

WFN Lesson
April 15, 2020
Ezekiel 37:1-14

-The Hebrew word *ruah* (sometimes spelled *ruach*) has multiple meanings. Depending on the context, it can mean “breath”, “spirit”, or “wind”. Our passage from Ezekiel actually features *all three* usages. It’s very poetic. Unfortunately, you don’t get the same oomph in an English translation. *Ruah* is on full display in this passage, having an all-encompassing effect: nature, body, and spirit.

-“In this report of Ezekiel’s ecstatic vision, the same Hebrew word (*ruah*) appears in three different senses. In v. 1 *ruah* is the ‘Spirit’ of the Lord that conveys the prophet into his ecstatic state. In v. 5 *ruah* is breath—the animating principle of human life. In v. 9 *ruah* refers to the ‘winds’ that bring the breath of life to the bodies awaiting their vivification. This is reminiscent of the *ruah* (the wind/breath/Spirit) that hovered over the chaotic waters and infused order and life into inert matter (Gen. 1:2)” (Vawter & Hoppe, 166-167).

-Read: Genesis 2:5-9

-Q: What are some similarities between this passage and the Ezekiel 37 passage?

-A: “An important line of continuity between the prophet’s vision and the account of creation in Gen. 2 is the two-stage regeneration of the dried bones. Ezekiel 37:4-8 records the formation of bodies around the bones, followed by the animation of those bodies in vv. 9-10. In Gen. 2:7 God first forms Adam from the ground and then breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. Ezekiel wants to prove to his fellow exiles that it is the Lord who is about to bring Judah back to life. Here the Lord follows the same pattern as in the creation of Adam” (Vawter & Hoppe, 167).

-This 2-part restoration is important. If God only brings the bones, sinews, and muscles back together, than you’re still left with a corpse. *Life* has to be re-given. You need a beating heart, blood flowing through veins, and lungs that are inhaling and exhaling in order to truly be *alive*.

-Read: Romans 4:13-25

-v. 17 describes God as one “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist”

-Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac (the one God had promised him) was born. Abraham was an old, old man, “as good as dead”, and yet God was able to create life. Then, God told Abraham to sacrifice this son (even though it would seemingly jeopardize God’s promise that Abraham would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky). Hebrews 11:19 explains that God had a plan, even if it meant raising Isaac from the dead (ultimately, God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, but God can do all kinds of incredible things to accomplish God’s purposes).

-God was even able to bring Gentiles (like us), who had no share in Israel’s blessing, into the fold, making us part of God’s people (cf. Romans 11:11-24).

-Conclusion: “The fundamental lesson of the vision is repeated: when the Spirit is present, God’s people are enabled to live. This is the only basis on which hope can be held out to the despairing community” (ESV Study Bible, 1559).

Memory Verse

-Genesis 2:7—Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Fun Activity

-Listen to these songs that have to do with our passage tonight (you can easily find them on Spotify, YouTube, or pretty much anywhere online if you type them in): “Spirit Wind” by Casting Crowns; “Come Alive (Dry Bones)” by Lauren Daigle.