

“Dem Bones!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Dem Bones** is a well-known *traditional spiritual*, often used to teach basic anatomy to children.
 - 1.1.1. The lyrics are based on **Ezekiel 37:1-14**, where the prophet visits the Valley of Dry Bones and brings them to life by mentioning God's name.
- 1.2. Ezekiel cried, "Dem dry bones!" - Ezekiel cried, "Dem dry bones!"
 Ezekiel cried, "Dem dry bones!" - "Oh, hear the word of the Lord."
 The **foot** bone connected to the **leg** bone, The **leg** bone connected to the **knee** bone,
 The **knee** bone connected to the **thigh** bone, The **thigh** bone connected to the **back** bone,
 The **back** bone connected to the **neck** bone, The **neck** bone connected to the **head** bone,
 Oh, hear the word of the Lord!
 Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk aroun', (3 x's)
 Oh, hear the word of the Lord.

2. **DEAD NATION LIVES! (1-14)**

- 2.1. This speaks to the resurrection of a **dead nation**.
 - 2.1.1. The **Jewish nation** has long resembled those dry & bleaching **bones**.
 - 2.1.2. There is **no life** until the **divine breath** passes over them.
- 2.2. **Closest I've come to watching dead things coming back to life:**
 - 2.2.1. **Dove Hunting** – Emptied out bag of birds in back of truck to put in zip-lock, only to watch one get up & fly away.
 - 2.2.2. **Possum in back yard** – Dog attacked(all wet) picked up with shovel through over fence, went around & was gone.
 - 2.2.3. **Ok, these weren't death to life experiences but...**
- 2.3. (3) God often asks difficult questions; not because He doesn't know the answers, but because He wants to know if we are aware of the circumstances around us.
 - 2.3.1. In vs.3 God asked the Prophet Ezekiel a crucial question. He asked, **"Can these bones become living people again?"**
 - 2.3.2. I like NIV answer, **"O Sovereign LORD, you alone know."**
 - 2.3.3. We say, **"God knows?"** (with a question mark at the end); when we should say, **"God knows!"**...and actually mean it!
- 2.4. (11) The nation was hopeless! (Like an army of skeletons in a desert)
 - 2.4.1. **Was a current proverb of the day.**
 - 2.4.2. Prov.17:22 says, **A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones.**
- 2.5. Webster's defines **DESPAIR** as *the loss of HOPE and a feeling of hopelessness*.
 - 2.5.1. It's the idea of **giving up hope**, feeling **discouraged & defeated**.

- 2.5.2. I found a company's website on the Internet called **DESPAIR, INC.**
 2.5.2.1. You will find pictures of sinking ships and designs that are called **DEMOTIVATORS.**
- 2.5.3. There's one picture of what looks to be a **marathon race** with runners running to the finish-line; and beneath the picture IN BIG BOLD PRINT is inscribed: **DEFEAT: For every winner there are dozens of losers. Odds are you are one them!**
- 2.6. **But seriously** – “**Hope** means **hoping** when things are **hopeless**, or it is no virtue at all...As long as matters are **really hopeful**, hope is mere **flattery** or **platitude**; it is only when **everything is hopeless** that hope begins to be a strength!”¹ G.K.Chesterton
- 2.6.1. As **Alexander the Great** was setting out on his conquest of Asia, he inquired into the finances of his followers. To ensure that they would not be troubled over the welfare of their dependents during their absence, he distributed crown estates and revenues among them. When he had thus disposed of nearly all the royal resources, his friend **General Perdiccas** asked Alexander what he had reserved for himself. “**Hope,**” answered the king. “In that case,” said Perdiccas, “**we who share in your labors will also take part in your hopes!**” He then refused the estate allotted to him, and several other of the king's friends did the same.
 2.6.1.1. Isn't that a great statement for those of us who follow Christ?
We who share in your labors will also take part in your hopes!
- 2.7. Have you been feeling lately “my **bones** are dry, my **hope** is cut off, I am **cut off!**”
- 2.8. **Story** – There's a picture of an **old burned-out mountain shack**. All that remained was the chimney...the charred debris of what had been that family's sole possession. In front of this destroyed home stood an **old grandfather-looking man** dressed only in his underclothes with a **small boy** clutching a pair of patched overalls. It was evident that the child was crying. Beneath the picture were the words which the artist felt the old man was speaking to the boy. They were simple words, yet they presented a profound theology and philosophy of life. Those words were, “**Hush child, God ain't dead!**”
 2.8.1. **Oh Lord God, You know!**
- 2.9. (14) God can give life through **His word**(4,7) & **His Spirit**(14).
- 2.10. **Interesting:** when Israel became a nation in 1948, many excavations started up.
 2.10.1. In 1963-65 **Masada** was excavated. (Masada = Hebrew for fortress - Situated atop an isolated rock cliff at the western end of the Judean Desert, overlooking the Dead Sea)
 2.10.2. They found a **Synagogue** on Masada - 4 tiers of plastered benches along the walls, as well as columns to support its ceiling.

¹ G. K. Chesterton, Quoted in Signs of the Times, April 1993, p. 6

- 2.10.3. Fragments of **2 scrolls**, parts of Deuteronomy and Ezekiel 37 (including the vision of the "dry bones"), were found **hidden in pits dug under the floor** of a small room built inside the synagogue.
 2.10.3.1. Imagine their excitement of being brought back to the land & finding **this chapter**, out of the **1074** chapters of the OT!

2.11. **2 Kings 13:20,21**

- 2.11.1. Elisha remains potent even in the grave!
 2.11.2. The virtue here wasn't in the bones of Elisha **but** in the power of God.
 2.11.3. The dead can be **reanimated**. And it doesn't really matter if it takes 2 days after death, or 2000 years. [God alone could have done it]

2.12. God can honor his servants after they are in their graves!

- 2.12.1. Yes you can awaken people after you're dead;
 Not their mortal bodies, but their **immortal souls**.
 2.12.2. Not by your bones but by **your example** you left behind; by **your instructions**, which may still speak; by the **prayers** you offered; by the **books** you gave away; by the pastors in foreign countries you help **educate**; by the **place of worship** you helped to build.²

2.13. What will you do that **ripples** across seas to **distant shores**; or **echoes** into **eternity**?

- 2.13.1. What will you do that **lasts**, that **matters**, that **will remain**, that **will survive**?

2.14. This speaks not only to the resurrection of a **dead nation**, but also **dead individuals**.

- 2.14.1. The **state of sinners** is described in this same situation. Read **Eph 2**
 2.14.2. God is doing this **today!** He is raising lost sinners from the dead (2:1-10) & **reconciling Jews & Gentiles** into one temple (2:11-22; esp.14)
 2.14.3. So many "**nations, states, counties, cities, neighborhoods**" today, look like the valley of **very dry bones**.
 2.14.4. There is **no life** until the **divine breath** passes over them.
 2.14.4.1. So meanwhile we pray, "**God sends a wind of revival to Your church**" & He will **if** we honor His word, pray, & depend on **the Spirit of God** in our lives! 😊

3. **DIVIDED NATION UNITES! (15-28)**

- 3.1. Not only will the dead nation be **raised**, **but** they will be **united** in a **cov of peace**.
 3.1.1. There will be no longer **Judah**(south) & **Joseph**(Ephraim/north), but one **nation**, w/one **king**, & one **temple**.
 3.2. Not only **renewal** but **reunion!** (union)
 3.3. (24) He reiterates the promise of the coming of **The Shepherd**.

² Rev. William Jay; Morning Exercises; pg.570