



Voice Ministries

# ***NEW LIFE FOR OLD BONES***

Reading: Ezekiel 37: 1-14

*The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones (Ez. 37:1).*

In these days there is much talk about revival, and many Christians are praying for revival to break out in their home area or in their country as a whole, believing that it will provide the answers to all the problems that face the church today. We look back to the great revivals of the past, studying them and relating them to our current times in a hope that we'll find some sort of pattern emerging. Yet, if there is a pattern at all, it's simply that no two revivals are alike. The problem is that we seek revival in a way that fits human thinking and understanding rather than God's.

Perhaps, rather than looking back to what are, after all, relatively recent revivals, we should search for a greater understanding of the prophet Ezekiel's prediction concerning the spiritual revival of his nation. His vision is of a valley filled with the dry bones of those slain in battle, and tells how new life is put back into them.

***The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones (Ez. 37:1).***

Revival is needed when there is a spiritual malaise, whether in individuals or in an entire nation. Whatever condition a nation may consider itself in, nevertheless it can only be truly discerned by the Spirit of the Lord. It's only after much prayer, sometimes for years, by Christians who, having ensured that they are right with God themselves, seek the revival of their land. These will be people who have been led by the Spirit to share their concern for the spiritual problems in their land with God; people who will pray as Paul urged the Church at Thessalonica ***without ceasing*** (1 Thess. 5:17). When their prayers are answered, however long it may take for that to happen, it will happen in a unique way, for God creates newness rather than repetition, uniqueness rather than pattern.

The vision that was given to Ezekiel was one which must have been particularly disturbing to him for it was unclean for the Jews to have any dealings with the remains of the dead, yet here was Ezekiel walking through a valley filled with such remains, the dust of the bones filling the air around him as he disturbed them. (Ez. 37: 2-3) ***and He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were a very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. [3] and He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" and I answered, "O Lord God, Thou knowest."***

Just imagine the feelings of helpless despair that must have engulfed Ezekiel as he walked through this valley. Even when asked by God whether these bones could be revived all he could do was to pass the question back stating that God alone knew the answer. He was deeply concerned for the spiritual demise of his land and must have



Voice Ministries

longed for revival. In our land today there are increasing numbers of Christians who feel the same way about our own land as we watch the erosion of any semblance of faithfulness to God's way of living. We too might well look around us and wonder whether the bones can live; and we too might well empathise with Ezekiel and have a sense of helpless despair about us as we look about. Is it possible that we might experience true revival in our land once again; the sort of revival that changes not only the lives of individuals but the pattern of living for the nation. Revival brings a complete renewing of the way of life. It may start with just one or two people, yet soon affects hundreds and thousands, causing people to look inwardly at themselves and drawing them To God through Jesus Christ.

We may well ask whether our country can experience such a renewing, and whether our town can see the evidence of such wonderful change as revival brings. The answer is that 'God alone knows.' We must play our part if we want to see revival. We must pray without ceasing, humbly beseeching God to bring about change, and making ourselves ready to receive and act upon the change when it comes. We must have absolute dependence on God to supply, and we must maintain our focus not upon the need for revival but on Him, for as we focus ourselves on Him then He will understand what we are looking to Him for. However desperate the situation, we must not change our focus from God and His righteousness.

***Again He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.'*** (Ez. 37: 4).

Just as in the days of Ezekiel, today there is a great need for people to hear the word of God preached from the pulpit, taught in the home and in the schools, and shared through the witnessing of committed Christians. The passage tells us that Ezekiel was told to prophesy over the bones, but has that any meaning for us in the church today? I wonder whether many people who regularly attend church services and meetings even seriously consider prophecy in today's world. Many would argue that it is something which happened primarily in Old Testament times, and that Jesus was the last great prophet. Yet the truth is that there are many who prophesy today, moved to utterance by the Holy Spirit, sharing a word from God to help galvanise His people into action and wake up the church with a clear clarion call. There are many pulpits where the word that is preached is a truly anointed word, not simply the wisdom of the preacher, however learned that preacher might be. The prophetic word will come to us through anointed, Spirit-filled speakers, those chosen by God to give that word, whether it be a preacher leading a service or a Spirit-filled believer in a prayer meeting; whether it be in a consecrated building or in someone's home.



Voice Ministries

So what will this word be that the prophets share? The short answer is that no-one knows until it has been shared, but beyond that, the one thing we can be sure of is that it will be a word that speaks to the dry bones of today's church. Many will close their ears because it will otherwise commit them to more action than they are prepared to commit to. Others will condemn the prophecy as being little more than sensationalism. Yet some will heed the word that is given and seek prayerfully the way to act upon it, recommitting themselves in the process. Revival will have come to these people, and from them it can spread.

***“Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life’. And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.”*** (Ez. 37: 5-6).

If the church is to respond then it desperately needs that breath of God now! In fact, the greatest single need to turn around the decline in our country is for us as a nation to feel the breath of God, renewing the spiritual life of the nation. The change will come when our churches are filled with Spirit-filled believers rather than church-goers. People who are committed to sharing the word of God and proclaiming new life in Christ for all who repent and turn to Him as their Lord and Saviour. This is what will ultimately bring about change in our nation, for when the people of the nation practice and experience change then the nation inevitably changes as well.

How can we experience this great renewing in our church and in our land today? Certainly, the first thing that needs to be resolved is for the whole church to unify in its purpose. We need to be part of a church that only has the establishment of God's kingdom as its intent; a church that puts aside petty differences in order to become unified against the common enemy; a church where allegiance to Christ is demonstrated to be far above any denominational or doctrinal issues. Any church that cannot be a part of this should question where they stand in true relationship to Christ, hard though that might seem.

Once the church has come together then there needs to be prolonged and insistent prayer; prayer that calls for the breath of God to revive the church and revive our land, prayer that demonstrates real commitment of the body of the church to His purpose. We must not be afraid to prophesy as God leads us in the Spirit, for it will be our obedience to Him that causes His breath to enliven the dry bones of the church. We must not be afraid to share God's promise to bring His people from their state of deadness and into the promised land. The message that we have to share is not the harshness of a judgmental church, but rather the message of hope from God.



#### Voice Ministries

Even in the blackest of days, God's people are still 'His people'. We have the promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and that's a promise of eternal hope.

The fervent prayer of a spirit-filled church will bring new life as God pours out his Spirit on the church, and the result will be a great number of conversions resulting in change in our land. If you dare to doubt this, then you doubt the omnipotence of God, the God to whom nothing is impossible!

Let us then determine to remain constant and faithful to the Word of God, just as Ezekiel was. No matter how dry our own valley seems to be, no matter how much deadness we encounter as we walk through it, let our constant prayer be that the very breath of God will come to revive it all.

Let us pray that life will be breathed back into the church and that a new spiritual commitment to God in Christ will fall upon our land as they recognise that He is the Lord!

Amen

© 2007, Colin Gordon-Farleigh, All rights reserved.  
The author grants permission to copy this material for **non-commercial** purposes intended to further the spread of the Word of God.  
If you copy material from this website into any medium **readable** on the **internet**, you **must include a link** to the page or pages copied.