

# **“The Skeleton – Prophecy to the Bones”**

*by Rev. John C. Tittle*

## **Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14 NRSV**

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” <sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.” <sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup>I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. <sup>11</sup>Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup>I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What jumped out at you about this passage? What feelings do you get reading it?
2. What was a hopeless situation you got through in your life? How did you get out?
3. The dry bones represented Israel in exile--ten years they had been away from their homeland. What are some other “dry bone” experiences us mortals go through?
4. Ezekiel mentioned the hand of the Lord came upon him. Have you ever been grabbed hold of by God and shown something?
5. Trust in God first takes honesty (seeing the dry bones). Why is it so important to be realistic about our situation?
6. The miracle of the dry bones was done by God, yet the prophet was commanded to participate. Why does God want our participation?
7. The miracle happened in two phases. What three things was Ezekiel commanded to prophesy to?
8. Why is the Holy Spirit so absolutely vital? What does the Spirit do?
9. God intervenes, speaks, acts, and invites our participation. Verses twelve and following says what God will do. How might these words give us encouragement today?