

Ezekiel 37:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Analysis

The command to 'prophesy unto the wind' (ruach) demonstrates the prophet's dependence on God for both message and power. Calling the breath/wind/Spirit 'from the four winds' (me'arba ruchot) indicates the universality of God's sovereignty—He commands the Spirit from all directions, transcending geographical limits. The phrase 'breathe upon these slain' acknowledges that Israel's condition was violent death (slain, halalim), not natural expiration, pointing to the Babylonian conquest's brutality. The promise 'that they may live' (yichyu) guarantees transformation from death to life through the Spirit's work. This verse illustrates the economy of redemption: the Father commands, the Son (represented by the prophet) speaks the word, and the Spirit applies life. The passage anticipates Pentecost (Acts 2:2-4), where the Spirit came 'from heaven' like 'rushing mighty wind' to animate the church. Just as Ezekiel could not command the Spirit in his own authority but only by God's word, ministers today proclaim the gospel in reliance upon the Spirit to give life.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern peoples associated wind/breath with divine life-force. However, unlike pagan animism where impersonal forces animated nature, Israel's theology taught that the personal Spirit of Yahweh sovereignly gives life according

to His covenant purposes. The exiles needed to understand that their restoration would not result from political maneuvering or military strength but from God's Spirit working in fulfillment of His promises. This principle continued in Israel's return under Zerubbabel: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts' (Zechariah 4:6). The church's life likewise depends not on human wisdom or organizational effectiveness but on the Spirit's regenerating and sanctifying work.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the prophet's dependence on God's command to summon the Spirit illustrate ministry's utter reliance on divine power?
2. What does summoning the Spirit 'from the four winds' teach about God's unlimited resources to accomplish His purposes?

Interlinear Text

בָּן	הַנֶּבֶב	אֶל	בָּרְתָּם	הַנֶּבֶב	אֶל	אֶמְרָתָךְ
son	he unto me Prophesy	al	bar-tam	he unto me Prophesy	al	em-rat-chek
H1121	H5012	H413	H7307	H5012	H413	H559
Then said	he unto me Prophesy	Then said	O breath	Then said	O breath	Then said
H559	H5012	H413	H7307	H559	H3541	H136
of man	Then said	Then said	O breath	Then said	the Lord	the Lord
H120	H559	H413	H7307	H559	H3068	H136
from the four	O breath	Come	O breath	and breathe	upon these slain	upon these slain
H702	H7307	H935	H7307	H5301	H2026	H428
וְיִחְיָה						
that they may live						
H2421						

Additional Cross-References

John 3:8 (Parallel theme): The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Song of Solomon 4:16: Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

Psalms 104:30 (Parallel theme): Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

Ezekiel 37:5 (References God): Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

Ezekiel 37:14 (References Lord): And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

