

## **Revive Us: O Lord God, You Know - Ezekiel 37:1-14**

Thinking back to last week's message, you'll recall that God told Ezekiel; despite the hardened, stony condition of the hearts of God's people, He would step in and renew them. Not for their name's sake, but for the sake of His good name. In that moment God said, "*And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you...*" (Ezekiel 36:26-27a) And before this, God told Ezekiel: "*Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols.*" (Ezekiel 36:25b) When God decides to bring revival, His presence demands that every idol has been destroyed. Especially, whatever idol sits on the throne of your heart. If you need a revival or want to see God, bring a powerful revival then it begins with the sacrifice of every (g)od we have allowed to sit in His place. Revival requires their removal. Revival is God stepping in and revealing His authority, His Kingship, and His Sovereignty. Revival is when the giver of life brings a fresh outpouring of His powerful Spirit on people who are beginning to drift or have already drifted into indifference, lethargy, and excessive sinfulness. Revival, biblically speaking, is the sovereign work of God lifting His people out of spiritual decline, worldliness, and sin while restoring them to a place where they desire more of Christ and His Word. No other passage of Scripture provides a better picture for what it's like when God brings revival than in Ezekiel 37.

Now, we didn't look at the ending verses of Ezekiel 36, but I did mention that God made a promise to the tribe of Judah, to restore them spiritually. But He did more than give the promise. He also gave a statement of undeniable assurance at the end of verse 36. He said, "*I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.*" (**Ezekiel 36:36**) I wanted to point these words out to you this morning because it helps us begin to understand what happens next between God and Ezekiel.

Look with me now at **Ezekiel 37:1-14**. As I read these verses, I want you to remember the previously mentioned promises of God. Revival was about to come to Israel. Renewal was imminent. God's presence and power was about to be on full display. **Read Ezekiel 37:1-14**. In this chapter, God is speaking about the coming renewal of the nation of Israel as a whole, not just individuals. This prophetic lesson is for Israel and will take place at the second coming of Christ, but we can learn some things about God and about revival.

**Vss. 1-2:** Some valuable information is given in these opening verses. First God wanted Ezekiel to see something he would never forget. He wanted him to see something that only God could do. It must be understood that true Revival is only something God can do. If He doesn't choose to move, then revival will not take place. Next, take notice of what was scattered all over the valley floor. Bones. Human bones. Lots of them. We see also that they were very dry. This is a true valley of death, and it symbolizes the destructive nature of living in sin and removing God from your life. Revival requires us to recognize our condition.

**Vs. 3:** I love this question from God. He asks Ezekiel if he thought the scattered, dry, dead bones could live? Can you imagine what Ezekiel was thinking? How am I going to answer this? In his

mind, he was probably thinking, I don't see how it's possible, but you're God, so, my answer is... **"O Lord God, you know."** In that moment, Ezekiel realized how dependent he was on God for everything. This is where our mindset should be if we desire to see true revival. We must realize that only God can do it. And if we get to experience it, we'll never forget it.

**Vss. 4-6:** If you ever need evidence for God's sense of humor, it's here in these verses. Imagine again, what was going through Ezekiel's mind. Not only do I find it hard to believe that these dead and very dry bones could live, and now you want me to preach to them? Oh boy, I hope no one is watching this. Look at how God instructs Ezekiel to begin his message to the bones. "*O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*" Aren't you glad I didn't begin the message today like that? Oh boy! Here's the truth though. Every time I deliver a message; I speak to some dry bones. Either the Christian who is slowly drifting away and slowly drying up spiritually, or the lost person who is dead in their trespasses. Regardless of which one you may be, God wants to bring you life. He wants to breathe life into your body. And, as he tells all of Israel here, when He does it, you will know it. There will be no denying it, Amen!

**Vss. 7-8:** Ezekiel was obedient. Revival requires obedience from God's people, even if it's just a few. It also requires preaching and hearing of His Word. It was out of Ezekiel's obedience that God acted. And boy did He act. Revival will be a supernatural act of God. Think about what just happened.

**Vs. 9:** Up to this point, these renewed bodies were just corpses. They were present but not yet alive. God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy once again. This time, God wanted him to pray and ask the Creator of life to breathe life into these bodies. Prayer is a requirement for revival. How much prayer is needed. How long should we pray for revival? The short answer: Continually.

**Vs. 10:** Again, God acted out of Ezekiel's obedience. This time, Ezekiel prayed, and God breathed! We spent most of last year focused on prayer. There's a reason for it. God wants to hear from us. If we want a true move of God, then we must ask Him fervently for it.

**Vs. 11-14:** Hope is the key here. At this point in Israel's history, they were lost and hopeless because they had trusted in false prophets and in the promises of false gods. This vision was given to them through their priest to remind them once again that with God, hope is never lost. No matter how far from God you may drift. No matter what you may have said or done, Jesus is always ready to accept you. God said to them, "*I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live.*" His message is the same for you today because of Jesus. Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*" **(John 6:63)** Jesus professed in **John 14:6**, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" With Jesus, there is always hope! Revival brings hope!

**Closing prayer:** From Paul's letter to the Ephesians. **Read Ephesians 3:14-21.**