



I. INTRO

A. Kingdom Come

Matthew 3:1-2 (J.B. Phillips) In due course John the Baptist arrived, preaching in the Judean desert: “You must change your hearts—for the kingdom of Heaven has arrived!”

- John was a forerunner, mission was to prepare the way of the Lord, announce the arrival
- Jesus’ first message, first recorded words

Matthew 4:17 (J.B. Phillips) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “You must change your hearts—for the kingdom of Heaven has arrived.”

- The reality was that very few had any idea who Jesus really was

B. The Kingdom is here?

- Think about the world that Jesus stepped into
- When the people of Jesus day heard “kingdom” this is what they thought:

Daniel 2:44 (NLT) “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever.

II. GLORY LOST

A. The glory of God filled the temple

- From Moses’ tabernacle to Solomon’s temple
 - God’s glory is a sign of His presence, power and favor

B. Israel drifts away from God (human nature)

- Pride led to rebellion and eventual destruction

C. The prophet Ezekiel (and others) warns of coming judgement

- God in grace and mercy wanted them to turn, they could have avoided this

Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NLT) “Therefore, I will judge each of you, O people of Israel, according to your actions, says the Sovereign LORD. Repent, and turn from your sins. Don’t let them destroy you! Put all your rebellion behind you, and find yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O people of Israel? I don’t want you to die, says the Sovereign LORD. Turn back and live!

D. Israel is conquered and goes into exile in Babylon

- They were taken captive and brought to a foreign land in Babylon
- Solomon’s temple was looted, destroyed, and burned by fire
 - God’s glory was gone, and so was the presence, power and blessing



III. EZEKIEL'S VISION – CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

A. The valley of dry bones

- All hope was gone

Ezekiel 37:1-2 (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. 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.

Ezekiel 37:11 (KJV) Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’

- Not only was this the condition of Israel in Ezekiel’s day, it was the condition of humanity in Jesus’ day, and it really hasn’t changed in our day

B. Can these bones live?

- God asks what seems like an easy question

Ezekiel 37:3 (NKJV) And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” So I answered, “O Lord God, You know.”

C. Ezekiel’s vision starts at what seems like the end

- Can God take dead things and make them live again?

Isaiah 61:1-3 (TLB) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted, to announce liberty to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of God’s favor to them has come, and the day of his wrath to their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel he will give: beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness. For God has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory.

D. Can you rebuild with ashes

Luke 4:17-21 (TLB) The book of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him, and he opened it to the place where it says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted and to announce that captives shall be released and the blind shall see, that the downtrodden shall be freed from their oppressors, and that God is ready to give blessings to all who come to him.” He closed the book and handed it back to the attendant and sat down, while everyone in the synagogue gazed at him intently. Then he added, “These Scriptures came true today!”