Babylon seemed to become their sad grave. As we know, the Babylonian captivity was the result of their sin of unbelief and disobedience to God's commandments. God had warned and rebuked them countless times since the wilderness wanderings, calling them to repentance. But when they did not listen to all the prophets either and

persisted in their sinful lives, they finally had to experience the judgment of God.

But this chapter is not about causation, but about the vision of restoration. Let us read verse 3: "He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." God was not talking about their guilt. Rather, the Lord asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" God helped Ezekiel to see into the future. God wanted to help Ezekiel see God's hope and vision for these dead bones. Ezekiel replied, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." This was the expression of his faith in Almighty God. God does not want us to dwell endlessly on sins, but rather to look up and see what God wants to do, who can bring even very dead bones back to life.

God, through His question, helps us not to look backward, but to look forward and take hold of His vision: "Can these bones live?" Do you think the young students on campus will come alive and 12 Bible teachers will be placed on every faculty? Do you think our next generation will even be needed as global spiritual leaders for world missions? Do you think your children will come fully alive again and be needed as Bible teachers and camp shepherds? God wants us to see His hope and respond by faith.

In Germany, we see that the entire Christian environment has become like dead bones. Even countless spiritual leaders have been overwhelmed by humanism and relativism and have capitulated to the spirit of the age. The churches have abandoned the mission of God altogether. Thus, they have become like toothless tigers. But God asks us, "Can these bones live?" God wants us to have faith in the power of God's word and in the power of prayer, and to see the great vision of God. Let us put away all sad thoughts and listen to God's question earnestly, that by faith we may grasp God's vision and see Him bring dead bones to life.

## **2. Prophecy to these bones: Hear the word of the Lord (4-10).**

Let's look at verse 4: "Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones. This is a strong challenge that by faith he should speak the word of God: "You withered bones, hear the word of the Lord!" Humanly speaking, this instruction is nonsensical. Dead bones can no longer hear. But God's word has power of creation: "Hear the word of the Lord!" Therefore, we may prophesy by faith that the Word of God works mightily by its power.

You downcast workers, hear the word of the Lord, Nehemiah 2:17, and rebuild the spiritual walls. You despondent disciples, hear the Lord's word Mark 11:22 and by faith challenge the 1:0 cut. You unemployed Bible teachers, hear Ezra 7:10 and grow as excellent Bible teachers for 120 sheep. God's word is not just any word, but it is the word of the Creator. God's word has creation power in it. God's word has creation power that makes people alive.

A young woman had been full of rebellion for a long time, so that she did not study for school, even running away from the life of faith. Her parents were desperate. But at her baptism, God's word 1 Peter 4:13 spoke to her heart, "But rejoice that you suffer with Christ, that you may have joy and gladness even at the time of the revelation of his glory." She heard God's word in this word and made a decision to suffer with joy together with Jesus. Her dead bones moved together and came to life, so that she now follows Jesus with great joy.

Let's look at verse 6. Ezekiel was even to announce to them in detail what the steps of their spiritual coming alive would be. Let's read verse 6 together, "I will give you sinews, and will make flesh grow over you, and cover you with skin, and will give you breath, and you shall live again; and you shall know that I am the Lord!" How did Ezekiel respond? Ezekiel prophesied the Word of God exactly as God had commanded him. Ezekiel had the simple obedience of faith that does not

calculate, but believes absolutely in God's power.

Let us read verses 7 and 8: „So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them." As Ezekiel prophesied in the obedience of faith, the miracle of God occurred. He watched as the bones began to move. At first it was just a rustling sound, but then he could see the bones coming together again to form skeletons. Tendons and muscles began to grow and they were covered with skin. It was the miraculous work of God's omnipotence that through the power of God's Word they looked like real people again.

This year we have seen Samuel and Joshua victoriously complete their high school graduation by faith for the glory of God. Now they have grown sinews and muscles to be used as shepherds for the students. Samuel was allowed to work to prepare various lectures and gain more and more spiritual strength. Instead of traveling or drinking like other freshmen, he was allowed to equip himself spiritually and practically that he may be set up as one of the spiritual leaders for this generation. Joshua had been like dead bones in various respects. But especially through the life fellowship at the center, he also got more and more spiritual muscles, so that he not only learns concentratedly for his studies, but also is allowed to serve God's work as a witness of the gospel at the campus.

Let's look at verse 9. The bones looked good, but they still had no breath in them. Once again Ezekiel was to prophesy. He was to command the breath to blow on these slain and bring them back to life. This refers to prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us read verses 9 and 10 together: "Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' " So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them;

they came to life and stood up on their feet-a vast army."

This passage teaches the omnipotence and authority of the Holy Spirit through our prayer of faith. When Ezekiel prophesied out of the obedience of faith, everything happened just as God had said. He experienced the supernatural work of God through the power of God's Spirit, which transformed dead and withered bones back into living people. They were even raised up into a great army of God. God works through the power of His Word. His word is living and powerful. It has the power of creation to bring forth something new out of nothing. It has the power of creation to change people.

We are currently seeing how powerfully God is working in Olaf through the power of His word. It seemed earlier that he would be eternally stuck in study and never be able to make a decision for Jesus. But when the servant of God prophesied to him by faith, God's word from Isaiah 6:8 worked in his heart and made him alive. In response to God's question, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?" he was able to answer, "Here I am, send me." God set him up as a co-worker of the Gospel and he was even allowed to be used preciously as a minister of God's word, a blessing to our next generation.

As a doctor, M. Peter lives very busy. But when he accepted the word of God John 1:42 and Ezra 7:10, he became very alive to the work of God. He was allowed to be used in the work of God as an outstanding minister of God's word. God's word worked in his life that he was allowed to be healed from the hurts of the past and look forward. Through the breath of God, he was allowed to stand up as a great host of God and be preciously used as a rock of the church like Peter.

George Müller had been a man like dead bones who caused his father many worries. Because of his dissolute life, he even had to serve time in prison, and his father had to ransom him. But when the Word of God John 3:16 worked in him, he became spiritually

alive. His life was changed bit by bit from a drunkard to a missionary who eventually gave homes to 10,000 orphans and planted God's hope in hopeless young people.

God's Word is making our next generation, Olaf, Dasom and the young students on campus, as well as Germany and Europe, spiritually alive. Therefore, we need not look at the dead bones and remain helpless, but may prophesy diligently with the authority of God's Word. Thus, not only Germany and Europe, but also the whole world will be spiritually revived. We may also build 120 mission bases for the M mission and the world campus mission.

We are warriors of God who obey God's word. We are ready to fight many spiritual battles and glorify God through many victories.

### **3. You shall know that I am the Lord (11-14)**

Verses 11 to 14 describe the application for the Israelites. Humanly speaking, they were completely hopeless. But God told Ezekiel that He would bring them out of their graves and bring them back to their homeland, the land of Israel. Let's read verses 13 and 14: "Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 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 the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD." God wanted to restore his people Israel and thereby reveal that he is the Lord, the sovereign and leader of their salvation history.

To many spiritual leaders, Europe looks like dead bones that God used to use as a continent of royal priesthood. Spiritual revival seems impossible to them. But through the disciple making ministry through one-to-one Bible study and through the prayer of the Life Community, we have experienced how God has worked mightily and raised up determined disciples of Jesus among the native shepherds. We have experienced how the

Next Generation has risen up as an exceedingly great army of God. We have learned that spiritual revival is possible. At the Christmas service, we saw that God is working mightily even in the Corona times and has led numerous students to the Word. In the new year 2022, let us pray with God's vision to form 10,000 ZBS teams through which Germany and Europe can be spiritually revived. In the New Year 2022, let us persevere in prayer with God's vision to open up 1,700 universities and colleges and mobilize our next generation for global leadership through LEF 2022.

Thanks be to God who helped our next generation to take deep roots in the Word of God and mature into holy stumps. Thanks be to the Lord that our students and next generation are very eager to serve the work of God online and in person and to contribute for world mission.

Like Ezekiel, let us speak the word of God through the obedience of faith. Let us prophesy the word of God diligently through 10,000 ZBS teams, early prayer, through GLEF, through master class and life fellowship. Also, starting from three bases, let us prophesy the Word of God over the M-world and for the world mission and see withered bones come alive with God's breath.

Today we have learned that God's word has authority to make even dead and withered bones alive and raise them up as a great army of God. We already have God's vision for spiritual revival. In the new year 2022, let us pray even more persistently to prophesy God's word by faith and with God's vision, and see the bones of young people come alive and rise up as a great army of God for the world mission.