



## Devotion

### Apeldoorn - ECCEN conference - 20180912

#### Ez 37:1-14 The Holy Ghost will make alive

We read God's holy Word from the prophecies of Ezekiel, chapter 37.  
So, the Scripture reading is from the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel.

#### <sup>KJV</sup> Ezekiel 37:

- 1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,
- 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry.
- 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.
- 4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.
- 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:
- 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.
- 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.
- 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them.
- 9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, 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.
- 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.
- 11 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.
- 12 Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.
- 13 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
- 14 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.

#### Prayer

## The labors of the Holy Ghost

600 years before the birth of Christ, in Juda it was a time of deep decline. There were many idols: Baal, the Moloch, the people bowed before idols of wood and stone. God's people, outwardly, Israel! They bowed for the sun, the moon and the stars.

Is this God's people? They look like the heathens! Totally declined; even their children were offered to the Moloch.

God's prophets had warned the people in the name of the Lord. The Lord had sent Jeremiah and Zephania. Juda had to quit the service to the idols. And if not, the Lord would come with His righteous judgements and His punishments.

Jeremiah had prophesied: 'I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.' (Jer 20:4 KJV)

In this way it has happened. The enemy came, the temple was ruined, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, nothing was left of the glorious former times. Many of the people were deported to Babylon. One of them was Ezekiel.

In Psalm 137 we read something of the homesickness of the people of God: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.* <sup>2</sup> *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.* <sup>3</sup> *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.* <sup>4</sup> *How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?* <sup>5</sup> *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.* <sup>6</sup> *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (Psa 137:1-6 KJV)*

A strange land, a strange language, a strange culture... strange idols... And the deported people of Juda had to do what was said; in fact, they were slaves. And... for the real Israelites, the real children of God, the daily lamentations were: O Lord, we are guilty, our people didn't obey to Thy Word, spoken by the prophets. We have sinned, we ARE sin, we are sinners. Grace, o Lord, give us mercy. They really missed the house of the Lord, the temple in Jerusalem. So there were still children of God, but they had to live in Babylon. It looked if all had ended, everything had gone: the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, the service of the temple, the future of the people of God... Everything had ended into... death.

And then, far away from home, in Babylon, in these very difficult circumstances, one of the deported young men, Ezekiel, was called as a prophet of God.

In our text he is telling us what has happened, we read this in verse 1:

*1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,*

*The hand of the LORD was upon me.* That means: Ezekiel is receiving the power and the Word to prophecy. The Holy Ghost is working. It says: *and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD.* Ezekiel saw a vision, a revelation of God. It was not real, but he saw it with eyes of his mind and soul.

<sup>2</sup> *And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.*

*And caused me to pass by them round about* - Ezekiel had to look, one time, and another time, again and again.

*The bones were very dry* = These bones are the image of the people of God.

In verse 11 it says: <sup>11</sup> *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. (Eze 37:11 KJV)*

These bones are the whole house of Israel. Juda! No life left!... The Dutch annotations say: 'They were like dead and buried'. Not any expectations left. No future. Dead. Only bones left: dry. Very dry. Cut off.

- This is an image of all fallen children of Adam. By birth **we** are like these bones. Dry. Very dry. No spiritual life. And we don't have any future, any expectation. Dead in our sins and iniquities.
- Did we learn that already? If so, the Holy Ghost has shown us our characters: children of Adam, fallen creatures, far away from God, His service, His sacrifices. Living as a stranger in this world.

Is not this the situation of the Church of Jesus Christ in modern Europe? In this post-Christian part of the world, it is dry. Very dry. And: there is no future without really spiritual life.

<sup>3</sup> *And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.*

*O Lord GOD, Thou knowest.* This is a token of Ezekiel's Godfearing life. He has learned that God is not obliged to help. He has learned that he is rightless, that the people is unworthy to be helped. He has learned that God is sovereign and free. And... Ezekiel is bowing under the righteousness and sovereignty of God, saying: *O Lord, GOD, Thou knowest.*

- Do you hear the reverence in these words?
- Did we already learn to bow under God's sovereignty? Did we learn to love ALL the virtues of God? Including the virtue of His righteousness? Because of His holiness, and our many, uncountable transgressions? Seeing your own guilt, your own unworthiness?

<sup>5</sup> *Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, **I will** cause breath to enter into you, and ye **shall** live:*

The Lord GOD Himself will give life. Otherwise it was not possible.

So, our question was: 'Who will He make alive?' The answer is: 'Those who are dead. They are lost children of Adam. Nothing more.' And therefore this is a big wonder. Impossible by men, but possible by God, according His free good pleasure.

But... HOW will the Lord God do that wonder?

<sup>4</sup> *Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.*

Ezekiel has to prophesy upon these bones. That is: to preach the Word of God.

Isn't that strange? Preaching on a cemetery? Isn't that an impossible task?...

But in John 5:25 it says: <sup>25</sup> *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.*

That is fulfilled in the people of Juda, regarding the prophecy in the verses 12 through 14:

*Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, <sup>14</sup> 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.*

And God has done it, after decades: when Kores came, the Persian, and overcame Babylon, Kores made a new law. The imprisoned people of Juda was allowed to go home again, to build up the walls of Jerusalem, to renew the temple, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:*

What the Lord GOD should do with the people of Juda, letting them go back to Jerusalem, the same thing will He do with dead, fallen children of Adam. Like we all are by nature. We need breath and life, but we donot possess that by ourselves. We need the life-giving regeneration by the Holy Ghost. We have to be made alive. The church has te be made alive. So often we see a sleeping church, used to the Word of God, used to the deeds of a faithful and welldoing God, used to words about heaven and hell, used to the law, used to the gospel, hearing about the wonders of God.

Hear, which images the Lord GOD has used to make clear what He would do:

<sup>6</sup> *And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

<sup>7</sup> *So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.*

<sup>8</sup> *And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.*

<sup>9</sup> *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.*

The recovery of Juda start with preaching. And the Holy Ghost will use that. He will breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

It is the same with the church in Canada, in the United States and in the Netherlands.

Europe No difference with the labors of the Holy Ghost in Israel after the time of Ezekiel or in these times, today,.

If the Holy Ghost is making you alive, He will use God's Word. And He will apply God's Word unto your heart.

▪ Do you know where I am speaking about? By your own experience?

<sup>10</sup> *So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*

Ezekiel in this vision is seeing that the Lord GOD is doing what He has promised.

Spiritual life is given... I cannot make that. I don't have that, I cannot give that. I only can receive it, made alive by the Holy Ghost.

The Lord doesnt need anything from me. That is the only reason that we may have Hope for a hopeless people, for a hopeloos church, for a hopeless nation. Hope, for a hopeless family, for a world without hope in itself.

The Lord shows us what we have to do: proclaiming the Word of God. Seeding the Word of God in the souls of the children. Praying, beseeching for the labors of the Holy Ghost. Then will Europe be alive again one time. Like Juda was brought back from Babylon to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> *And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,*

*Ye shall know* - that is NOT: know something by mind. It is: knowing by experience, knowing by heart.

What will you know? *'That I am the LORD'*, says God. Four capital letters, that is: Jehovah, the Lord of the Countenance, the Lord Who is unchangeable, the Lord Who cannot lie.

What He has promised, will He do. Always. He says in Zephaniah 3:12: *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*

And here, Zephaniah is talking about the people of Juda that will come back from Babylon. It is an image of the real people of God, of the real children of God.

- Is it said about you? Is it regarding you? Do you recognize yourself in *'an afflicted and poor man or woman'*?

These afflicted and poor people is called: *'My people'*. **My!** The same people that denied God, that served the idols, the Baals, the Moloch, the sun, the moon, the stars... So intensely deaf, blind... dead... Not able to serve God, not willing to serve God.

The Lord GOD is calling them still: *'My people'*. O, then the Lord GOD, Who cannot lie, is saying something more:

<sup>14</sup> *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.*

God will be honoured. *'Thy Name be hallowed'*.

In which way? *'Thy Kingdom come.'*

Why?

Well, the origin is the good pleasure of God.

The price is paid by Jesus Christ, at Golgotha.

<sup>10</sup> *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (Isa 53:10 KJV)*