

## THE BREATH OF LIFE (*NIŠMAṭ ḥAYYĪM*) IN GENESIS 2:7 AND ITS INTERFACE WITH *HĀRŪĀḥ* IN EZEKIEL 37:1-14 AND THE BREATH OF THE SPIRIT IN JOHN 20:22

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### Abstract

The breath of life which God breathed into the nostrils of the man which he formed from the dust of the earth made man a “living being” (*nepeš ḥayyāh*). The man, formed from the earth, became a living being only when inspired with the divine breath of life, which God breathed into his nostrils. By stating this, the Yahwist wishes to say that human life springs directly from God. As applied to living creatures, the breath of life is the vitalizing and sustaining principle. However, humanity is not the only being that is animated by “the breath of life” from God (Gen 2:7), “all flesh” (*kol-bāśār*) – human and animal – was animated by this “breath” (Gen 6:17; 7:15, 22). In the Yahwist’s view, man is set apart from the rest of living creatures because God breathed directly into his nostrils.

**Keywords:** Breath of Life, *rûaḥ*, *nepeš*, creation, *’ādām*, *’ādāmāh*.

### Introduction

The “Breath” which God blew into man’s nostrils is not only a sign of life; it is equated with life itself: to have “breath” is to be “living”. However, the intensity in which God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life is the Yahwist’s way of indicating that peculiar relationship between God and man which the Priestly writer describes in terms of “image” and “likeness”. The breath of life” [*nišmaṭ ḥayyîm*] in Gen 2:7 designates a God-given, animating power – the essence of life. It provides and sustains life in all flesh, people, and animals during their earthly existence, and which they forfeit at death (cf. Ps 104:29; Eccl 12:7). Both man and beast draw the same breath, all come from the same dust, and to dust all return (Eccles 3:19; cf. Pss 103:14-16; 104:29). The import of breathing into the nostril of man is to give vitality to the man. Vitality is communicated by God, and he is portrayed as communicating it by breathing into man’s nostrils that which is the sign of life. However, the fact that God imparts his own breath to man, marks the dignity of man above animals. It is the Yahwist’s equivalent of the “image of God.” Man’s uniqueness is underlined in the fact that God directly breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The breath of life in Gen 2:7 as the principle of vitality is akin to the breath which revitalized the dry bones in Ezek 37:17. It is also the same breath that the risen Lord breathed on his disciples (Jn 20:22). This article seeks to study the interface between the “breath of life” (Gen 2:7) and its relationship with the animating *rûaḥ* in Ezek 37:1-14 and the “breath” by which the risen Jesus quickened the spirit of his disciples (Jn 20:22).

### **Yahwist Account of Creation**

Gen 2:4b-25 presents a somewhat dissimilar account of creation. This account, ascribed to the Yahwistic writer (J), is not a continuation or supplement to Gen 1. While in Gen 1 the Priestly writer portrays God as creating all things by his creative word, in Gen 2 the Yahwistic writer portrays the Creator as a divine potter (Hopkins, 1964). The J writer says that Godshaped (*yāsār* - to form, shape) man (*'ādām*) “from the dust of the land (*'āfār min-hā 'ādāmāh*)” and “breathed (*yippaḥ*, hiphil form of the verb *nāpāh*, to breathe) into his nostrils the breath of life (*nišmat ḥayyîm*); and the man became a “living being” (*nepeš ḥayyāh*, Gen 2:7). The bond of life between man and earth given by creation is expressed with particular cogency by the use of the Hebrew words *'ādām* and *'ādāmāh* (Von Rad, 1972). Man (*'ādām*) is formed from the dust of the earth (*'āfār min-hā 'ādāmāh*). The wordplay shows the man’s close relationship to the ground - his cradle, his home, and his grave. Man (*'ādām*) was created from the dust of the earth (*'ādāmāh*); his job is to cultivate it (Gen 2:5, 15); and when he dies, he returns to it (Gen 3:19 [Wenham, 1998]).

The man, formed from the earth, became a living being only when inspired by the divine breath of life, which God breathed into his nostrils. This stresses that man is more than a God-shaped piece of earth; he has within him a divine element – “the breath of life” (*nišmat ḥayyîm*), as a result of which he became a “living being” (*nepeš ḥayyāh*; Greek: *psuchēn zōsan*). As the *Imago Dei* man is *nepeš ḥayyāh* (living being). The Yahwistic writer, however, goes beyond a mere declaration that life comes from God when he says that God breathed into the nostrils of the lifeless man the breath of life. Here, the *nepeš* denotes the potency on which life rests (Von Rad, 1964).

The divine breath of life which unites with the material body” makes man a “living being” both “from the physical as well as from the psychical side. This life springs directly from God, as directly as the lifeless human body received breath from God’s mouth when he bent over it” (Von Rad, 1972). Wenham (1987, p.60-61) emphasizes that the phrase “living creature” is contrasted with a dead one. The phrase, “and man became a living being” means simply “and the man began to live.” By blowing on the inanimate body made from the earth, God made man come alive. However, it is not man’s possession of “the breath of life” or his status as a “living creature” that differentiates him from the animals. Animals are described in exactly the same terms. Man’s uniqueness is underlined in the fact that God directly breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Gen 1:26-28 affirms the uniqueness of man by stating that man alone is made on God’s image and is given authority over the animals. Man’s sovereignty over the rest of the animal world is expressed in the fact that he is authorized to name them (Gen 2:19).

### **The Breath of Life (*nišmat ḥayyîm*) in Genesis 2:7**

Gen 2:7 reads: “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living

being.”The Hebrew word “*nāpah*” represents a common Semitic root with the basic meaning “blow” or “breathe.” In the Old Testament, the verb “*nāpah*” occurs 12 times. Except for the occurrence in Gen 2:7, it appears only in exilic and post-exilic texts, mostly prophetic. There are nine occurrences of the qal (Gen 2:7; Isa 54:16; Jer 1:3; 15:9; Ezek 22: 20, 21; 37:9; Hag 1:9; Job 41:12 [20]; two in hiphil (Mal 1:13; Job 31:39); and one in pual (Job 20:26 [Maiberger, 1998]).

The root *npš* means “to inspire,” “to breathe.” The root *npš* in the form of the noun *nepeš* occurs 755 times in the Hebrew Bible, denotes “life” or “living creature” (Jacob, 1974).*Nepeš* is applied to both humanity and to animals. The same phrase using this term is applied to humankind (Gen 2:7) and is also applied to all living creatures (Gen 1:20-21, 24). As applied to living creatures, *nepeš* denotes animal life (Cate, 1990).

Animals also have breath, but it is the narrator’s intention to stress that human beings have the very breath of God sustaining them (Waltke, 2001). The “Breath” which God blew into man’s nostrils is a sign of life (cf. 1 Kgs 17:17). “Breath” like “blood” in the elementary physiology of ancient man was the sign of life and, therefore, equated with life itself: to have breath was to be “living” (Vawter, 1977). Thus, in the Old Testament understanding of a person, the *nepeš* is not set apart as a distinct aspect of the human (Gen 2:7: “and the man became a living being [*nepeš ḥayyāh*]).” As McKenzie (2002) said, the *nepeš* in Gen 2:7 is not identical with “the breath of life” that man received from God, rather man is the living *nepeš*.

Scholars view the phrase, “the breath of life” [*nišmat ḥayyîm*] in Gen 2:7 just like *ruah ḥayyîm* in Gen 6:17 and *nišmat-ruah ḥayyîm* in Gen 7:15 as designating a universal, God-given, animating power that provides and sustains life in all flesh, people and animals, during their earthly existence, and which they forfeit at death (cf. Ps 104:29; Eccl 12:7 [Pike, 2017]). While as the Yahwist suggests, breath stands for life itself and is evident in all people as they inhale and exhale, the emphasis in creating the first human is on the power and action of God, who “breathed” (*yippah*) into his nostrils the breath of life [*nišmat ḥayyîm*]” (Gen 2:7). As Pike (2017) has said, this figurative representation of God instilling life into the first created human powerfully conveys the notion that divine power is necessary for human life to exist. It must, however, be noted that it was not only the first human that lived by receiving “the breath of life” from God (Gen 2:7), “all flesh” (*kol-bāšār*) – human and animal – was animated by this “breath” (Gen 6:17; 7:15, 22).

Like the rest of the other creatures, man experiences the frailty and transitoriness of life since this breath of life, given by God, may be withdrawn by God at any time. Both man and beast draw the same breath, all come from the same dust, and to dust all return (Eccles 3:19; cf. Pss 103:14-16; 104:29). However, the intensity in which God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life is the Yahwist’s way of

indicating that peculiar relationship between God and man which the Priestly writers describe in terms of “image” and “likeness” (Davidson, 1973). Skinner (1976) held that the import of breathing in the nostril of man is to give vitality to the man. Vitality is communicated by God, and he is portrayed as communicating it by breathing into man’s nostrils that which is the sign of life. However, the fact that God imparts his own breath to man, marks the dignity of man above animals. It is the Yahwist’s equivalent of the “image of God.”

The Hebrews do not speak of life in the abstract. Life is always observable, something possessed. Basically, life is motion. To have life is to possess the power to act, to accomplish a task begun in man by God’s *rûaḥ*, his breath, his dynamic spirit (Gen 2:7). The primary meaning of *rûaḥ* is wind; it is mobile and mobilizing. God’s breath is a vital, always effective source of energy in men and animals, in all living things (Ps 103 [104]:10-30 [Coyle, 1967]). The breath referred to in Gen 2:7 is a breath of life. The “breath of life” is not the air in general, but God’s own living breath. God shares this divine “breath of life” with the human and with the animals (cf. Gen 7:22). The result of both human beings and animals is a “living being” (*nepeš ḥayyāh*, 2:7, 19; 1:20-30; 9:12-16).

The uniqueness of the Hebrew phrase, *nišmat ḥayyîm*, in Gen 2:7, matches the singular nature of the human body, which, unlike the creatures of the animal world, is directly inspirited by God himself. The divine act of breathing into the human provides the only distinction between humans and animals (Fretheim, 1994). What the Yahwist wishes to communicate in 2:7 is that human beings derive their lives directly from God. Without the breath of life that God puts into humans, they would be dead and dissolve into dust from which they came (Gobson, 1981). Among the living beings, man is a privileged creature, because of the divine breath which God breathed in him. Through it, man shares in some way in the life of God (Hauret, 1964).

### **Man as Living Being (*Nepeš Ḥayyîm*)**

The Yahwist declared that as a result of the divine action of breathing the breath of life into the nostrils of the inanimate man he formed, man became a living being (*nepeš ḥayyāh*) or a “living soul” (Gen 2:7). The *nepeš* is thus the being, the person, the self (Coyle, 1967; cf. 1 Sam 18:1; Ps 102 [103]: 1). The breath of life in man is the principle of life within him. Also, *nepeš* (soul, literally “breath”) may signify life itself (Gen 35:18; Exod 21:23).

The terms, *nepeš* and *nišmat ḥayyîm* in Gen 2:7, are variously translated. Some versions, like ASV, translate the word *nepeš* as “soul”, and thus, translate *nišmat ḥayyîm* as or “living soul”. This rendering of *nepeš* as “soul” is, however, misleading. It seems to have been influenced by the Greek dualism: soul/body dualism. Versions like RSV, KJV, NAB, and NIV translate *nepeš* as “being” and thus render *nepeš ḥayyîm* as “living being”. It seems that these versions avoid rendering *nepeš* as “soul” because it might have made their modern readers think

of the “immortality” of the soul, which is not a Hebrew idea but a Greek idea. Plaut (1981), too, renders *nepeš ḥayyāh* as “living being” rather than “living soul”. Like the RSV, Plaut also avoids the dichotomy between body and soul which was of post-biblical origin.

Two basic words that are translated as “spirit” in the Old Testament are *rûaḥ* and *nepeš*. *Nepeš* originally meant “neck” or “throat” and later came to mean “breath” or “life” and ultimately is translated as “spirit” or “soul”. The meaning “neck,” “throat,” which *nepeš* has in some passages, is an attempt to localize at a specific and visible place the expression of life (Jacob, 1974). *Rûaḥ*, on the other hand, originally meant “breath” or “wind” and later came to be interpreted as “soul” (Cate, 1990). According to Seebass (1998), *nepeš* means the vital self. For, according to Gen 2:7, a person does not have a vital self but is a vital self. Thus, we need not assume that *nepeš* involves “having”, it rather involves “being”. *Nepeš ḥayyāh* in Gen 2:7 is a coined phrase, it is a common expression used by the Priestly writer for “living being” (Westermann, 1997; cf. Gen 1:20f., 24; 9:10, 12, 15f).

In the Hebrew worldview, the “soul” is not part of “man” but the whole living person, consisting of his body plus the breath which gives it life. Thus, when the Psalmist says, “God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol” (Ps 49:15), he is not to be understood as looking forward to the survival of his soul after death. He is expressing confidence that God will not let him die (Gobson, 1981). According to Davidson (1973), the Hebrew term, *nepeš*, does not mean soul in the sense of the spiritual part of man; rather it means life, vitality, the total living personality. The Old Testament term *ḥayyîm* does not cover all that the term life connotes. In the Old Testament, *ḥayyîm* indicates only physical, organic life.

According to Skinner (1976), *nepeš* (“a living being”) in Gen 2:7 is not a constituent of human nature, rather it denotes the “personality as a whole.” *Nepeš* is the usual term for a man’s total nature, for what he is and not just what he has. The same cannot be said of either spirit, heart, or flesh. The classical text in Gen 2:7 expresses this truth. According to E. Jacob, “each individual is a *nepeš*. *Nepeš* denotes what is most in human nature, namely, the ego, the “I” (Jacob, 1974). The *nepeš* is not applied as a separate element of man’s being, but to the whole man in possession of vital powers.

### **The *rûaḥ ywh* as Agency of Animation in Ezek 37:1-14**

There is an interface between *nišmat ḥayyîm* (“Breath of Life”) in Gen 2:7 and the *rûaḥ* in Ezek 37:1-14. Just the *nišmat ḥayyîm* is a vitalizing power in Gen 2:7, the *rûaḥ* in Ezek 37: 1-14 is the animating and vitalizing force. As an “agency of animation,” the *rûaḥ* operates internally, like the breath of living creatures (*ḥayyîm*) in Ezek 1:15.19-21. In Hebrew thought as Ezek 37:1-14 shows, it is the breath from God that vivifies the dry bones and restores them to life. This notion is reflected in Gen 2:7. Here the J writer emphasizes that the

breath of life (*nišmat hayyîm*) which God blew into his nostrils of the man (*'ādām*), which he formed from the dust of the earth (*'āfār min-hā'ādāmāh*), is a vitalizing force that gives life to the human beings. As in Gen 2:7, the *rûah* is portrayed as the vitalizing agent in Ezek 37:1-14.

The vivifying breath of God appears also in Ezek 37:9, where the spirit (*rûah*) blowing through the whole world (the four corners of the world) is summoned to blow on the dry bones of the slain to restore them to life. In the Old Testament view, all earthly life derives from the breath of God (cf. Isa 42:5; Job 33:4); when this breath is taken away, they die (Ps 104:29; Job 34:14f; Isa 57:16). In the Old Testament worldview, “breath” and “life” (*n<sup>e</sup>šāmāh andnepeš*) are synonymous (Maiberger, 1998). For E. Jacob (1984), *nepeš* is the immaterial principle which can be abstracted away from its material sub-structure and that can lead to an independent existence. The departure of the *nepeš* is a metaphor for death; a dead man is one who has ceased to breathe.

The vitalizing power of the divine spirit is reflected in several texts of the Old Testament. Isa 42:5 describes Yahweh as the one “who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it” who gives “breath” (*nešāmāh*) to people on it and spirit (*rûah*) to those who walk on it” (Block, 1989). In Ezekiel, this animating sense of *rûah* is more outstanding than in Isaiah. The animating effect of the spirit is described in the opening vision (Ezek 1). However, no text in the entire OT portrays the vivifying power of the divine spirit as dramatically as 37:1-14. In 37:1, the hand of Yahweh (*yād-yhwh*) is said to come upon the prophet Ezekiel and transport him in the spirit into the middle of a valley that was full of very dry bones. The bones which the prophet sees are interpreted as representing “the whole house of Israel” (*kol-bêt yiśrā'el*, Ezek 37:11) in apparently hopeless condition in exile (Feinberg, 1969; Brownlee, 1971; von Rad, 1965). Jerusalem had been destroyed (587 B.C.), and the Babylonian exile is akin to the death of the nation.

Yahweh commands Ezekiel to prophesy over the lifeless bones. i.e., to pronounce God’s powerful word over the bones that they may be restored to life (Ezek 37:4-6). The words declared by the prophet result in the energization and revivification of the bones. Though the bones came together, with flesh covering them, what was lacking in them was the regenerative life force (the breath of life, *nišmat hayyîm*) that will bring life into them (Ezek 37:7f; West, 1971; Feinberg, 1969). Again, God commands Ezekiel to “prophesy” to the breath (*hinnābe' 'el- hārûah*, 37:9), and summon it (the breath of life) to come from the “four winds” (*me'arba' rûhôt*) to “breathe” life upon the bones that they may live (37:9; Eichrodt, 1970; West, 1971).

There is a play on the term *rûah* in Ezek 37:9: “Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy “to the breath” (*'el-hārû<sup>h</sup>*), prophesy, mortal, and say “to the breath” (*'el-hārû<sup>h</sup>*): Thus says the Lord God: Come “from the four winds” (*mē'arba' rûhôt*), O breath (*hārû<sup>h</sup>*), and breathe (*ûpehî* – from the verb: *nāpah* – to breathe) upon the slain,

“that they may live” (*weyihyû*: from *hāyāh* – to live, be).” As he prophesied, the spirit of life came upon the bones and they were revitalized (Ezek 37:7-10). Authors like Darr (2001), Allen (1998), Breck (2001), Zimmerli (1983), and Achard (1992) understand the *rûah* as a vitalizing force, just as “the breath of life” in Gen 2:7.

The terms, “breath,” “wind” and “spirit,” are renderings of the same Hebrew word *rûah*. The verb “to breathe” (*ûpehî*) in v. 9 is the qal imperative feminine singular of the verb *nāpah* – to breathe. It is the same verb used in Gen 2:7 to describe how God, having formed man (*’ādām*) from the soil (*’ādāmāh*), breathed (*yippah* - qal imperfect form of the verb *nāpah*) into its nostrils the breath of life (*nišmat hayyîm*) (Darr, 2001). In Ezek 37:1-14, as in Gen 2:7, *rûah* is the animating principle. With the breath of life infused into the lifeless and dry bones, they are quickened and revived. As Allen (1998) has said, the spirit of God which brings about the re-energization of the bones is a powerful creative force akin to that in Gen 1.

The *rûah* is a “breath of life,” an agent of the revivification of a nation quasi moribund in exile. The exile was the ‘grave’ into which Israel had been laid. This fact is underlined in 37:12-13. Here, the bones are portrayed as buried in graves. God announces that he will open their graves, bring them forth from those graves (exile), and restore them to their homeland. The revivification of the bones symbolizes the revivification of the nation. Such a revivification is a form of national disinterment. Brownlee (1971) writes that the revivification of the nation quasi moribund is also akin to the work of a new creation.

Evidently, Ezekiel portrays Yahweh’s *rûah* as the agent of the revivification of the Exiles who are quasi moribund in the land of exile, and whose “breath”, i.e., the hope of survival, is gone. It is a revival which is effected by God’s life-giving spirit (Achard, 1992; Allen, 1990). The revival of the nation demonstrates Yahweh’s power and being. God demonstrates his life-giving power; Yahweh has the power not only to initiate life but also to re-animate the dead and re-energize them with “breath” (*rûah*) so that they will live (Darr, 2001; Allen, 1998). Feinberg (1969) held that the revival of the dry bones symbolizes revival of Israel to spiritual life. The restoration of the people of Israel is a revival effected by the Spirit of God (Schedl, 1972). To the revived “bones” God will give his spirit within them so that they may live (37:14).

### **The Breath of the Spirit in John 20:22**

The function of “the breath of life” in Gen 2:7 as a divinely animating life force is not only in harmony with Ezek 37:1-4 but also with vitalizing power of the breath of the risen Lord on his disciples in Jn 20:22. On the Easter evening, the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples who were together behind locked doors, “for fear of the Jews” (Jn 20:19). The risen Jesus greeted his disciple with the peace greeting: “Peace be with you” (*eirene humin*). This eirenic greeting offered to a

band of disciples who were wracked with fear restores them to inner security and fearlessness (Shepherd, 1971). Now as he pronounced the post-resurrection *eirenic* greeting he empowers them to go and proclaim the good news to all nations: “*As the Father has sent me so I send you*” (Jn 20:21).

To enable them carry out this task of witnessing in a hostile world, Jesus bestows on them the Holy Spirit (cf. 15:25–26; 16:8–11), the external sign of which is the “breathing on” the apostles: “When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). The “breathing on”, as Schnackenburg (1987) symbolizes the conferring of life akin to Yahweh’s breathing on the man in Gen 2:7; or the calling down of breath on the dry bones in Ezek 37:9. Note that in Gen 2:7, God breathed on the inanimate man he formed from the dust of the earth, and man became vivified by the breath from the mouth of God. In Jn 20:22 has *emphysao*. It means “to breathe upon or over,” though here it is used of Jesus rather than God. Here Jesus takes the place of God (Stauffer, 1964): “he breathed (*enephusēsen*, aorist indicative of the verb *emphusao*) on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (*Labete pveuma agion*). Here, the spirit is conveyed as a breath, as in Ps 104. The bearers of the spirit (the apostles), however, receive from Christ the power of losing and binding: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Here (Jn 20:22f), then, three processes which are separate in the other Evangelists, the giving of the keys, the missionary command, and the outpouring of the Spirit, are combined in a single act of creation which denotes the beginning of a new reality of life. The apostles, having been empowered by the risen Jesus by the imparting of the Holy Spirit, continue the work of the risen Lord in a new form. He who is sent by God now sends the disciples into the world equipped with the Spirit, who is released by the work of the risen Jesus and who will complete what has been begun (Stauffer, 1964).

The verb “to breathe” (*emphysao*) occurs only here in the New Testament; it is the same verb used in Gen 2:7 of God “breathing” into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life (O’Day, 1976). In Ezek 37:1-14, the command, “breathe into these slain that they may live” is addressed to the life-giving spirit (Ezek 37:9-10). Following the divine command, “breath” came into the bones; and they came to life and rose to their feet, a mighty host. Just as God breathed his spirit into the man in the creation story (Gen 2:7), so Jesus now does so with the words: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Haenchen, 1984).

The breadth of God in Genesis gave life; the breadth of Jesus gives eternal life and energizes the disciples for the task ahead. Jesus’ symbolic action of breathing on the disciples represents the imparting of the Holy Spirit. As the man was vitalized by the “breath” of God in Gen 2:7, so were the disciples energized by the “breath” and the gift of the Holy Spirit by the risen Jesus. In the Old Testament, “spirit,” “wind,” and “breadth” often represent the same vocabulary cluster (Brown, 1990). The bestowal of the Spirit is an *empowerment for mission* (Fuller, 1978). The disciples are to continue Jesus’ work. The apostles



were authorized not only to proclaim universally the message of God's forgiveness (Acts 10:43), but also to say in individual cases "your sins are forgiven."

### **Conclusion**

The man, formed from the earth, became a living being (*nepeš ḥayyāh*) when God breathed into his nostrils "the breath of life" (*nišmat ḥayyîm*). The breath is the sign of life. By breathing into his nostrils, God communicated vitality to the man. The breath of God is an animating force that gives life to all living things (cf. Ps 104:29; Eccl 12:7). In the Old Testament view, all earthly life derives from the breath of God (cf. Isa 42:5; Job 33:4); when this breath is taken away, they die (Ps 104:29; Job 34:14f; Isa 57:16). However, the fact that God imparts his own breath to man, distinguishes him from the rest of the animals, and indicates his peculiar relationship with God. It is the Yahwist's equivalent of the "image of God." Among the living beings, man is a privileged creature, because of the divine breath which God breathed in him. The *nišmat ḥayyîm* ("Breath of Life") in Gen 2:7 is an animating and revitalizing force as the divine *rûaḥ* in Ezek 37:1-14 and the breath from the risen Jesus on his disciples. Just like the breath of God in Gen 2:7 in Ezek 37:9 the man formed from the dust of the earth, the spirit (*rûaḥ*) in Ezek 37:9 revivifies the dry bones of the slain to life. Similarly, the breath from the risen Jesus has a revitalizing power. It quickened the spirit of his disciples and energized them for the task ahead.

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