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## Ezekiel the Prophet of Renewal and Unity

### Objective:

To learn about the new life in the prophecy of Ezekiel

### Memory Verse:

*"The name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE" (Ezekiel 48:35)*

### References:

Ezekiel" Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty

Ezekiel the Prophet" Fr. Bishoy Abdel Messih

### Introduction:

Ezekiel is a priest and a prophet, ministered during the darkest days of Judah's history: The seventy years period of Babylonian captivity. He was carried to Babylon before the final assault on Jerusalem and used prophecies, parables, signs and symbols to dramatize God's message to His exiled people.

### Lesson Outline:

#### I. The Defeat of Jerusalem Before the Babylonians

In about 597 BC the Babylonians came under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar and besieged Jerusalem. Jerusalem's king, Jehoiakim, surrendered and the Babylonians looted the city and took with them Jehoiakim and all the strong men as captives and sent them into exile in Babylon as the Scriptures say: "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon" (Jeremiah 24:1).

#### II. Ezekiel the Prophet

In those days there was a great prophet whose name was Ezekiel. He prophesied of the Exile before it took place but the people did not listen to him and were not wise in what they did. Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon and there he prophesied about what would happen in the future. The people went to him and asked about the time of salvation and rescue from that affliction and Ezekiel prophesied saying: "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me: Son of man, can these bones live? So I answered: O Lord God, You know. Again He said to me: Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.' So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me: Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man,

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and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army" (Ezekiel 37:1-10).

This prophecy had a direct meaning (which was near) and a spiritual meaning. The direct meaning indicates the historical events, which took place fifty years after this prophecy when Cyrus King of Persia gave an order that the Jews would return to Jerusalem from exile and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). But the remote spiritual meaning is what Ezekiel prophesied about the work of the Holy Spirit and the New Life which is given to men: "Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5).

### **III. The Work of the Holy Spirit**

*1. The Gift of the New Life:* We can imagine human beings before Christ. They were sentenced to death because of sins. That was the wide valley which was full of the bones of the dead then Christ the Hope of Gentiles, came and His light shone on those sitting in the valley of darkness and shadows of death and the voice says, "O you who are still asleep, get up rise from the dead and Christ will send light for you. The soul that believes will pass from death to life and will rise with Christ and take, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the new life... and on the day of Pentecost, there was a sound which came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and the Holy Spirit rested on the early church and all the people were filled with Spiritual power... gifts and miracles according to what the Holy Spirit gave them and the new man who rose with Christ began to live his new life with the Holy Spirit: "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). In this way the rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit saved us (Titus 3:5).

*2. The Source of Unity:* Ezekiel prophesied of the Unity of the church in which the Spirit of the Lord works, "Come from the four winds O breath and breathe upon these slain that they may live". The breathing of the Spirit from the four parts of the world indicates the one church in the whole world which is led and guided by the Spirit of the Lord in the holy unity of all believers as the Lord Jesus desires so that all believers may become one (John 17:21), a new heart and right spirit. St. Augustine said contemplating this saying, "Come with all your sins and with all your faults, come with your heart, with your spiritual desires and in secret take off the works of darkness, take off the sins of humanity...the moment you do this the Spirit renews your senses which have been corrupted by iniquities and sins. In this way our souls will be holy temples for God and the Spirit of God abides in us... Ezekiel the Prophet wrote: Thus says the Lord... Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

### **Conclusion:**

The Lord appeared to Ezekiel in a heavenly vision so he fell upon his face and the Lord said to him, "Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak to you" (Ezekiel 2:1). This encouraged Ezekiel and the Lord gave him a message to call the captured to repent and ordered him to deliver that message.

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## **Applications:**

Do a Bible search for the characters that saw a vision.

Try to find verses from the New Testament that was actually prophesied in the book of Ezekiel.