

Reflection One by Dr. John Sentamu

Ezekiel's prophecies come from the time of the Babylonian exile– the dry bones of Israel's hopes will live again. This is a prophecy of the people of Israel in exile and – set, as it were, in the death and the valley of despond - the hope is to bring them back to their land out of death.

Prophet Ezekiel is asked, “Mortal, old man, can these bones live?” Can Israel come out of exile? What would our answer be? Some of us may have said “No Lord, the nation will never come out of exile.” And some of us may have replied, “Yes Lord, it can. You just watch me and I will show you how.”

But Ezekiel's answer is, “Only you, Lord God, know that.” He is told to speak the word of God and to call upon the life-giving power of God's Spirit. The Word and the Spirit give life.

The nation will come back to life by the life-creating power of God! We may also read the text of Ezekiel as a promise of our own resurrection brought to us by the Spirit. That Spirit is life, and leads us into all truth. Which implies that individual responsibility and a person's continued life with God matter – as well as the renewal of the nation.

At this present time of COVID-19 we are, as it were, set in death in exile. I believe the Sovereign Lord who knows it all by the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead to life eternal, the life creating power of God will bring us out of exile – out of the valley of death. Sovereign Lord we look to you to deliver us.

Reflection Two by Dr. John Sentamu

It is significant that Jesus of Nazareth raises a man from death. Please notice Jesus's genuine love for his friends in the wonderful sign of the raising of Lazarus, pointing to our own transformation. Christ, the Anointed One, the resurrection and the life, by dying gives us life.

As Christians, we say, ‘We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.’ We have been baptized into Jesus Christ's death, His promise is Eternal Life – the very Life of God which He came to bring. Already and yet still to come. The words of Psalm 130 say to us ‘Wait for the Lord’. Since Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, died for us, death is

something that we should not fear or be anxious about, for the best is yet to be. And as a promise, God has poured into our hearts the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

And the Nicene Creed encapsulates what we believe who God is in himself.