



VALLEY OF DRY BONES

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

GOAL

- ▶ To teach children the story and meaning of Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones. This story offers an opportunity to teach about the importance of resurrection in the life of a believer.
-

WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Sovereign:** one with supreme power. God is sovereign over everything.

Resurrection: rising from the dead, especially Christ's resurrection after dying for our sins.

New Covenant: a covenant is a promise or agreement. God made a covenant with Abraham to make his descendants God's chosen people. God made a new covenant with humanity that, through His Son, Jesus Christ, He would forgive us of our sins and restore a relationship with those who love and follow Him.

MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **Proverbs 19:21:** Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Psalms 130:7: O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.



OVERVIEW

▶ **Read Ezekiel 37:1-14:** After many warnings from the Lord, the land of Israel was conquered by the Babylonians. The Israelites were taken prisoner and removed from their homeland. While in captivity, the people lost all hope in ever returning. The Lord gave the Prophet Ezekiel a vision of a valley filled with dry bones. The Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy over the dry bones, telling them that the Lord will bring life back into them. As Ezekiel spoke the words the Lord gave him, a rattling sound filled the valley as the bones began to come together, forming skeletons. The skeletons were then covered in flesh, but the bodies had no life in them. The Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy over the lifeless bodies again, this time telling them that the Lord would fill them with breath. As Ezekiel prophesied to them, they were filled with breath. This vision was meant for the people of Israel, dried up of all hope. Through this vision, the Lord was promising to fill them with life and hope again through His Spirit.

SUGGESTIONS

▶ Being conquered by the Babylonians was punishment for the people of Israel's idolatry and disobedience. Despite their evil ways, God still loved them and had a plan to bring them back to their homes and to restore their hope.

- **Restoration:** Even though God allowed the Israelites to be conquered by the Babylonians, it did not mean that He had given up on them and no longer loved His people. Their punishment would bring them back to Him, restoring their relationship with their God.
- **Resurrection:** In this story resurrection is used as a metaphor for Israel's return from captivity, but it also speaks of a future bodily resurrection where the dead in Christ shall live. The resurrection from the dead and the promise of eternal life are foundational in our Christian hope.
- **New Covenant:** God promises that there will be a new covenant between Him and His people, the Israelites, in which He will give them a new heart and a new spirit. He promised to put His spirit in them. The Israelites are not the only ones who benefit from this new covenant with God: all who believe in Jesus Christ can be forgiven of their sins and have a relationship with God.



PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

Ages 5-7 **Breath of Life** | **Supplies:** streamers, sticks, tape

Give each student a stick and a length of a streamer. Tape the streamer onto the stick. When the students wave the streamer around, it will float on the air. God used the four winds to fill the resurrected bodies with breath.

Ages 5-10 **Rattling Bones** | **Supplies:** paper towel tubes, uncooked beans, tape, markers, crayons, decorating supplies

Give each student a paper towel tube, and instruct them to fold together the sides of one of the openings and tape it closed. Give each student a number of uncooked beans to place in the tube, and then have them fold together the opening on the other side. Allow the students to decorate the tube however they like.

The beans in the tube will remind the students of the rattling sound Ezekiel heard as the bones started coming together.

Ages 8-10 **Four Winds** | **Supplies:** four electric fans, balloons

Place the fans facing each other with a bit of space in the middle. Blow up a number of balloons, and place them in the space between the fans. Divide the class into teams. Instruct the students that once the fans are turned on, they should move the fans around to keep the balloons in the air within the circle of fans. The team to keep the balloons in the air within the circle of fans the longest wins.



**MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING**

▶ **Proverbs 19:21:** The Israelites thought that they were doomed to life as captives in Babylon, but that was not God's plan for them. We face difficulties in life, but God will help us to overcome them to accomplish His work.

Psalms 130:7: The many recorded failings of the Israelites throughout the Bible are not just a history lesson for us; it is an example of the abundance of God's love and that it never fails. No matter how many times we fall, God will help us to get back up again.

**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▶ **Ages 5-7 | Dry Bones | *Supplies:* popsicle sticks, glue, decoration supplies**

Give the students a number of popsicle sticks, and instruct them to use them to make a stick figure of a person. Once they have created their stick figure, glue the sticks together. Allow the students to decorate their stick figures any way they want.

Ages 5-10 | Filled with Breath | *Supplies:* balloons, tape

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a number of balloons and tape. On "Go!", the students should start blowing up the balloons and arranging them in the shape of a body. The first team to create a balloon body wins.

Ages 8-10 | Bag of Bones | *Supplies:* large printouts of skeletons, tape

Cut out the individual bones except for those in the hands and feet—those parts can be left as the whole hand and foot. Place the bone cut outs into a paper bag. Place a completed skeleton somewhere in the room so the students can see how the bones go together. Divide the class into teams. Give each team a bag of bones and instruct them to put the skeleton together using the example skeleton. The first team to put the bones together correctly wins.



**TAKE
HOME**



Ezekiel's vision brought hope to the Israelites, but it applies to us as well. God is with us, and He has a plan for our lives. Knowing this fills us with life and hope.

- **Restoration:** Our God is a God of hope. For those who belong to Him, the brokenness of this life is not the end. In eternity all that has been lost shall be restored when all things are made new.
- **Resurrection:** In this story resurrection is used as a metaphor for Israel's return from captivity, but it also speaks of a future bodily resurrection where the dead in Christ shall live. The resurrection from the dead and the promise of eternal life are foundational in our Christian hope.
- **New Covenant:** In this story, we see the Spirit of God coming upon His people and raising them to new life. This is the promise of the gospel. When we trust in Jesus we are born again into God's family by the Holy Spirit.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: God allowed His people to be taken captive after many years of what?

A1: God allowed His people to be taken captive after many years of rebellion and idolatry.

Q1b: Has anyone ever warned you about something?

Teacher Notes: Let the students answer. This warning could be about bad behavior or not to do something unsafe. Whatever it is, warnings are given to help us correct our actions or to avoid something that could cause us harm. God had sent many warnings to the Israelites about their behavior, but they did not listen and change their ways. When we don't listen to warnings, we may be punished or learn about the dangers of this world the hard way. When God warns us about something, it is especially important that we follow His instructions.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What was in the valley Ezekiel saw in his vision?

A2: There were dry bones in the valley Ezekiel saw in his vision.

Q2b: Is the sky purple?

Teacher Notes: Let the students answer. While we all know that the sky is blue, not purple, God could make it purple if He wanted. When God asked Ezekiel if the bones could live again, to his knowledge and ability, the answer would be no. But because Ezekiel knew that God was sovereign over all creation, Ezekiel knew that the bones could live again if God so chose. When God asks a question, we should not look to our own understanding of the world and how it works. God is capable of anything!



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: To whom did God tell Ezekiel to prophesy?

A3: God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones in the valley.

Q3b: Do you talk to your stuffed animals?

Teacher Notes: Let the students answer. We may talk to our stuffed animals, but we don't ever expect them to talk back. They are not alive, and never have been. In Ezekiel's vision, God asked him to speak to a huge pile of dry bones. While these bones were at one point people, they had been lifeless for some time. Ezekiel could have told God that this request was ridiculous, but instead, on faith, he did as God asked. No matter how silly it may seem, God will never ask us to do something that does not work toward accomplishing His purposes.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What sound filled the valley after Ezekiel spoke the Lord's prophecy?

A4: A rattling sound filled the valley after Ezekiel spoke the Lord's prophecy.

Q4b: Have you ever played with LEGOs that built a model all on their own?

Teacher Notes: Of course not! To build a LEGO model, we have to put the blocks together in a specific way. When Ezekiel spoke the words the Lord told him to say, the bones in the valley started coming together, forming perfect skeletons that were then covered in muscle and flesh. The pile of bones became a collection of bodies that were in better physical condition than they were before the individuals died.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: After Ezekiel spoke the second part of the prophesy, what filled the bodies?

A5: After Ezekiel spoke the second part of the prophesy, breath from the four winds filled the bodies.

Q5b: You wanted to go outside to play, but it's raining. Can you change the weather so it's sunny out?

Teacher Notes: No, we cannot change the weather; however, God can. God created everything and is in control over all of creation. God can create a storm or cause wind to blow through a valley. More importantly, as seen in Ezekiel's vision, God can use the wind for His purposes: to give life. God can do anything because He created everything.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What did the dry bones scattered across the valley represent?

A6: The dry bones scattered across the valley represented the people of Israel.

Q6b: Raisins are dried up grapes. If you soak a raisin in water, will it become a grape again?

Teacher Notes: Soaking a raisin in water will make it plump back up, but it will not become a grape again; however, when we lose hope or fall away from the path God has set for us, God can restore us to our original state. He can fill us with hope, life, and purpose over and over again. He will never give up on us as long as we don't give up on Him.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: What would the people know when all the things in Ezekiel's prophecy happen?

A7: When Ezekiel's prophecy comes true, the Israelites will know that the Lord made those things happen, fulfilling His promise.

Q7b: Have you ever done something for someone that you promised you would do?

Teacher Notes: Let the students answer. Fulfilling a promise leaves us with a good feeling. Not only are we doing something for someone else, we are proving our good character and trustworthiness. When God makes a promise, He fulfills it. God loves to fulfill His promises to us because He loves us.



QUESTION & ANSWER

MEMORY VERSES

▶ **Proverbs 19:21:** Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Psalm 130:7: O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

.....

BIG IDEA

▶ God has the power to make all His promises come true.

.....

CLOSING PRAYER

▶ Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for filling us with life and hope. Help us to use the life you've given us and Your Holy Spirit to fulfill the plan You have created for our lives. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

.....



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



After many years of rebellion and idolatry, God allowed His people, the Israelites, to be taken captive by the empire of Babylon. This was a dark and discouraging time for the Israelites. Their temple, land, and nation had been lost. It was during this time that God gave an incredible vision of hope and new life to a prophet named Ezekiel.

SLIDE 2



In Ezekiel's vision, the Spirit of the Lord carried him to the middle of a valley filled with dry bones that were scattered all over the place. As the Spirit of the Lord led Ezekiel through this valley of bones, God asked him, "Can these bones live again?" Ezekiel responded, "Oh Sovereign Lord, only you know the answer to that!"

SLIDE 3



Then God told Ezekiel to speak a message of prophesy to the dry bones that surrounded him, saying: "Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! I will put breath into you, and make you live again! I will put flesh and skin on you, and you will return to life! When I breathe new life into you, then you will know that I am the Lord."

SLIDE 4



So Ezekiel spoke just as the Lord commanded, and as Ezekiel said the words of God's prophesy, a great rattling sound filled the valley. The bones of each body came together and connected themselves to form complete skeletons. As Ezekiel watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones, and then skin formed over the bodies. But there was no breath in them; there was no life in these bodies.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



Then God commanded Ezekiel to speak a prophecy to the winds by saying, "Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies that they may live again!" As Ezekiel spoke these words, breath came into their bodies, and they all came to life. There in this valley, a vast army of living men stood before Ezekiel!

SLIDE 6



Then God explained to Ezekiel that the bones in the valley represented the people of Israel: dried up, out of hope, and out of life. Then God told Ezekiel to prophesy to Israel: "O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to rise! I will bring you out of captivity and back to the land of Israel!"

SLIDE 7



God gave Ezekiel this final message to prophesy for His people: "When you return you will know that I am the Lord! I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again! You will return home to your own land!" The Lord told Ezekiel to tell the people of Israel that, when this all comes to pass, they will know that it was the Lord who caused these things to happen and that the Lord had fulfilled His word.