

# Ezekiel

## Ezekiel and the Bones

Ezekiel 1:1-3; 37:1-10, 14

I, Ezekiel, was a priest (the son of Buzi) who lived with the Jewish exiles beside the Chebar Canal in Babylon. One day late in June, when I was thirty years old, the heavens were suddenly opened to me and I saw visions from God.

The power of the Lord was upon me and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley full of old, dry bones that were scattered everywhere across the ground. He led me around among them, and then he said to me:

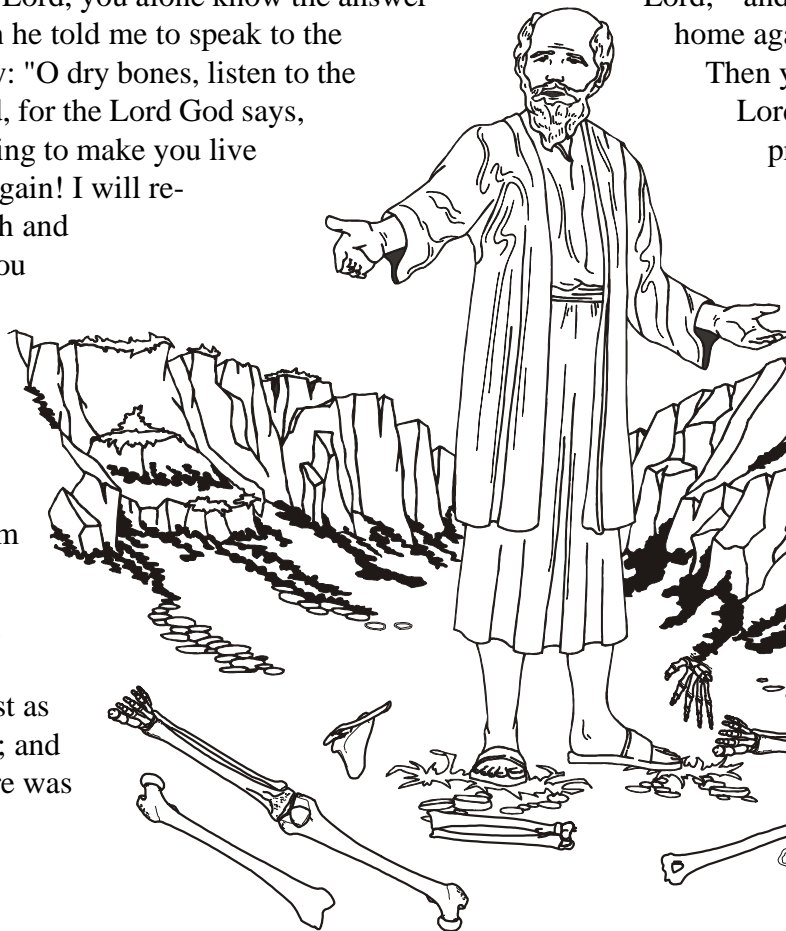
"Son of dust, can these bones become people again?"

I replied, "Lord, you alone know the answer to that." Then he told me to speak to the bones and say: "O dry bones, listen to the words of God, for the Lord God says, 'See! I am going to make you live and breathe again! I will replace the flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you shall live and know I am the Lord.'"

So I spoke these words from God, just as he told me to; and suddenly there was

a rattling noise from all across the valley, and the bones of each body came together and attached to each other as they used to be. Then, as I watched, the muscles and flesh formed over the bones, and skin covered them, but the bodies had no breath. Then he told me to call to the wind and say: "The Lord God says: Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain bodies, that they may live again." So I spoke to the winds as he commanded me, and the bodies began breathing; they lived and stood up—a very great army.

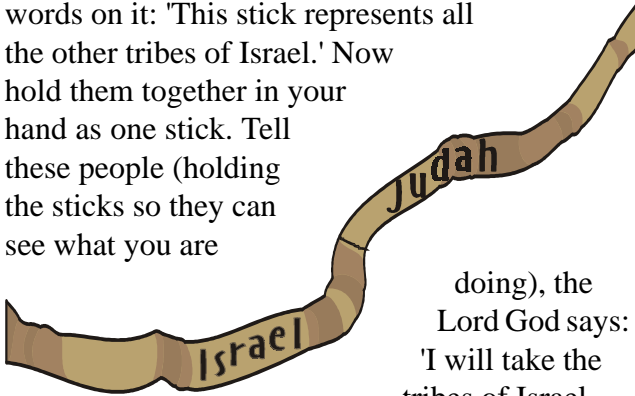
"I will put my Spirit into you," said the Lord, "and you shall live and return home again to your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have done just what I promised you." ■



## One Stick

Ezekiel 37:15-23

Again a message from the Lord came to me, saying: "Take a stick and carve on it these words: 'This stick represents Judah and her allied tribes.' Then take another stick and carve these words on it: 'This stick represents all the other tribes of Israel.' Now hold them together in your hand as one stick. Tell these people (holding the sticks so they can see what you are



doing), the Lord God says: 'I will take the tribes of Israel and join them to

Judah and make them one stick in my hand.'"

For the Lord God says: "I am gathering the people of Israel from among the nations and bringing them home from around the world to their own land, to unify them into one nation. One king shall be king of them all; no longer shall they be divided into two nations. They shall stop polluting themselves with idols and their other sins, for I will save them from all this foulness. Then they shall truly be my people and I their God. ■

## Sin and Punishment

Ezekiel 18:5,9; 10-13; 17b,18

"If a man is just and does what is lawful and right, and obeys my laws-that man is just," says the Lord, "and he shall surely live.

"But if that man has a son who is a robber or murderer and who fulfills none of his responsibilities, who refuses to obey the laws of God but worships idols on the mountains and commits adultery, oppresses the poor and helpless, robs his debtors by refusing to let them redeem what they have given him in pledge, loves idols and worships them, and loans out his money at interest --shall that man live? No! He shall surely die, and it is his own fault.

"But if this sinful man has, in turn, a son who sees all his father's wickedness, so that he fears God and decides against that kind of life; and obeys my laws-he shall not die because of his father's sins; he shall surely live.

**The one who sins is the one who dies. The son shall not be punished for his father's sins, nor the father for his son's. The righteous person will be rewarded for his own goodness and the wicked person for his wickedness. ■**



Three Generations of Men