

Prophetic International

A Prophetic Company

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THE HOLY WAY INC.

HOLDING TO THE PURITY OF THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Ezekiel 37:1-14

God showed Ezekiel a valley full of bones, scattered and dry. He told Ezekiel to prophesy - simply speak the words the Lord gave him. This caused the bones to come together, develop tendons, flesh, and skin. Then God told Ezekiel to speak His words to the breath (Spirit) to give life to the bones. The bones then became alive and stood up becoming a mighty army.

God then explained that this vision applied to the people of Israel who were scattered and dry, but in the last days would be reassembled in their own land and become alive by the Spirit of God. No doubt, national Israel, having been re-gathered and re-established as a nation, now needs a prophetic voice to bring it to true spiritual life In Christ.

This vision is of a people that have lost their life, and now even their bones are decaying. In the desert life equals only one thing, and that is water. All farmers know that there are three types of water. Water fit for drinking, water that is only good enough for crops, and water with too much salt and other impurities.

Now if all we have to give to these bones is - some good ideas, advise, the first thing that comes to mind, a Scripture that seems relevant, or a good book that really helped me; then we are in trouble, for most of the time nothing will happen to the bones. But why is this so?

This vision also clearly applies to the Body of Christ as the new Israel. We know that, before Christ comes again, the churches, which have lost their power and vitality and have been divided into thousands of little organizations, will have to be reunited as one Body, under one Head. This will happen as a prophetic voice speaks clearly the words of God in the full authority of the Holy Spirit. This prophetic voice will then speak to the breath (or Spirit) of God, instructing that breath to empower the bones to stand up as a mighty army.

That, briefly, is the vision and its obvious applications. The vision opens up a number of complex questions the answers to which can shed light on God's present intentions.

1. Prophecy to the dry bones?

Is it not strange that God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones? And is it not also strange that speaking to them caused them to come together and develop sinews, flesh, and skin?

Clearly, God's words are powerful and creative. All the events of creation described in Genesis 1 came about by words spoken by God. The words of God were actually the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity. Creation was an act of the three Persons of the Trinity, in submission to each other.

Jesus was able to heal the sick, still the waves, and cast out demons by a word of command because He was the Word. When the disciples were sent out on their training journeys, they did the same because they were acting in the authority of the Word.

The Old Testament prophets were able to say, "Thus says the Lord" because they were actually hearing His words and relaying them to the people.

In many of the Gospel narratives, Jesus is said to have done things "to fulfill what was spoken by the prophets." (1) Does this mean that the prophet's words had influence over the ministry of the Son of God, requiring Him to do certain things? Or was it because their words were truly the Word of God and therefore in line with His eternal purposes which were being fulfilled in Jesus Christ?

Jesus claimed that John the Baptist was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets; and then He went on to say that the least in the Kingdom of God is greater still. (2) This should include us.

In the Revelation to John, the heavenly hosts sing prophetic songs about things that are going to happen. Immediately, these momentous events unfold on earth.

Paul speaks of prophecy as the greatest of spiritual gifts. (3) This is because prophecy enables people to hear directly from God and has power to produce the result of which it speaks.

(1) Matthew 1:22; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17, 21:4; John 13:18; 17:12, 13; 18:9; 19:28.

(2) Matthew 11:11-15.

(3) 1 Corinthians 14: 1.

What does this say about our prophetic ministry?

Should we not also be able to speak things into existence?

2. What does the "breath" of God mean?

In both Hebrew and Greek, the same word (Hebrew: ruach; Greek: pneuma) is used for breath, wind, and spirit.

When God created mankind, He breathed into them the breath of life. This means that He placed His Spirit in them. This gift of the Spirit gave them the ability to live in intimate fellowship with Him, obey Him totally, and live without sin - until they yielded to the serpent's wiles.

The gift of the Spirit on Pentecost restored to Jesus' followers the option of living in the full authority and grace of the Spirit. It appears, however, that this life in the Spirit is conditional upon the believers' willingness to abandon their own independence, their own ideas, and their own wills and give the Spirit full control. There have certainly been times in the history of the Church when her members have truly attempted to walk in the Spirit.

Whenever this has been tried, sanctification has neared perfection and the power and glory of God have been manifested in signs and wonders and in marvellous extension of the Kingdom.

In between these high points, people have decided (consciously or unconsciously) that they do not really want to have God in charge of their tongues, their actions, and their churches. They sometimes try to excuse themselves by claiming that the gifts of the Spirit stopped after the first century. In so doing, they abandon the sanctifying and empowering of the Holy Spirit, putting their reliance rather on the wisdom of mankind: sound business principles, human reason and experience, strong [human] leadership, and political correctness. This substitution causes spiritual death. The bones become dry.

Everyone has a different opinion of how the Church should act and be structured. Sometimes churches even poll the members to get their opinions on doctrine and morality. They think that they can find Truth by dialogue and democratic process. People have many opinions, all of which

partake of the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In any given situation, God has only one opinion (the right one). Therefore, people's opinions cause division; God's Truth brings unity (gathers the bones together).

The strong leaders often strive to be in charge. This leads to a conflict of interests. New, organizational structures (churches or denominations) are created so that all the leaders can be in charge of something. The bones are scattered.

Is it possible that a prophetic voice could now, speak God's words as Ezekiel did in his vision? This could actually bring the people of God together in unity (not organizational unity produced by committees, but a higher unity brought in by the breath of God). Is it possible for the Church to become that mighty army that can manifest God's authority and glory in the world in preparation for Christ's Coming? Can this great move of God keep going this time without falling back into natural human effort?

3. Are we really expected to tell the Holy Spirit what to do?

Ezekiel was instructed to speak to the breath or Spirit of God and tell Him to "*Hear the Word of the Lord.*" This becomes a problem for us for two reasons:

a. We do not understand the submission of the three Persons of the Trinity to one another

Jesus is the Word of God. Everything that He said was from the Father. He was able to say, "*I do not speak My own words. I only say what My heavenly Father gives me to say.*" (4) His equality with God the Father is based on His total submission to the Father.

Similarly, Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit would not speak or act on His own, but would bear witness to Jesus, continue His ministry and lead His followers into all truth.

(5) The Holy Spirit submits to the Word just as Jesus, the Word, submits fully to His heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son is based on His submission.

Therefore when we ask the Holy Spirit to prophetically do or release something that did not come from the Father, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN! The Spirit will not do it.

(4) John 16:13-15

(5) John 15:26.

b. We do not fully understand or trust the prophetic word

We do not fully understand or trust the prophetic word. We are not sure that it is the Word of God. In fact, some churches teach that prophets were only in Old Testament times or only for the first century of the Church or until the gifts of the Spirit were supplanted by the Bible. The trouble with this theory is that the Bible states that God has established this ministry in the Church and calls prophecy the greatest of the gifts. Neglect of prophecy deprives God of the privilege of speaking to His people or of bringing His purposes to fulfillment.

The season we live in is the season of false prophets, who claim to be the answer to the world's ills. If we do not have true prophets in the church, we can easily be misled by the false ones.

If we are His Body, then we must speak for Him. We are His mouth (as well as hands, feet, eyes, ears, and the rest). Following Jesus' example, we should be able to speak what the Father gives us to say. This means that, in a derivative sense, the Church, as the Body of Christ, is the Word of God. The Church is called to fulfil the functions of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. We have

been seated with Him in the heavenly places (6) and authorized to speak in His Name and exercise His authority.

Just as the three Persons of the Trinity were present and acting together in Genesis 1, so in this great act of re-creation described in Ezekiel 37, the will of the Father, expressed through the prophetic Word, will instruct the Holy Spirit to bring the renewal for which we long. The Spirit will be breathed into the united Church revitalizing her and empowering her as a mighty army to face Satan's forces in the final battle of the ages and come out victorious. Although the warfare will be intense, the power and glory of God will be manifested through the Church in greater measure than ever before.

We will see the greater works of which Jesus spoke to His disciples. (7)

(6) Ephesians 2:6.

(7) John 14:12.

4. Where is this prophetic voice to come from?

In Old Testament times, God anointed individual people to be His spokesmen.

Kicking and screaming, they received His task and His authority and went around saving, "Thus says the Lord . . ." They were often despised, ignored, or persecuted. The truth of the Word they spoke was proven because what they said came to pass.

In the New Testament pattern, ministry is done on a body-ministry principle (*God has placed in the Church: apostles, prophet's* (8). . . . *There were in the church in Antioch prophets and teachers* (9). . . . [all plural]). We can then assume that the prophetic voice that will usher in this last renewal will be a many-membered voice --- a prophetic company.

Of necessity, this prophetic voice will have to come out of the existing churches. The age-old principle of the remnant will again come into play. One Friday afternoon, the remnant got down to one Man hanging on a Cross. Then it grew again. There has always been a remnant, though it gets bigger or smaller.

Will God not again choose a remnant to be His faithful prophets in our day?

5. Qualifications for prophetic ministry?

a. A call of God specifically for this purpose

b. Sanctification

All our own ideas, desires, and plans, as well as all sin, have to come to the Cross. We learn the reality of Paul's statement that *"it is no longer I who live, but Christ."* (10) We give up our independence of Him.

(8) 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11.

(9) Acts 13:1.

(10) Galatians 2:20.

c. Willingness to make a sacrifice

Prophetic ministry means a great sacrifice of time and effort, of natural desires and pleasures. The prophetic ministry will not win us any popularity contests even in Christian circles. Persecution and struggle will be the norm.

d. Prayer and worship in the Spirit

As we pray in tongues or in our own language with the words the Lord gives us we have communion with the Triune God. We know Him as He is and come in line with His purposes.

e. Faith

We prophesy according to the measure of faith. This means faith in God's desire to speak to us, faith in our ability to hear from Him, and faith in the authority and power of the prophetic word that He gives us.

f. Boldness to speak out the words He gives us

There must be no admixture of our own ideas or purposes. We need to know, what He wants us to say and when, and then we need to proclaim it loudly and clearly. The results will be fantastic.

6. How can we be prepared for this prophetic ministry?

a. Accepting the qualifications listed above

b. Worship

The Revelation to John is a marvelous pattern. The heavenly host joins in praise around the throne with new songs given by the Holy Spirit. These songs reveal God's intentions. This will get us in tune with the heart of God.

c. Intercession

When we know God's intentions and purposes, we still have to pray them into existence. God does not act automatically or independently. He expects us to overcome in intercessory prayer every obstacle and hindrance to the fulfillment of His purposes. Then He wants us to pray His purposes into existence.

d. Prophetic utterance

We will learn to speak God's words to the churches, speaking the Church into unity and into the new life in the Spirit. We will also speak the Word of God to the Spirit, inviting Him to fall in a new way on the Church, empowering her and manifesting the glory of Jesus in her.

e. Prophets act as His trumpets

As the faithful remnant of God's people moves into Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered worship and service in the heavenly places, the Gospel will reach every tribe and tongue and people. Then the end will come. The kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ and He will rule for ever and ever. This is the time of the sounding of Trumpets. This is the beginning of the seventh month. The Lord is calling a company of prophets to act as His trumpets.

The final great renewal of the Church in preparation for Jesus' Coming will have to be spoken into existence through the prophetic ministry. Ezekiel 37:1-14 indicates how this process can take place.

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