

DOCTRINE OF BONE(S)

- I.** Preliminary considerations and definition.
- A.** A word study of bone(s) in the Scriptures reveals not only a literal or anatomical use, but metaphorical, symbolic and idiomatic meanings also.
 - B.** Sometimes the literal and figurative ideas are combined in a single use.
 - C.** The figurative uses are designed to teach or emphasize spiritual principles of doctrine associated with the physical subject or object in view.
 - D.** Webster defines the literal bone as one of the hard pieces or parts of the skeleton of most vertebrates. Meat adheres to it. Bone can contain marrow that is a highly vascular (nutritive fluid), soft tissue that fills the cavities of most bones. Marrow is the inner most, essential or choices parts and the source of animal vigor (active strength or force of body or mind; effective energy or power).
 - E.** Marrow is paralleled with the human spirit in Heb.4:12.
- II.** Vocabulary.
- A.** Hebrew.
 - 1.** עֵצֶם - -etsem; used 126x; from the root verb עָצַם - -atsam meaning strong, mighty. Atsam can be compared to the Arabic “azuma”, “to be great in bones”, hence “to be mighty”. Our noun etsem is translated body, bone, bones, itself, limb, pains, strength, very same and wood. This is the most common word for bone.
 - 2.** גֵּרֶם - gerem; used 5x; meaning bare, bone, bones, limbs and strong.
 - 3.** גָּרַם - garam; used 2x; to break bones.
 - 4.** גֵּרְמֵי - garemi; used 1x; means bony, a name applied to Keilah the Garmite. 1Chr.4:19
 - 5.** צֵלַע - tsela-; used 40x; rib (2x), side, walls, one another.
 - B.** Greek: ὀστέον – osteon; used 4x; bone(s).
- III.** Literal uses.
- A.** The first mention of a bone in Scripture is not the word bone, but “rib(s)” (Gen.2:21-22). God literally removes a rib from Adam and built Eve from it.
 - B.** Of the literal bones of Christ. Psa.22:14,17; Luk.24:39
 - C.** Other literal uses: 2Sam.21:12-14; 1Chr.10:12; Job 10:11; Ecc.11:5; Amos 6:10; Mic.3:2,3; Dan.6:24; Heb.11:22
- IV.** Figurative uses.
- A.** Idiomatically to denote kinship relationships:
 - 1.** Of husband and wife, “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”. Gen.2:23
 - 2.** Of familial or genetic relationships otherwise, “You are my bone and my flesh”. Gen.29:14; Judg.9:2; 2Sam.5:1; 19:12-13; 1Chr.11:1
 - B.** Metaphorically of the soul/volition:

1. Psa.141:7; “*As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol*”. The farming analogy pictures a furrow with the soil (also symbolizes volition e.g., Heb.6:7-8) divided to both sides; this parallels Sheol divided into 2 parts, Hades and Paradise, where the souls of unbelievers and believers are separated into their appropriate places.
 2. Psa.38:3; David speaking under Divine discipline, “*There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no (lit.) peace in my bones*”. A secondary sense is added to DD to the body bringing further distress to the soul.
 3. Pro.3:7-8: “*Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, And refreshment (lit. a drink) to your bones*”. The outer man (body) is healed while sustaining the soul within. Water is used metaphorically for spiritual life (Joh.4:7-14; Heb.10:22).
 4. Gen.2:21-23 combines literal, idiomatic and metaphorical senses to include picturing soul essence.
 - a. The first concept for “bones” is actually a “rib” in the creation account of the woman.
 - b. The words of the marriage ceremony “*This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*” are not only literal and idiomatic for the new relationship, but the term “bone(s) further suggest metaphorical implications of the soul.
 - c. Bones represent the part of the anatomy that are invisible to the eye, innermost and the framework for the body.
 - d. It highlights strength, whereas flesh highlights weakness.
 - e. The term “rib/tesela-“ is only translated thus in these verses; it has a primary meaning to be equal (side) and thus intimate while possessing unique individuality.
 - f. The term is most often used for the Tabernacle and/or Millennial Temple and their furnishings designed to teach spiritual realities associated with the physical structures. Exo.25:12,14; 26:20,26; Eze.41:5,6,7; et al
 - g. The singular “rib bone” taken from the man and made into the woman denotes not only organic unity, but spiritual.
 - h. It highlights the equality of their sharing of inner essence being created in the “image of God” of Gen.1:27
 - i. Adam and Eve enjoyed both a physical and spiritual union.
- C. The term “bone(s)” is used in context with the word for “soul”:
1. To emphasize soulish torment or pressures.
 - a. Job 7:14-15: “*Then You do frighten me with dreams And terrify me by visions (denotes mental not physical torment); So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my (lit.) bones*”. Job is saying that he would choose death over the inner tribulation he is experiencing in his soul/BC.
 - b. Job 30:16-17: “*And now my soul is poured out within me; Days of affliction have seized me. At night it pierces my bones within me, And my gnawing take no rest*”. The emphasis is inner torment of the soul while the testing continues. For figurative language of “piercing the soul” see Luk.2:35; Heb.4:12

D. Other figurative uses include:

1. To emphasize doctrine in the soul i.e., +V to BD. Psa.35:9-10: The doctrine in David's soul produces faith in God's deliverance from his enemies.
2. Edification of the soul. Pro.16:24; BD is readily accepted by +V edifying the soul as associated with DD.
3. To emphasize volition. Pro.25:15; Context indicates a change of mind. The ruler's volition to maybe do one thing is broken and he wills through persuasion to do differently. Jer.20:9; The context shows Jeremiah complaining to God under his STA because of the abuse and affliction he has receive from negative Israel. Vs.9, "*But if I say, 'I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name'* (Jeremiah is weighing the alternative of abandoning his ministry), *Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones...*" (the doctrine in his mind passes judgment on his soul for this kind of thinking; how else can fire be entrapped in him?).
4. To illustrate fear. Job 4:14
5. To illustrate good health and strength. Job 20:11; 21:24; 40:18; Isa.66:14
6. To illustrate being close to physical death. Job 19:20
7. To illustrate DD upon the body. Psa.6:2; 32:3 (body/bones); cp.31:10
8. Broken bones illustrate personal and national DD/deserved wrath: Individual – Psa.51:8; 34:20 (lack of DD); National – Eze.37:1-7,11; "dry bones" = unbelief of previously dispersed Israel; Judg.19:16ff; The 12 part division of the body of the concubine cut "by limb bone" and sent throughout Israel was a warning of impending wrath from God for allowing the homosexual vice to remain among the Benjamites.
9. To depict the state of unbelief. Eze.37:1ff; Mat.23:27

V. Bones in typeology.

- A.** At the Passover feast it is commanded to not break any bone of the sacrificial lamb. Exo.12:46; Num.9:12
1. The Passover lamb is a type of Christ.
 2. Not to break a bone is prophetic that literally not a bone of Christ was broken during crucifixion (Joh.19:36).
 3. Further, it is symbolic that no Divine wrath (DD; cf.Psa.51:8) was directed toward Christ for any personal sins during sin bearing i.e., all judgment was undeserved (cp.Heb.7:26).
- B.** Both Joseph and Moses were types of Christ.
1. Joseph commanded that after his death that his bones be carried out of Egypt to the promised land. Gen.50:25
 2. Moses carried out the order. Exo.13:19
 3. Combined this teaches the soul/spirit of Christ exiting this world into Ph₃.
 4. Since a type of Christ was used in both the command and execution teaches that no man took the life of Christ, but that He laid it down through His own choice. Joh.10:17-18; 19:30

- C. Elisha as a type of Christ illustrated resurrection with his bones after death. 2Kgs.13:20-21
1. Resurrection was the evidence that Christ was the Son of God. Cf.Rom.1:3-4
 2. Resurrection is the promise for those in union with Christ via retroactive positional truth (R/PT). Cf.Rom.6:5
 3. The man being buried symbolized an unbeliever.
 4. The dead man touching the bones of Elisha illustrates identifying with Christ via faith establishing union with Him.
 5. The dead man was passive in the action of touching Elisha's bones.
 6. This teaches that all that come to Christ, the Father actually gives to Him. Cp.Joh.6:39
 7. The bones of Elisha = Christ's complete obedience of will to the POG qualifying Him as the Messiah and authority to impart eternal life. Cf.Joh.5:19-21,30
 8. The man revived symbolizes the new birth or eternal life evidenced in resurrection given to those that the Father has given the Son. Cp.Joh.6:40

- VI. Bones are used symbolically of judgment against negative volition in 1Kgs.12:28-13:2.
- A. In the passage, Jeroboam set up two pagan altars in Israel.
 - B. A man of God passes judgment against the altars in 1Kgs.13:2.
 - C. The burning of the bones on the altars = God's judgment upon the souls of men that adhere to other gods and not the true God.
 - D. For similar symbolism see 2Chr.34:5; Eze.6:5; 24:4,5,10; 32:27.