

Title: FROM THE VALLEY TO GOLGOTHA, JOHN 11:1 – 45
(Chatham, NJ; 04/06/14, AM) [D – Narrative Analysis]

Theme: The Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel represents not only the people of Israel but also the sinful state of death of humanity.

Purpose: To provide a descriptive narrative that pictures death but also portrays the life-giving power of God demonstrated in Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life.

Introduction:

1. From Ezekiel to Jesus, a story unfolds.
2. It is a graphic image of death and despair followed by life and hope.
3. Through Christ God has redeemed mankind from the clutches of a Valley of Dry Bones.

I. The Valley of Dry Bones: an Image of Humanity, Ezekiel 37:1 - 14

- A. The city has fallen, 33:21 (Jeremiah 39 & 52)
 1. Ezekiel receives word of Jerusalem's destruction
 2. In 33:23-24 Israel hasn't yet fully recognized God's punishment: they think they will return
 3. 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, they had been unfaithful
 4. Not until Daniel's prayer of repentance in chap. 9 is there some communal recognition of their sins
- B. Surrounded by death and despair
 1. In 37:11, Israel saw only hopelessness
 2. God takes Ezekiel to a valley of death
 3. Perhaps a place where several nations had warred: a place of anger and violence, bloodshed and killing
 4. No one had buried the dead
 5. The dry bones emitted silent despair (2)
 6. Vultures and wild animals had already picked the bones clean
 7. The absence of water sucked the life out of most living things
- C. Can these bones live? (3)
 1. Paraphrase: can God bring life out of death?
 2. Ezekiel pronounces the words of God to the bones (4-7)
 3. Can you hear the rattling, 7?
 4. Picture the muscles and the skin, 8: what do you see?
 5. They are not yet alive: has hope begun to stir Ezekiel's soul?
 6. The breath of life (as given to Adam at creation) came into these bodies of flesh, 10; they stood up
 7. "An exceedingly great army" 11
 8. In despair, God gives life and hope, 11-14
 9. A marvelous display of grace: remember this valley.

II. Deeply Moved, Greatly Troubled: Jesus at the Tomb of Lazarus, John 11:33

- A. John 11 – Jesus goes to the funeral of a friend
 1. "Our friend" in verse 11
 2. Jesus had been there before, Luke 10
 3. He delays but seems to know what he's going to do, 4 & 14
 4. Imagine the grieving sisters and friends
 5. The pain of loss is still a raw wound
- B. The Resurrection and the Life – A Dialogue

1. Jesus greets and talks with Martha
2. "If you had been here . . ." Is this a mild rebuke or expression of her assurance?
3. "Your brother will rise" "I know" (23-24)
4. "I am the resurrection and the life" (25, 26) for "everyone who believes"
5. "Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Messiah" (27)
6. What do her words tell you?

C. Jesus goes to the tomb (28-37)

1. The key: "He was deeply moved . . . and greatly troubled" (33)
2. But he already knew what he was going to do!
3. The bigger picture: this is the Valley of Dry Bones close up
4. When death hits close to us, we are confronted with the human condition
5. Death is dry bones, hopelessness, and despair
6. Yet God gives life: Jesus raises Lazarus

Epilogue (12:1 – 11):

- Joy at a dinner party; our brother lives (Lazarus is there; Martha serves)
- Yet the joy is incomplete: Mary anoints Jesus for his burial (I'm sure this point was somewhat lost on the disciples)
- Sorrow will return
- Jesus will die
- Lazarus will die
- All humanity dies, Hebrews 9:27-28: you will walk through this valley
- But Jesus has changed our valley of dry, lifeless bones
- The valley of death has sprung to life: this is our story
- He has freed us from the fear of death, Hebrews 2:14-15
- Fear no more! Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.