

You've probably all heard of Ezekiel and the dry bones. You may even have sung the words of the song: *"Dem bones dem bones dem dry bones ... hear the word of the Lord."*

Picture the situation with me. The lord takes you to a valley and there in front of you is the remains of an exceedingly great army. God's people have lost the battle. It must have been some battle, because there were a great number of bones, a great number of people slain as a result of the battle. It's not a recent battle because there are dry bones everywhere. That means they've been picked over by birds and animals and what's left has dried out in the sun and rain. It's not the most uplifting place. In fact if it had been me, I might've found it scary. A mass open grave and God has not only led you to this place, He now leads you back and forth among the bones.

Picture this. God asks you a question, "Can these bones live?" In the natural of course we'd think they couldn't. One would think their owners were long gone.

What about Ezekiel walking back and forth among them? I doubt he had any inkling of what can be done with DNA today. He must have been a man of faith, a man who believed in the resurrection of the dead, either that or he was cautious in how he answered God.

He said, "Lord, *you know.*"

If anyone could know such a thing it was God. Ezekiel knew this much about Yahweh. His God knew. Right answer. What God knows is what is important. Our knowledge and knowing is nothing compared to what God knows. Maybe Ezekiel was God's prophet because he didn't rely on his own understanding.

Proverbs 3:6 *"Don't rely on your own understanding. In all you ways know the Lord and he will direct your paths."*

Then God said to him, *"Prophesy to these bones ..."*

Prophesy?

God told Ezekiel to prophesy to them? Why didn't he ask him to pray for them, or anoint them with oil, or lay hands on them, or at least hold his hands out over them (there were a great many of them)? Prophesy? He wasn't told to ask God for their healing and revival, but to prophesy what he heard God telling him to prophesy. And what was that?

"Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!"

So, I ask you, can dry old bones hear ... and you say ...?

"The Lord knows." Right answer!

In the beginning when God was creating the world, He prophesied too. First there was the Word of God and then it came to pass. Nothing came into existence without it and the Apostle John knew this about God (John 1).

"Let there be ..." and there was (Genesis 1). The word of God went out and accomplished what it was sent to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Now Ezekiel obeys and speaks to the bones. "Bones, hear the word of the Lord." God is showing Ezeziel the importance of hearing the Word of God. It comes first. From hearing comes faith (Romans 10:17). Do you want to be like the Bible heroes, a man or woman of faith? Then seek to hear the Word of the Lord. It's all about relationship, communicating with your creator.

Back to Ezekiel. Why had the army lost the battle? Was it that they'd stopped hearing the Word of the Lord? The Bible contains reports of armies going into battle without consulting God and they lost it. Was this valley full of the bones of those who went into battle without consulting God? Were they doing things their way, or the way they'd always done battle? Were they confident in their own strength to win the battle, so didn't seek God about it? I recommend that you take a look at some of the lost battles in the Old Testament and see why the army lost.

At the end of the passage, the Lord says this about the bones: They were people who'd lost **hope**. They felt cut off.

Hear the Word of the Lord. This is what this valley of bones needed to do, in order to rise up like the army they'd been equipped to be. Hear what God is saying in this situation. They needed daily bread, fresh from God's storehouse, not yesterday's bread. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice. If you don't hear His voice, what are you doing about it? If you are still a lamb, the aim is to grow up into Christ, into the full stature of Christ.

Whose eyes are you looking through? Whose knowing? Maybe you've seen a dead part of the church, part you wouldn't even consider church, and decided it can't change. Can this church become an army again? Can those people who've lost a particular battle, succumbed to temptation, can they serve in God's army again? Can they become firebrands for God again?

Hear the Word of the Lord. Don't trust in your own preconceived ideas about things. Seek the Lord and what He has to say about things.

Before Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the dry bones in the valley, he was told to prophesy to the mountains of Israel. And what was the first thing he was asked to prophesy? "*Hear the word of the Lord.*" Can mountains be made to hear?

The valley of dry bones heard. They came together with muscles and all the flesh that was needed to live, yet they didn't arise. They needed something else to arise as an army.

"*Son of man, prophesy to the ruach,*" the wind, the spirit "*... come ... breathe on these slain that they may live.*"

Even if people hear the word of God, the Spirit of God is needed for them to live and to be overcomers. "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live." There is no maybe in this. The Lord declares it.

Come Spirit of God, breathe on us all that we might arise, an army, full of hope, ready to do your will.



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I was going to digitally sketch, flowers beaming and dancing in the light and cloud, but immediately I tried, a vision of white leaves leapt into my sight and I thought of the leaves on the Tree of Life as healing for the nations. So I put them in the foreground and the earth in the distance below, behind the Ruach. Come breath of God. The Breath of God is needed for people to arise and dance and minister to the world. In the first image, they looked a bit limp - floating rather than dancing. To co-operate in the Spirit, they need to be able to bend, to be flexible. When we rely on our own understanding and knowing, we can become inflexible. There are new things the Lord wants to lead us into. Hold up the white flag of surrender. Yes, and do more than that. Be that white flag surrendered to the Lord. Your will be done, Your way. I bend to Your word.

References in brackets come from the Bible.