

The Importance of Prophetic Vision

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Ezekiel 37:1–10 (NKJV) “The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² 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. ³ And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord God, You know.’ ⁴ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, “O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. ⁶ 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.’ ” ’ ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, 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.’ ” ’ ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.”

It is important to see things from God's perspective. It is important to get in agreement with God rather than the people and the problems around us. How can we see things from God's perspective? First we can see things from God's perspective by reading His Word, the Bible. In addition, we can see things from God's perspective for our generation through “prophetic vision”. We must have prophetic vision to survive. Proverbs 29:18 in the King James Version says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” The English Standard Version renders this verse as, “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint” The Amplified Bible renders this verse as “Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation from God], the people perish.” The point is clear: when people lose sight of God's vision for their life, their lifestyle and choices become unrestrained. They are no different than the world around them. For instance, a person involved in pornography and immorality has no vision for true intimacy in marriage. A person who wastes his or her money has no vision for future benefits. A person who lives for the moment has no vision for the future. A person who does not invest in his children has no vision for the next generation. A person who does not control his appetite has no vision for a long healthy life. A person who is undisciplined in spiritual matters has no vision for spiritual growth. A person who is uninvolved in the local church has no vision for what Christ is building. A person who seeks to gain this world has no vision of eternity. In the same way, a church that has no heavenly vision will become unrestrained in the direction of its ministries and efforts. It will bounce from one ministry fad to the next.

Proverbs 29:18 also says that those who keep the law of God will be happy. What does it mean to keep the law of God? The law of God refers to the Word of God. The Word of God establishes the boundaries within which God's blessings are experienced. Those who read and follow God's Word will walk in the light of spiritual vision. They will live with a sense of purpose. Those who disregard God's Word are blind and stumble in the darkness. A blind person once asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision!"

So, how is your vision? You may have good eyes but have you lost your vision? Natural vision sees things from an earthly perspective. Prophetic vision sees things from a heavenly perspective. What do you see? Do you see the problems or the possibilities? Do you see victimization or victory? Do you see poverty or prosperity? Do you see surrender or success? Do you see ruin or restoration? Do you see riot or revival? What do you see? Without prophetic vision, a person's thoughts, words, and actions will be unrestrained.

Prophetic vision does not mean *denying* the problem. Problems are real. Denial will not make problems less real. In Ezekiel 37 the vision revealed that there was a problem. The spiritual condition of the people

of God was like a valley of dry bones. God took Ezekiel on a tour of the valley filled with dry bones so that he could see the problem clearly. Are you denying the problem in your life today?

Prophetic vision does not *ignore* the problem. God didn't ignore the problem. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away. In fact, ignoring the problem can make the problem much worse! We must face reality rather than ignore it. God brought Ezekiel to this valley to make him face the problem. Are you ignoring the problem in your life?

Prophetic vision correctly discerns the real need of the human soul. In verse 11 of Ezekiel 37, the prophet heard the desperate cry of the people. They were joyless; they said "Our bones are dry!" They were hopeless; they said "our hope is lost". They were lifeless; they said, "We are cut off!" Many today are just like Israel in this vision. They are joyless, hopeless, and lifeless. Can you hear the cry of the desperate?

Not only does prophetic vision see the problem, it also sees God's solution to the real need of His people! People who only see problems are critics. Everyone is qualified to be a critic. Only a person with prophetic vision is qualified to be a problem solver! A person with prophetic vision sees the divine solution to desperate human need.

God sees things differently than we do! God showed Ezekiel things from His perspective. Through prophetic vision, Ezekiel was able to receive insight into the past, regain hope for the future, and release faith for the present.

God asked Ezekiel, "*Can these bones live?*" The question was not an issue of God's ability but of Ezekiel's faith. God will test our faith in His ability. Jesus said, "*All things are possible to him who believes.*" (Mark 9:23) God is looking for someone who will believe Him so that they can become a vessel to bring divine transformation. It takes faith to prophesy God's word in what seems to be impossible situations.

Ezekiel's response was, "*O Lord God, You know!*" Ezekiel answered on the basis of God's sovereignty. He had faith in God's ability but lacked faith in the possibility that God would act in his day. We need prophetic vision in order to address with faith today's challenges with heavenly solutions. God is looking for those with faith to respond to His question, "Can these dry bones live again?"

Prophetic vision sees the dry and dead condition of God's people but also believes that God can and will bring divine resurrection. Prophetic vision taps into and releases the life-giving power of God's word. God gave the command to Ezekiel: "*Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.'*" Nothing happened until God's word was spoken!

Declaring God's word in response to prophetic vision is inspired by a spirit of faith. 2 Corinthians 4:13 (NKJV) "*And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak.*" Prophetic vision speaks what it sees and believes. In Mark 11:23 (NKJV) Jesus said, "*For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*"

Prophetic declaration is a demonstration of faith in the promise of God. Romans 4:16–21 (NKJV) "*Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*" Prophetic vision enables us to speak of things that are not as though they are.

If the power of the Gospel is to be realized in our world, then we must begin to prophesy God's word rather than what we see in the natural. We must prophesy God's word rather than what we think. We must prophesy God's word rather than what we feel. We must prophesy God's answer rather than the problem. We must prophesy life rather than death. We must prophesy God's word by faith when nothing seems to be happening at the moment. This is contrary to the fallen human nature that is quick to voice its doubt and unbelief rather than faith in God's word. Are you speaking words of faith or of unbelief? Are you speaking on the basis of natural vision or of prophetic vision?

Prophetic vision activates supernatural change. First, when Ezekiel prophesied God's word, a new *sound* was heard; "*There was a noise.*" When church leaders and members begin to prophesy God's word, people begin to talk differently. People begin to see and speak the answer instead of the problem. People begin to speak with faith and expectation. People begin to get noisy in prayer and praise. Are you ready to hear a new sound in your marriage, family, and church?

Second, when Ezekiel prophesied God's word, a "shaking" began to occur; "*and suddenly a rattling.*" When we begin to declare God's word in obedience to His voice, He will shake everything that is not of Him. Are you ready for God to shake the fleshly entanglements, interests, and investments in your life?

Third, when Ezekiel prophesied God's word, a *reordering* began to take place; "*the bones came together.*" Bones began to come into alignment with other bones. As we prophesy God's word, God brings everything that is out of divine order back into His proper alignment. He brings kingdom order back into the human heart. He brings kingdom order back into marriages and homes. He brings kingdom order back into churches. God will reorder church government, ministries, members, and methods so that people are properly "jointed" together in the body of Christ. Proper structure and alignment is needed for the body to stand strong.

Fourth, when Ezekiel prophesied God's word, a *forming* began to take place; "*As I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over.*" Sinews are the ligaments that hold bones together at the joint. Sinews symbolize the covenant relationships within the body of Christ that hold the members of the church together. The "flesh" refers to the muscles that enable the bones to move and function. So the muscles symbolize the grace of God that enables the work of God to be accomplished. The skin is a covering that protects the body from germs, bacteria, and disease. So it is that skin symbolizes the spiritual covering of Christ provided through godly pastors and elders in the congregation. They protect the body against the intrusion of false ministers, heresy, division, and the leaven of sin.

Fifth, when Ezekiel prophesied to the "breath" the spirit of life came into lifeless bodies; "*Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, 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."*'" "Breath" speaks of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who breathes new life into the church. Through the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit, potential for fruitfulness and multiplication is restored in people's lives and in the church.

Prophetic vision restores divine purpose; "*And they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*" Through prophetic vision the army of God is raised from the graveyard of defeat to stand as a mighty force for God in the earth. Prophetic vision infuses life into the dead and enables God's people to rise up and take their place as victorious soldiers in His army.

Are you an agent of spiritual transformation? Are you taking your place in the ranks of God's revival army? Do you see things through prophetic vision? Are you declaring faith in God's promises? Are you prophesying life to the valley of dry bones? We must ask God to restore prophetic vision to His church. Without prophetic vision the church will remain a valley of dry bones. Through prophetic vision the dry bones will align with God's order, receive new life, and stand as God's mighty army in the earth!

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