

GOD'S REVIVAL PROMISED

CORE PASSAGE: EZEKIEL 37:1-14

CONTEXT

Ezekiel was brought up to be a priest in Jerusalem, but he was carried away to Babylon during the first wave of the Babylonian exile. Yet even there, the Lord's hand was on him, and he was called by the Lord as a prophet. Ezekiel prophesied to the people who remained in Judah that their hardheartedness and sin would result in the Lord's abandonment of the temple and the total destruction of Jerusalem. When God's judgment came to pass, the people understandably lost all hope. They had earned their punishment. But God still had a plan for His people, and Ezekiel prophesied their revival and spiritual new birth.

KEY CONCEPT

God revives His people when hope seems lost.

As you examine Ezekiel 37:1-14:

- Visualize Ezekiel's experience of God commanding him to tell dry bones to come to life and them obeying.
- Reflect upon the role of the Holy Spirit in transforming us and drawing us out of hopelessness.



TIMELINE

Jeremiah Prophesies Judgment on Judah and a New Covenant (Jeremiah 1–38)

Babylon Besieges and Conquers Judah, Deporting the People (2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36)

Daniel Prophesies in Babylon (Daniel 1–12)

Ezekiel Is Deported in a First Wave of Exiles and Prophesies Against Judah (2 Kings 24; Ezekiel 1–33)

SESSION STUDY: Ezekiel Prophesies Hope and Restoration for the Exiles (Ezekiel 34–48)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Day 1: Ezekiel 1–11 | ☐ Day 4: Ezekiel 25–32 |
| ☐ Day 2: Ezekiel 12–17 | ☐ Day 5: Ezekiel 33–39 |
| ☐ Day 3: Ezekiel 18–24 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 80 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EZEKIEL 37:1-10

WHEN HOPE SEEMS LOST, WE RELY ON GOD'S POWER TO REVIVE US.

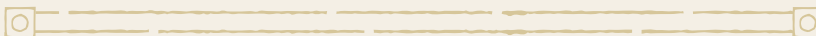
Circle every use of "live" and "breath" in the passage.

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." **4** He said to me, "Prophecy 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." **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, "Prophecy 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!" **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.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Though sin, guilt, and shame may have a hold on us, God's resurrection power brings renewed life to those who trust in His Son, Jesus, who conquered sin and death through His resurrection.

Key Concept: God revives His people when hope seems lost.



Several years into their seventy years in exile, God's people were discouraged. But the vision God gave His prophet in Ezekiel 37 signified a restoration of hope. The vision began with the Holy Spirit taking Ezekiel to see a valley of dry bones scattered all about. As a priest, Ezekiel would have been forbidden to touch dead bones and become unclean (Leviticus 21:1-2). Ezekiel likely recognized this shocking scene as an image of judgment against his people.

Ezekiel was led all around the valley to see that the bones had been dry for a very long time. God then asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezekiel 37:3). Ezekiel responded with reverence, acknowledging that only God would "know," and only in God's power could it be possible.

God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones, commanding them to hear the word of the Lord. As Ezekiel spoke, an unbelievable transformation unfolded. Bones came together; muscle, fat, and skin covered them; and bodies became whole—whole but lifeless. Then God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath. As the prophet obeyed, the breath entered the bodies, bringing them to life. The bones once completely dry rose up as a vast, living army.

What areas in your life feel spiritually "dry" or lifeless? How can the Lord bring renewal and restoration?

The vision of the once-dead bones, now-living bodies told the story of Israel. The dead and dry bones represented the Israelites' despair and sense of hopelessness as they lived in exile, feeling abandoned and forgotten by God. Perhaps many of them believed the story of God's mercy and covenant with Israel was over. The living and vast army, however, pointed to the impending revival and God's promise to restore His people from the inside out, cleansing them from their sin and giving them a new heart and spirit (36:24-30).

God is the One who brings judgment and life, and He is the One who restores what is broken. Ezekiel's vision reassured the exiles that their restoration was certain. Likewise, we believers in Christ can be reassured of this unwavering truth: God's covenant faithfulness endures forever.

How does this passage challenge your faith in God's power to work in hopeless situations?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EZEKIEL 37:11-14

GOD WILL REVIVE US WITH HIS SPIRIT SO THAT WE WILL KNOW HIM.

Circle all the times God says the words “I” and “my.” Then underline all the times God says the words “you” and “your.”

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. **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.’”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

REGENERATION: Regeneration takes place at the beginning of the Christian life and is the miraculous transformation, or the new birth, that takes place within an individual through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). It is the divine side of conversion (a person turning to Christ in repentance and faith), being the work of God within a person’s life that causes him or her to be born again, a work that human effort is unable to produce.

Key Concept: God revives His people when hope seems lost.



When Jesus taught His disciples and audiences in parables, they were not readily understood, being somewhat vague stories that invited interpretation. Therefore, Jesus explained His intended meaning of the parables to His disciples. If Jesus told the story of Ezekiel's vision, we might assume it referred to our physical resurrection or life after death, which may not be too far afield. But so it would be clear to Ezekiel and his audience among the exiles, God explained in detail the meaning of Ezekiel's vision.

God stated that the bones represented Israel and their struggle with hopelessness during the Babylonian exile. They had been so confident that Jerusalem could not fall because God had chosen it as the place where His name would dwell (1 Kings 9:3). Now that Jerusalem was destroyed, did that mean the covenant God had made with His people could not be restored? The people of God scattered across the Babylonian Empire were to see themselves in the scattered and disconnected valley of bones.

What is God's role in our understanding of His Word, and how should we submit to that?

In the midst of His people's sorrow, which they had rightly earned by their rebellion, God promised to do what felt impossible. He promised to take scattered Israel and re-form them together in their land. This would not be just a physical restoration to the land but also a spiritual restoration in which the people would return to covenant relationship with God. The restoration would not be just individual but communal. Israel would one day be restored back to God as a unified nation in beautiful fellowship with Him.

God will be faithful to His people and keep His promises. For the nation of Israel, the Lord would return the people to the land and His Spirit would be with them and in them, helping them to live in obedience. God would write His new covenant on their heart, and He would breathe new life into them. In this way He would restore, uphold, sustain, and show His sovereignty over His people, proving to them without a shadow of a doubt that He is the Lord.

How can we rely on the Holy Spirit to live out God's purposes for our lives?

DRY BONES COME ALIVE

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14. Write or illustrate the process that brought the dry bones to life.

DRY BONES		LIVING BONES

After all that the nation of Israel had done to reject God, why would He choose this course of action? What was His purpose in revealing this scene to Ezekiel?

Key Concept: God revives His people when hope seems lost.



HEAD

How does our understanding and faith in God impact our obedience to Him and our proclamation of His gospel?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Pray through Psalm 80 by first acknowledging the Lord as your Shepherd and Restorer. Ask God to restore your heart, to renew your faith in Jesus, and to bring you hope and peace through the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

In what areas of your life are you lacking hope and feeling cut off from God? How does this passage encourage you?



HANDS

How will you pray and prepare for sharing the gospel of Jesus with those who are spiritually dead in their sins?



3 REASONS WE DON'T SHARE THE GOSPEL (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT)

By Ken Braddy



When people find a great new restaurant, golf course, retail store, or ice cream shop, they will go to great lengths on social media to let others know about their discovery. Word-of-mouth advertising takes over, and things can go viral. You've seen it happen, I know.

One of the primary purposes we have as Christians is to share the good news of Jesus with others. The Great Commission is clear—we are to make disciples, and

that process takes place when we introduce people to Jesus's redemptive work on their behalf.

Many believers don't step out in faith and share what they've discovered about Jesus for several reasons. Here are three reasons why people don't share their faith and how you can help yourself and your group tell others the most important message in the world.

1) PEOPLE DON'T KNOW A SIMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

I remember when people used to attend 12-week seminars to learn a 1-hour gospel presentation. I doubt many people today will sit still that long! Knowing a simple gospel presentation is important. Find a method that can be written down and easily shared quickly using one verse, such as Romans 6:23 or John 3:16.

As a Bible study leader, I've taught groups a one-verse method using Romans 6:23, and it is easy to learn and share with others. The one-verse method feels more like a conversation than a presentation, and you can find visual guides online that you can easily sketch on a napkin too.

2) PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW TO ARTICULATE THEIR TESTIMONY

Some believers don't know how to give an "elevator speech" about their come-to-Jesus moment. If they haven't thought it out, they just don't know where to start.

Teach your group to write out their story (testimony) in three parts: (1) their life before coming to Christ; (2) the situation surrounding their salvation experience; and (3) their life after receiving Jesus as their Savior.

Give your group time to write this out during Bible study, and then give them more time to practice sharing their testimony with another person in the group. and hone their story. As their confidence grows, they will be more likely to speak up with a non-believing person.

One of the primary purposes we have as Christians is to share the good news of Jesus with others.

3) PEOPLE DON'T FEEL THE URGENCY TO SHARE

Just like Peter's critics (see 2 Peter 3), believers can be lulled into thinking that Jesus's return isn't imminent. Peter reminded his opponents that the Lord counts time differently, that He "delays" His return so that people can hear the gospel, and that unbelievers at Christ's return will face a terrible day of judgment. Second Peter 3 is a passage that group leaders can teach to help their group members see the seriousness and the urgency of helping others hear about Jesus.

Ken Braddy is Lifeway's director of Sunday School and is a 30-year veteran of Sunday School ministry and author of *Breathing Life into Sunday School*. He serves as a Sunday School leader at his church in Tennessee.

REFERENCES

UNIT 13

Session 4

1. Ambrose, On Naboth, 11.48-49, in Marco Conti and Gianluca Pilara, eds., 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 130 [Logos].

UNIT 14

Session 1

1. Paul R. House, 1, 2 Kings, vol. 8, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 267-68.

Session 4

1. George Blaurock, "Anabaptist hymn," in Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings, ed. Daniel Liechty (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 47.

UNIT 15

Session 2

1. Kenneth L. Barker, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, vol. 20, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 95.
2. R. C. Sproul, The Prayer of the Lord (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), 85.

Session 3

1. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Plants," in Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1714.

Session 4

1. J. I. Packer, Knowing God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 136.



Your feedback made it easy to see.

You spoke and we listened. The *Personal Study Guide* is now available in a large-print option. Same great content, just easier to read.

Shop now at lifeway.com/gospelproject
or call 800.458.2772.

DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

After Solomon's reign over a united people, because of his sin of idolatry, the kingdom split. To varying degrees, the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah often followed that same idolatrous path, with a few exceptions. Thus, God sent prophets to call them to repentance and to warn the people of His judgment. Because they did not humble themselves and listen, their enemies overtook them and they were sent into captivity. But even as the prophets warned of judgment, they also prophesied a future day of hope—a day when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would come to establish His kingdom and a new covenant to forgive sin and provide eternal hope for God's people.

Lifewayadults

gospelproject.com

RELIGION/Biblical Studies/Bible Study Guides



© 2025 Lifeway Christian Resources