

Are We Witnessing an Awakening During This Time of Uncertainty?

God bless you, my friend. In this season of uncertainty, may He give you strength. There is so much disruption, so much discussion of disease, death and financial depression. It requires a supernatural transfusion to stay strong.

But God will give it. In fact, I'm wondering if God is up to something supernatural in this season. What if we are witnessing an awakening? What if God is using this pandemic to call us back to Himself? Might it be that we are experiencing the early days of a revival? A revival in which millions of people will turn and return to God?

Perhaps we need to add a phrase to our prayers. In addition to saying, "Lord, fix this," let's pray, "Lord, use this." Use this calamity for Your glory. Stir our hearts! Reap a harvest! Blow Your breath over this valley of dry bones.

Do you know the story of dry bones?

Ezekiel was a radical, wide-eyed prophet who served as a thorn in the collective side of Israel during the 6th century B.C. He was ever on the Hebrews' case, urging them to turn away from foreign idols and toward their living God (Ezek. 18:30-31). They did not listen. Consequently, the nation experienced utter annihilation at the hands of the Babylonians in 587 B.C. The city was ransacked, and the magnificent temple was destroyed. Envision Washington, D.C., lying in smoke and embers; the Capitol building demolished and the White House burned down. The once-proud Hebrews were marched out of their homeland. From their exile in Babylonia the Jews declared: "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost. We are cut off completely" (Ezek. 37:11).

The psalmist could only lament, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps. 137:1) And again, "How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land?" (vs. 4)

The exile was a catastrophe.

But God had other plans. The people may have abandoned God, but God never abandoned them. He made the Hebrews a promise.

"For here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You'll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You'll be my people! I'll be your God!" (36:26-27, MSG)

Please note the active agent in this rescue mission. God! God will rescue. God will gather. God will cleanse. He will give the new heart and, most importantly, God will put His Spirit in the people and, as a result, they will obey God's commands.

Do you find this to be a stunning assurance? So did Ezekiel. Consequently, a field trip was in order.

"God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun" (Ezek. 37:1-2).

Death Valley. No life to be found. No children playing, sweethearts kissing, musicians singing or dancers dancing. Only bones. Dry bones.

God asked him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezek.

37:3a, MEV).

What a question.

What a question for for today. As we look out over our society where depression, opioid abuse and suicide are rampant, can these bones live? As we hear the news of shutdowns, meltdowns and a global pandemic, we ask, can these bones live?

The prophet was a man of vision. But not enough vision to venture an answer. He deferred. "O Lord God, You know" (Ezek. 37:3b).

Then the Lord gave this command:

"Again He said to me, 'Prophecy over these bones and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you so that you live. And I will lay sinews upon you and will grow back flesh upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you so that you live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord'" (Ezek. 37:4-6).

The prophet did as told. As he prophesied, Ezekiel heard a grand rattling. Bones clicked and clattered and reconnected. Sinew appeared out of nowhere to hinge the joints. Skin spread and refleshed the skeletons. The ravine of bones became a collection of bodies. Yet the bodies had no breath. No life. There was no evidence of beating hearts or breathing lungs. So, God told the prophet to let lose another proclamation.

"Then He said to me, 'Prophecy to the wind; prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain so that they live.' So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezek. 37:9-10).

Don't miss the point. Apart from the Spirit, we may have

bones, flesh, scalps and teeth, but we have no life. He, and He alone is the giver of life. Less we miss the message, God delivers the punch line.

“And I shall put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I the Lord have spoken and performed it, says the Lord” (Ezek. 37:14).

Might this be what God is doing? Our focus on entertainment and finances have left us dry; a dry society, a land of dry bones.

God will breathe on these bones.

It simply falls to us to be Ezekiels.

The story of dry bones in Death Valley is so dramatic that we might miss a stunning element of this miracle. Ezekiel was invited to invite it. God told him to prophesy and, once he did—and only once he did—the wind of heaven began to blow.

What if the prophet had refused? What if he had declined? What if Ezekiel had heard the word and walked away, saying something like, “That’s too supernatural for me.” “I’m too small-time to be partnering with God.” Or, “He must have me confused with someone better, bigger or holier.”

But he didn’t.

And you?

The breath of heaven is awaiting your invitation. Proclaim a declaration. State a heartfelt petition. Spirit, I welcome you.

To be clear: A revival is a supernatural work of God. We cannot coerce it or force it, but we can request it.

So, let’s expand our prayer.

Keep saying, "Lord, fix this," but begin praying, "Lord, use this." Who knows what we might witness.