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Sermon Notes

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## **Four Resurrections**

### **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

Today is the most glorious day of worldwide celebration the church experiences throughout the year! All around the world, Christians are assembling themselves together to say to each other, “Christ is risen!” and to answer with faith and joy, “He is risen indeed!”

Twenty centuries of astonishingly effective missionary work has spread the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all twenty-four of the major time zones around the globe... as the sun rises, races across the sky, and sets in every locality in the world, Christians are assembling today to celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the dead... and the promise that all who believe in him will also live eternally through his victory!

Year after year, I have the privilege of preaching on Easter Sunday...of calling our hearts to consider the resurrection of Jesus Christ by means of the Scripture. I have come to realize that faith in the resurrection and faith in the scriptures are indissolubly linked—only by believing that biblical account is true will you have faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Bible alone gives that faith!!

So year after year, I get to choose some text that brings our collective minds to consider the WORDS of scripture’s testimony to this simple, stunning fact—Christ rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion for our sins

As Paul put it powerfully...

***1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures***

Christ was raised from the dead ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES!

In Paul’s day, “the scriptures” refers to the Old Testament... the words of the prophets written down by the Jews...

But Christ’s resurrection from the dead was not for his sake, but for OURS!!! That WE MIGHT LIVE FOREVER!!

Job asked a powerfully poignant question for the entire human race... all of us are under the death penalty... we know that our own death is inevitable...

***Hebrews 9:27 man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment***

So this question burns in all of our hearts:

***Job 14:14 If a man dies, will he live again?***

Is there a resurrection FOR ME? I want to live! I want to defeat the grave!! I want to live forever! If I die, will I live again?!!

That is why I want to preach an Easter sermon from Ezekiel 37... the astonishing vision of Ezekiel in a valley of dry bones

Why, O why, dear pastor, are you bringing us HERE??? To one of the eeriest and creepiest visions any prophet ever had? Something like from a horror film... one commentator said it was like strolling uneasily into someone else's hallucination

Ezekiel was lifted by the Spirit and placed in a vast valley of dry bones... not a cemetery, but it seems more like an ancient battlefield... a vast army of dead people, whose bones are not piled up in one place, like some slaughterhouse, but scattered widely over the entire valley, like in a vast battle. These dry bones, are summoned to life by a preached message, by the Word of God through a messenger, and by the howling of a powerful wind, from the four corners of the earth, that breathes life into this vast army of dead people... and, in stages, they eventually come to life!!

Why is this a fit message for Easter Sunday?

Some time ago, I was sharing the gospel with a co-worker... and I read the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead after four days... the stone rolled back, Jesus called out to the tomb, "Lazarus, Come forth!!" And the dead man came to life, and walked out of the tomb, still wrapped up in his grave clothes. I asked this person to whom I was witnessing, "What would you have felt if you'd been there?" I wanted him to talk about the amazement he would have had at Jesus' loving power over death. Instead, this man said, "If I'd been there and seen that, I would have run away screaming as fast as my legs could carry me!"

Okay... but what about Ezekiel 37? Suppose you had seen a VAST ARMY of dead people GRADUALLY COME TO LIFE, bit by bit, with the rattling sounds and a howling wind?

But my purpose this morning is not to terrify anyone, but to give the joyous scope of Christ's intention in resurrection... that God intends not just to raise one man, a single Lazarus, from the grave, but a VAST ARMY, greater than anyone can count, from every tribe, language, people and nations... and to give us GLORIOUS RESURRECTION BODIES that can never die, and put us in our own land... indeed, in our own WORLD, a New Heaven and New Earth, which will be free forever from death, mourning, crying, and pain

I want to preach from Ezekiel 37 a VISION of a VAST RESURRECTION... to do that, I want to use this text to speak of FOUR RESURRECTIONS...

- 1) Christ's bodily resurrection
- 2) Israel's national resurrection
- 3) The Church's spiritual resurrection
- 4) The Church's bodily resurrection

## I. Christ's Bodily Resurrection

A. The reason for our celebration today

B. Christ died for our sins... paying the death penalty we deserved

1. All of us had violated God's commandments, disobeying his laws
2. The death penalty for sins was established in the Garden of Eden

***Genesis 2:17 you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.***

***Ezekiel 18:4 ... the soul who sins shall die.***

***Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death***

3. Christ died in our place

***Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

***1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit***

4. aa

C. God raised him from the dead to vindicate his suffering for us... for our salvation

D. The Account of His Resurrection is THRILLING!

***Matthew 28:1-10 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not***

*be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

*John 20:19-21 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

E. The clear implication

*John 14:19 Because I live, you also will live.*

*John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

F. The worldwide extent

*Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is the centerpiece of human history... it is the reason why God allowed the human race to continue even after Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden and brought the human race into death...

God had planned a great deliverance from death... a rescue from the corruption of the tomb... the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the focal point of our hope

Christ's resurrection is also the culmination of the history of Israel... the Jewish people... it is the ultimate reason why God chose the Jews and determined that through Abraham's descendants all nations on earth would be blessed

So, Christ's resurrection provides the ground for the three resurrections that follow in this sermon: Israel's national resurrection, the Church's spiritual resurrection, and the Church's bodily resurrection

## II. Israel's National Resurrection

### A. Ezekiel's Time

1. Ezekiel lived six hundred years before Christ
2. Ezekiel was a prophet called by God in a time of national crisis...
3. The northern Kingdom of Israel had already been exiled 150 years... scattered, dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire as a punishment for their gross idolatry and wickedness
4. The southern Kingdom of Judah followed in their footsteps, and now, in Ezekiel's day, was punishing Judah with exile by the Babylonians for the same sins—idolatry and wicked rebellion against God's Commandments
5. Ezekiel's Book begins with a stunning vision of the glory of Almighty God... soon after, he is placed by the hand of God among the exiles to Babylon to prophecy to them

### B. This Exile is a Severe Punishment

1. The Jews were now finally removed from their Promised Land... their inheritance that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... the Land was to be theirs by covenant, but now, because of Israel's wickedness, idolatry, rebellion, God was now punishing them with exile to Babylon
2. Most of them actually would DIE... they would be slaughtered by the sword, famine, and plague
3. A tiny remnant of them would march in chains to Babylon to live out the rest of their lives in captivity
4. The Jews as a race, as a people, were in some sense DEAD
5. Would there be any HOPE for them? Could they ever recover as a nation?
6. Living in a foreign land, with no temple, no religion, no national identity, why would they not just simply melt into the Babylonian population and die as a nation??
7. ISRAEL AS A NATION SEEMED DEAD

8. Jeremiah, a prophet who lived at the same time as Ezekiel, spoke of the chilling desolation of Jerusalem after the exile...

***Lamentations 1:1 How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!***

C. Walking through Ezekiel's Vision

1. God moves Ezekiel to a place of vision

***Ezekiel 37:1-2 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.***

- a. God moves Ezekiel back and forth through this horrifying valley
  - b. It seems they may have been an army lying where they fell on the battlefield
  - c. These corpses have been dead a LONG TIME... whatever moisture there was in them when they first died has now long gone... the carrion birds have picked their flesh, the worms and microbes have finished with these skeletons, and there is nothing left... as far from life as possible... the bones seem bleached in the sun
  - d. The QUANTITY of the bones and their STATE... totally dry—dead, dead, dead—this is what is emphasized
  - e. Though this is a vision focused on the people of Israel, yet it cannot help but make us think about our own future
  - f. All of us will most certainly die... and in enough time after our death, when the microbes and worms have finished with us, we will be the same... completely dry skeletons
2. God's Stunning Question... and Ezekiel's Humble Answer

***Ezekiel 37:3 He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"***

- a. This is not much different than Job's question

***Job 14:14 If a man dies, will he live again?***

- b. Only here, God asks it of Ezekiel
- c. God did not ask it because he did not know... but because he was testing Ezekiel and preparing him for the miracle that would follow
- d. Ezekiel's answer was humble and faith-filled

***I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know."***

- e. God alone can give life to the dead... the only way dry bones can live is if God wills to raise them to life!!

***Romans 4:17 the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.***

### 3. The Command and the Promise

***Ezekiel 37:4-6 Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! <sup>5</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. <sup>6</sup> I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"***

- a. God alone can give life to the dead... but amazingly, he chooses to use faith-filled messengers to proclaim his Word to the dead
- b. The WORD OF GOD gives life!!
- c. God says what he will do and then, he fulfills his promise by his power
- d. Ezekiel is the prophet... and though he cannot give life to these dry bones, yet he can be the TOOL by which the supernaturally powerful word of God is spoken over them... by that word, the DEAD ARE RAISED TO LIFE
- e. The prophetic word will make these dry bones live... even to the detailed level... tendons, flesh, skin...all the vital organs, the systems needed for life—the muscles, intestines, blood vessels, brains, nerves—and the SKIN that covers it all
- f. God doesn't NEED prophets... for God formed all of these systems out of the dust of the earth when he made Adam
- g. But in his grace, he chooses to use people to preach his life-giving Word
- h. AND He alone will get the glory... when the dry bones come to life, ALL THE NATION will know that He is the Lord and He alone did this

### 4. The First Phase: The Preached Word Brings a Partial Resurrection

***Ezekiel 37:7-8 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.***

- a. Ezekiel obeyed and spoke to the dead bones...
- b. He preached the message of life and resurrection that God had told him to preach
- c. There was NO INDICATION OF LIFE when he began preaching... it was an act of simple faith and obedience that he did
- d. Ezekiel might have felt foolish talking to dry bones, inanimate objects...
- e. But as he was preaching, suddenly an eerie rattling sound began... the sound of bone assembling with bone
- f. It must have been loud, since it was a VAST ARMY that was being assembled... it must have been DEEP, because the valley was quite large
- g. But the assembly of the bones in their proper order was just the beginning... soon the tendons, and flesh (muscles, internal organs, soft tissue, etc.) assembled, also in their proper order... it might have looked GRUESOME, because at one point, there was no skin on these assembled bodies
- h. Then the skin covered them, and at last, they were whole... but they were still DEAD... there was NO BREATH IN THEM

#### 5. The Second Phase: The Spirit Gives Life

***Ezekiel 37:9-10 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet-- a vast army.***

- a. It is the SPIRIT ALONE that can give life
- b. The Hebrew word for "spirit" "breath" and "wind" is all the same... *ruach*
- c. So Ezekiel was commanded to prophecy to the "breath" or the "wind" ... but it was a symbol of a prayer for the Holy Spirit of God to give life to the dead
- d. The breath/wind/Spirit comes from the four corners of the earth... moved not at all by Ezekiel, but by the sovereign will of God

***John 3:8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."***



- e. Ezekiel pleads with the breath to come into each of these fully assembled but still dead people and bring them to LIFE
- f. And as he was speaking these words, prophesying, the entire army of people CAME TO LIFE

#### 6. The Vision Interpreted

- a. This whole thing seems to have been merely a vision in Ezekiel's mind
- b. But now, its meaning had to be spoken to him... and to us

***Ezekiel 37:11-14 Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup> I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'"***

- c. The army represents the Jewish nation... the WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
- d. Not merely the southern Kingdom of Judah, but the northern Kingdom of Israel, long exiled by the Assyrians and scattered throughout the pagan world
- e. The image of death was REAL but also SYMBOLIC... in both exiles, hundreds of thousands of Jews had died by the sword, famine and plague... only 4600 were counted as exiles in Jeremiah 52, meaning the overwhelming majority died
- f. But the dry bones also symbolized their HOPES... what had become of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Had God forsaken the Jews forever? Are we CUT OFF from God because of our sins?
- g. God's prediction must also be seen as BOTH symbolic and physical
- h. I will open your graves and bring you up from them!!!
  - i) So, I will restore you to the Promised Land and give you a hope and a future... I will bring you back to Israel and reestablish you there
  - ii) I will put my Spirit in you and you will live
  - iii) BUT ALSO, I will literally raise your dead bodies from the grave

Resurrection #1: restoration of the Jewish nation to the Promised Land under Ezra and Nehemiah

BUT dear friends, that restoration was not the final glory of Israel... and the prophecy here goes beyond that, but speaks of a literal resurrection from the grave

AND it alludes to a SPIRITUAL resurrection that is to come:

*Ezekiel 37:14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live*

This hearkens back ONE CHAPTER to the amazing promise made to Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 36:24-28 "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. <sup>28</sup> You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.*

These are nothing less than the promises of salvation through faith in Christ!!

Christ's death and resurrection opens the door for a NEW COVENANT, by which ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD can be resurrected... both spiritually, and physically

### III. The Church's Spiritual Resurrection

#### A. Our Natural Spiritual Condition

*Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

We were all spiritually DEAD because of our transgressions and sins

We loved wickedness... we loved lust and pleasures and worldly corruption...  
we hated the things of God – his Word, his people, his commandments...  
we were hostile to God, hating one another and being hated by each other

We were dead even while we lived... enslaved to Satan's dark kingdom

We were VERY DRY, spiritual corpses... completely UNRESPONSIVE to the presence or purposes of God

#### B. Our Spiritual Resurrection

1. Like Ezekiel's vision, God sends messengers to PREACH to the DRY BONES of spiritually dead people
2. Missionaries and evangelists go out in the power of the Holy Spirit and speak the simple gospel message of faith in Christ
3. They speak of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross
4. They speak of his BLOOD ATONEMENT
5. They call on spiritually dead people to HEAR, REPENT, BELIEVE!!
6. As that gospel message is proclaimed, life comes into some people... faith comes by hearing... there is NO RATTLING SOUND, but they COME TOGETHER as human beings for the first time, they understand the purposes of God in making them

***Ephesians 2:4-9 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.***

The HOLY SPIRIT moved in our souls and made us alive... Jesus called it being "born again" or "born by the Spirit":

***John 3:3-6 Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.***

7. Jesus spoke much of this spiritual resurrection

***John 5:24-25 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. <sup>25</sup> ¶ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.***

HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU???

HAVE YOU HEARD HIS VOICE and crossed over from death to life???

C. Our New Life in the Spirit

***Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.***

1. The heart of stone has been removed... this is the old DEAD heart we had, unresponsive to the commands of God
2. Now we have a heart of flesh... one that is ALIVE spiritually, that beats for the glory of God... we yearn to live and walk in all of God's ways... we delight in God's law when we used to hate it
  - a. We want to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength
  - b. We yearn to love our neighbor as ourselves
  - c. This is the NEW LIFE of the Spirit

D. Question: Has this Happened to You?

1. I am well aware of what day it is!
2. I know it's Easter Sunday, and many people go to church on Easter who do not give God much of a thought the other 51 Sundays a year
3. I am SO THANKFUL you are here! But maybe honestly you are spiritually like those DRY BONES... unresponsive to God's will
4. The text makes it plain, apart from the moving of the Spirit, I can do NOTHING to help you
  - a. I can speak, perhaps even eloquently, powerfully, and memorably... but if the Spirit does not give you life, you will walk out of here just as you came in... spiritually DEAD
  - b. The church can be incredibly friendly, the music can be skillfully done, the lighting can be just right, your friends who invited you can be just how they need to be, but if the Spirit of God does not give you new life, you will remain a spiritual corpse
  - c. Look at your life... has the heart of stone been removed by looking at Christ's death for you? Has your heart of stone been removed by understanding the astonishing power of Christ's resurrection from the

dead? Have you come to a place where you yearn to obey God's Word and to follow Him?

5. You Christians: see again the total dependence this church should have on the ministry of the Holy Spirit
  - a. Pray for God's Spirit to work in this moment, and indeed, through the year
  - b. Pray for God to saturate ME as a preacher of the gospel... so that there can be real spiritual resurrections that happen by the ministry of FBC throughout the year
  - c. Pray for God's Spirit to make your own hearts more and more sensitive to his will and his Word... is He MOVING YOU to obey God's decrees and follow His laws?
  - d. More than that, is the Spirit MOVING YOU to courageous witness to the spiritually dead people in your life? Do your unsaved neighbors and coworkers and roommates hear the life-giving words of the gospel from you?
  - e. Do you see lost people around you as DRY BONES... "without hope and without God in the world?"

#### IV. The Church's Bodily Resurrection

##### A. One Final Resurrection

1. Ezekiel is very specific about this... and though it is in the service of a vision about Israel's political, national future, yet the detailed words line up with a future reality

***Ezekiel 37:12-13 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.***

2. Our graves will contain our physical bodies... if the time goes on long enough, they will contain nothing more than our skeletons... that will be all that is left of your body

3. But the Lord Jesus Christ has promised these things to us:

***John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.***

***John 5:28-29 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out-- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.***

4. So also the Apostle Paul has taught plainly the details of the physical resurrection from the grave

***1 Corinthians 15:42-44 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.***

#### B. The Details are Mysterious

1. You may wonder, "How can God do this?" Perhaps the molecules of my body were scattered far and wide... maybe I will be incinerated in a fiery plane crash and not even my bones will remain... perhaps I will be consumed by a shark in the great ocean and nothing will be left
2. But God is able to raise you from the dead... How? I don't know... I just know that He would holds together every atom of the universe can also keep track of whatever part of us he wants to be RAISED FROM THE DEAD... I will leave those details to him and just believe in what He has said

#### C. The Future (Resurrected) World

1. The final detail has to do with the LAND God promised to his people

***Ezekiel 37:12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.***

***Ezekiel 37:14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'***

2. Israel DID get restored to the Promised Land under Cyrus the Great of Persia... but they were still under Gentile overlords, politically subservient and weak, like slaves in their own land
3. And furthermore, they did not obey God any more than their ancestors did... for in the end, they rejected the Son of God and killed him as they did the other prophets
4. No, the Promises of Ezekiel have been partially fulfilled in the spiritual resurrection of the Church, JEW AND GENTILE... but the promise of the Land awaits the "resurrection of the earth"

***2 Peter 3:12-13 That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.***

5. To some degree, that is the FIFTH resurrection implied in this Ezekiel passage... the cleansing resurrection of a world completely free from the effects of human sin... a place where we will walk in our glorious resurrected bodies for all eternity, enjoying the radiant beauty of a perfect earth and perfect heavens

## V. Applications

- A. I have already pleaded with you who are LOST to hear Christ's voice in this message and CROSS OVER FROM DEATH TO LIFE
- B. I have also already spoken to you Christians to see and savor and delight in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT who alone can give life to the dead... and so therefore you must be thankful to the Spirit for breathing life into your souls; pray for your pastor and the elders to be completely reliant on the Spirit to minister life to souls; pray for me to be a man of prayer after preaching, for only the Spirit can do anything with these words I speak from the pulpit; so also YOU should pray for the Spirit to press these words into the hearts of all who hear
- C. Furthermore
  1. Worship God for his tenderhearted GRACE to rebellious sinners like us
    - a. Christ died innocently, for he never once disobeyed his Father
    - b. The multitudes of corpses Ezekiel saw in his vision all represented actual sinners who were only getting what they deserved... we all deserve DEATH
    - c. But God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ Jesus!
    - d. Give him thanks for your spiritual LIFE!
  2. Stand in awe of Christ Jesus, who is your resurrection and life
    - a. It is by hearing HIS VOICE that you came to life
    - b. The Spirit speaks HIM to you... the Spirit breathes CHRIST in your previously darkened heart
    - c. Worship Christ, the resurrected Savior, whose mighty victory over the tomb gives all of us hope in the face of the grave

3. Do not grieve like the pagans who have no hope when a Christian loved one dies physically... grieve, yes... but be HOPE-FILLED...
  - a. Ezekiel's vision links the dry bones to the DEAD HOPES of Israel
  - b. Our hope is not DEAD but ALIVE! It lives with Jesus! So if you have even relatively recently buried a loved one who died in the Lord, be FILLED with hope for the future, even while you grieve somewhat for the present
4. Yearn for the power of the Spirit to operate in your life to make you much more obedient than you have ever been before
  - a. The Spirit comes into us and MOVES US to keep His commands
  - b. Don't merely listen to the word and so deceive yourself... do what it says
  - c. We need to move from a knowledge-based discipleship to an obedience-based discipleship... not how much of God's word to you KNOW, but how much do you OBEY? The Spirit works knowledge, yes... but to the end purpose of obedience, delight-filled obedience
  - d. One of the most important areas of obedience for us MUST BE evangelism... speaking the words of life to a dying world; ask God to make you much more effective than ever before in this!!
5. Look forward more and more to our future resurrection, and that of this GROANING PLANET... we will be in glorious bodies, surrounded by such a world as we can scarcely describe... a New Heaven and New Earth