

## Leader Resources for Small Groups | February 16, 2020

### *During the Exile — Ezekiel*

**Focus Passage:** *Ezekiel 1:1-3, 37:1-14*

**Additional Context:** *Ezekiel 37:1-28*

**Corollary Scripture:** *Daniel*

**Other Passages Referenced:** *Deuteronomy 30:15–19; Ezekiel 2:8–3:1; 8; 11:22–23; 33:21; John 7:17; 20:22; Acts 2;*

**Sermon Recap:** The 5 Major and 12 Minor prophets cover the scope of Israel's rebellion to expectation, through their exile and restoration. The continuing message is that God speaks to His people in their times of trouble. Before the exile, Isaiah told the people of Israel they could and should trust the LORD in times of trouble. During the exile, the people of Israel asked, "How can we trust God after He allowed us to be conquered and exiled?" Ezekiel addresses that question. We need to obey God's word (Ezek 37:7), eat God's word (Ezek 2:8–3:1), and stay intrigued by God's word (Ezek 37:28). The LORD caused the Israelites to be exiled in order to fulfill the covenant curses for their unfaithfulness to the covenant. The exile represents the experience of every human being who lives in a fallen world. Ezekiel's vision of the LORD breathing life back into dry bones (Ezekiel 37) reminds us of both creation and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. God's saving of His people was something they, being spiritually dead, could not do for themselves. Their renewed life was completely a gift of God's grace as the LORD supernaturally used His word and Spirit to bring new life.

### **Interpretive Helps:**

- Writing of the Major and Minor Prophets in Relation to the Exile
  - Before—Hosea, Amos, Habakkuk
  - During—Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel
  - After—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
  - Isaiah's writings address pre-exile, the exile, and post-exile.
- The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem on two separate occasions:
  - The first was by the King Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BC.
  - Nebuzaradan laid siege to Jerusalem again in 587 BC and destroyed the city and temple during that time.
- Biographical info on Ezekiel:
  - Ezekiel had visions from God while he was among the exiles in Babylon (1:1)
  - Ezekiel was both a prophet and a priest (1:3). He was the son of Buzi, a Zadokite priest (see 44:15 and cf. 1 Kgs 1:32–35)
- *Chaldeans* are a people from southern Babylon. The name *Chaldeans* is often used interchangeably with *Babylonians*
- "The hand of the LORD was upon me ..." is a repeated phrase in Ezekiel used to introduce a prophetic vision from God (3:22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1). It is pretty much synonymous with "The Spirit of the LORD was upon me ...."

### **Comments to Leaders**

- As you meet this week, I encourage you to be intentional on two fronts:
  - Probe a bit and be sensitive to see if anyone in your group may be going through an especially dry time spiritually or is still suffering from previous "destruction" in their personal lives.
  - Call attention to our need for both the Word of God and the Spirit of God in community with the People of God. Avoid advice giving but speak the word from Scripture and clamor that the Holy Spirit will do the supernatural restoration needed. Some of the verses in Serve Question 3 may be helpful.

- I want to remind you that if you have members who may need more individual attention or skills than you have to offer, you may want to make them aware of Turning Point <http://wcchapel.org/turning-point/> and Mentoring Ministries <http://wcchapel.org/mentoring-ministries-sign-up/>

## Group Gathering

### **Connect:** *Making Honest Connections with One Another (Pick one)*

1. Please share briefly one of the following:
  - a. Any follow up to last week's discussion about seeing God's holiness and our contrasting sinfulness?
  - b. What God has been saying to you through His word, the sermon, or other people?
  - c. A joy or answer to prayer you received?

### **Grow:** *Listening to and Learning from God's Word*

#### **Read Ezekiel 37:1–14**

1. What did the dry bones in the valley represent?
2. In Ezekiel 37:4, what was the command the LORD told Ezekiel to prophesy over the bones?
3. What was the promise the LORD made In Ezekiel 37:5, that Ezekiel was to prophesy?
4. List the promises the LORD makes in Ezekiel 37:12–14.
5. How does the vision of breath coming over the dry bones in Ezekiel 37, and the promise of the Spirit relate to Genesis 2:7? ... To John 20:22 and Acts 2:1–4?

### **Serve:** *Serving King Jesus and Others, By Living Out and Letting Others Know God's Word*

1. Do you see yourself as living in exile? ... Why or why not?
2. Are you aware of an experience in your own life where you heard the word of the LORD and subsequently received the Holy Spirit?
3. Has the Spirit been speaking to you about an area of your life where you know you are not obeying God's word? If so, read Psalm 32:1-6, Isaiah 1:20, and 1 John 1:8–9 and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to do what you cannot do on your own.
4. Do the dry bones, lost hope, and feeling cut-off remind you of anyone you know? Would you pray about speaking truth from God's word to them and praying that God's Spirit would bring new life?

### **What we hope members glean from the passage:**

1. The whole house of Israel—northern and southern kingdoms (Ezek 37:11).
2. "Hear the word of the LORD."

3. "I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live."
4. Promises
  - "I will open your graves and raise you from your graves."
  - "I will bring you into the land of Israel."
  - "You shall know that I am the LORD."
  - "I will put my Spirit within you."
5. In Gen 2:7, the breath of the LORD brought life to the bodies of Adam and Eve. In John and Acts, The breath/wind of the Holy Spirit came as a fulfillment of the promises made in Ezekiel 37:14 and created new life spiritually as the Holy Spirit entered into believers.

## Further Resources

- Bible Project –
  - Ezekiel Part 1 (7 minutes) – <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=26>
  - Ezekiel Part 2 (7 minutes) – <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=27>
- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of [www.wcchapel.org](http://www.wcchapel.org)