

Ezekiel Part 44 (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

1. One of the most amazing and well-known prophecies in the OT is found in Ezekiel 37.
2. Few other passages have suffered more from the extremes of interpretation with either too much or too little in both meaning and application of the figures, symbols, and types.
3. There are two common questions associated with Ezekiel 37.
4. First, does this passage convey OT ideas concerning the bodily resurrection of the dead?
5. Second, what, if anything, does this passage say about the relationship of Israel and the church of the New Testament?
6. Most scholars agree that teaching a doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was not the main point of Ezekiel 37.
7. Some of the restoration promises of Ezekiel 36:24–32, especially the “new heart” and “new spirit” (vv. 24–28), are features of the church age as well. (Ezekiel 36:22-38)
8. But the OT promises of a new everlasting covenant are all addressed to a remnant within ethnic Israel, not to the church.
9. Ezekiel 37 can be divided into two sections by the phrases “the hand of the LORD was upon me” in v. 1 and “the word of the LORD came to me” in v. 15.
10. The vision in 37:1–10 is followed by the interpretation in verses 11–14 and is the first message.
11. The second message concerned a symbolic action, binding two sticks together (vv. 15–17) with an interpretation in vv. 18–28.
12. **37:1–10** Ezekiel was taken in a vision to a valley filled with human bones that were dried, bleached, and scattered. (Read verses 1-10)
13. The prophet walked “back and forth” (lit. “around”) in the valley taking care not to touch any of the bones.
14. As a priest he would have taken such precautions since touching a dead body, including these bones, was forbidden (Ezekiel 1:3 and Leviticus 21:11).
15. The bones were characterized as “very dry,” indicating that they had been there for some time. (Ezekiel 37:2)

16. Any suggestion that there could ever again be life in the bones would appear impossible. (verse 3)
17. He knew that if the bones could live it was a matter only God knew and that the giving of life was a deed only God could perform.
18. The message consisted of a promise to give breath, life, tendons, flesh, and skin to these bones so they would know that he is God. (vv. 4–6)
19. Ezekiel's obedience produced immediate results. Even before he had finished, he heard the "noise" of the fulfillment of God's promise. (Ezekiel 37:7)
20. The bones came together and were clothed with flesh, but they still were not alive. (v. 8)
21. So God again commanded the prophet to preach to the "breath," "wind," or "spirit") to fill these lifeless bodies. (v. 9)
22. It clearly was God's Spirit who was to give breath to these lifeless bodies.
23. So, he preached to the "breath," and life entered the lifeless bodies, and they stood as a vast, living, reconstituted army. (vv. 10)
24. **37:11–14** God interpreted the vision for Ezekiel. It was God's response to the people's expression of hopelessness. These "bones" were "the whole house of Israel."
25. God made marvelous promises to the nation in chaps. 33–36, but the real issue was, "Can these bones live?"
26. Can a dead and lifeless nation in exile and under the control of a godless nation be resurrected and become a living, thriving kingdom once again?
27. Sin had brought about the death of the nation of Israel. Only God can produce life for those who are physically and/or spiritually dead.
28. God, however, said, "I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them," signifying all their places of exile.
29. This promise of restoration for the nation was divine power, not human power. (vv. 12–14)
30. What a marvelous message of encouragement this was, both to Ezekiel and to the people in exile.