

Ezekiel 37:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Analysis

God commands Ezekiel to 'prophesy upon these bones,' demonstrating that divine word creates life where death reigns. The imperative 'prophesy' (hannabe) requires the prophet to speak God's word as His authorized representative. The direct address 'O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD' personifies the lifeless remains, illustrating that God's word possesses creative power beyond natural capacity. This echoes Genesis 1 where God speaks creation into existence and anticipates John 5:25, where Jesus declares the spiritually dead will hear His voice and live. The phrase 'dry bones' (atsemot yaveshoth) emphasizes complete death—not fresh corpses but long-deceased remains, maximizing the miracle's impossibility from human perspective. God deliberately chooses the most hopeless situation to display resurrection power, teaching that no situation exceeds His ability to restore. The command to prophesy reveals that ministry is not human effort but Spirit-empowered proclamation of God's word, which accomplishes what it declares (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Historical Context

Delivered during the Babylonian exile (likely 585-584 BC), this vision addressed Israel's utter despair. Ezekiel 37:11 interprets the vision: 'these bones are the whole house of Israel,' who lamented, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off.' The exiles viewed their national death as final and irreversible. Their temple lay in ruins, the Davidic king was captive, the land was desolate, and they were scattered among the nations. The vision of dead bones coming to life

proclaimed that God would restore Israel nationally and spiritually, bringing them back to their land. This prophecy saw partial fulfillment in the return under Ezra and Nehemiah (538-445 BC) and awaits ultimate fulfillment in Israel's end-times restoration (Romans 11:25-27).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'dead' situations in your life seem beyond hope, and how does God's command to prophesy to them challenge your despair?
2. How does this passage demonstrate that spiritual life comes through hearing God's word, not human effort?

Interlinear Text

Again he said	H413	unto me Prophesy	H5921	bones	H428
H559		H5012		H6106	
Again he said	H413	bones	H6106	unto them O ye dry	H3002
H559				Hear	H8085
of the LORD				the word	H1697
H3068					

Additional Cross-References

John 5:25 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Matthew 21:21 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Ezekiel 36:1 (Word): Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:

Jeremiah 22:29 (Word): O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

Isaiah 26:19 (Parallel theme): Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Ezekiel 37:11 (Parallel theme): Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

John 2:5 (Parallel theme): His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

Numbers 20:8 (Parallel theme): Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

1 Kings 13:2 (Word): And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

Isaiah 42:18 (Parallel theme): Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.