

The Valley of the Dry Bones



by Lee Duigon

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As a wave of virulent antisemitism sweeps the Western world, my Bible-reading has brought me back to Ezekiel 37—the prophet’s vision of the valley of dry bones.

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, 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 He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? (Ezekiel 37: 1-3)

What could be more desolate than a valley full of dry, dead bones? Yet as Ezekiel watched, God clothed the bones with flesh and sinew, put skin on them, brought up a wind to breathe life into them, and stood them on their feet, fully restored.

There followed the prophecy: *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. 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, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live... (verses 12-14).*

I’m not a theologian, but I think we err if we try to interpret this vision literally: it’s bigger than that. Much bigger.

A valley full of dry bones seems like a vivid metaphor for spiritual death, spiritual desolation. There are more than a few such valleys in our world today. Our public schools and colleges, our corrupt politics, what we laughingly call our “entertainment” media, and on and on. Can these bones live again? Ezekiel said, “O Lord God, thou knowest” (v. 3).

How many times has this fallen world tried to wipe out God’s people Israel? The Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans uprooted them from their homeland and scattered them over the world: the image of sowing seeds comes immediately to mind. The Jews returned to their homeland—after yet another attempt to exterminate them, this time by Nazi Germany— and established a new state of Israel in 1947. Today they fight to keep it.

But aside from the enduring importance of Israel—is our reach wide enough and long enough to grasp the full sense of this prophecy?

Something tells me that it isn’t.

The Son of God came in the flesh, did His Father’s works on earth, was crucified, dead, and buried. Dead bones in a stone tomb. And then, as He said He would, He rose.

He is the means by which all the dry bones shall be given life. Even those that don’t realize that they’re dead. God created the world for life, not death. His sovereign power will restore that life—life where human sin and hubris has planted only death.

We have entered our current Christmas season. It’s fitting that we celebrate. We ought to be overcome with joy. “Joy to the world, the Lord has come!” The hymn gets it right.

Those desolate valleys are waiting to be watered, planted, and restored to life.

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on

my blog, <http://www.leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and visit.
My articles can also be found at www.chalcedon.edu/ .

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