



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 36

*Theme: Israel's Past Sins Judged
and Forgiven*

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Theme: Israel's past sins judged and forgiven

Chuck Smith: In chapter 36 Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy to the mountains of Israel. Now this is the second time he prophesied to the mountains of Israel. The first time was back in chapter 6, and he was prophesying the desolations that would come to the mountains of Israel and to the cities because they had built the high places on the mountains and worshipped the false images, idols, and gods. And thus he spoke about the mountains being made desolate. That prophecy was fulfilled and the mountains of Israel remained desolate for nineteen centuries. Now again he prophesies to the mountains of Israel, but this prophecy has to do with a work of God in making now the desolate mountains inhabited. And so there is quite a contrast between this prophecy in chapter 36 and the prophecy in chapter 6 where the desolation of the mountains was described and now the restoration from the desolation.¹

Missler: God's Glory Vindicated

In this chapter we are going to see the Lord champion the cause of Israel, and that can easily lead to the misunderstanding that God is somehow partial to Israel *per se*. However, what God is really doing is vindicating His glory. He has condescended to have Israel be the mechanism for His purposes on earth, and when those mechanisms are impugned, it is His glory that is attacked. What God is defending is not Israel, it is His glory, His own sovereignty, His own prerogatives. It is a question of being sensitive to what God's purpose is. He chose to operate through Israel and the land.²

Constable; The establishment of Israel in the land 36:1-15

This part of the prophecy of the preparation of the Promised Land sets forth what God would do for Israel. It contains the opposite of the curses against Israel warned of in chapter 6, and it contrasts Israel's glorious destiny with the terrible fate of Edom in chapter 35.

The chapter contains the most comprehensive enunciation of the plan of redemption to be found in this book, setting forth all the factors that comprise God's plan of salvation.

Ezekiel 36 parallels the New Covenant God promised to Israel and Judah in Jeremiah 31. This covenant includes at least three specific elements: (a) restoration to the land (Ezek. 36:24; Jer. 31:27-29), (b) forgiveness of sin (Ezek. 36:25; Jer. 31:34), and (c) the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:26-27; Jer. 31:33).

The future of Israel [in chapters 36 and 37] can be summarized in four words: restoration, regeneration, resurrection, and reunion.³

ESV; 1–15 The Mountains of Israel Restored. The judgment of Mount Seir (ch. 35)—so reminiscent of God's prior judgment of the mountains of Israel (ch. 6)—contrasts with the announcement now of restoration in corresponding terms. The address here is fairly consistently to the “mountains of Israel” (36:1), and most of the second-person references (“you”) are plural. A singular reference is occasionally made, however (e.g., to the “land [soil] of Israel,” v. 6). Broadly, this oracle sets out an explanation for the wrath that befell

¹ Chuck Smith, Notes on Ezekiel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries

² Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

³ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

the “mountains” (vv. 1–7), followed by the promise of their restoration (vv. 8–15). Within that simple division, the structure is complicated.

Clarke: The Edomites or Idumeans, during the Babylonish captivity, took possession of the mountainous parts of Judea, and the fortresses which commanded the country, intending to exclude the Jews if ever they should return from their captivity. The prophet therefore, by a beautiful personification, addresses the mountains of Israel; and, ascribing to them passions and emotions similar to those of his own breast, consoles them with the prospect of being soon rid of those usurping foes; of being freed from the dishonor of idols under which they groaned; and of flourishing again in their ancient glory under their rightful owners, vv. 1-15. The idolatry and other sins of the Jews are then declared to be the cause of their captivity and dispersion, vv. 16-20; from which however they are promised a deliverance in terms of great force and beauty, vv. 21-38. This chapter contains also, under the type of the happy condition of the Israelites after their restoration from the Babylonish captivity, a glorious prophecy of the rich blessings of the Gospel dispensation.⁴

In chapter 36 we find that Israel’s past sins must be judged and forgiven before she can be restored to the land.⁵

God, Wrath—God’s wrath protects His people from their enemies, protects His holy name from ridicule, and leads His people to repentance and renewal. See note on 5:8-17.

History, National—Israel’s judgment was deserved. Her deliverance was not. God delivered His people from Exile to restore the reputation of His holy name among the nations, to express His jealous wrath against the nations, to make a new covenant relationship which His people would keep, and to cause Israel and the nations to know Him as the only God in control of history. See 1 Ki 20:13, note; Isa 1:24-26, note.

⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Old Testament*

⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 35:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ezekiel 36:1

Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:

The mountains of Israel are personified and what is spoken to them should be understood as happening to and upon them in connection with God's plan for Israel (Ezekiel 36:1-15).

Constable 1-3: Yahweh commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the mountains of Israel (in contrast to Mount Seir, cf. 6:1-14). The reason was threefold. First, Israel's enemy had spoken against her (cursed her, cf. Gen. 12:3) by rejoicing that the everlasting heights (mountains) of the land had come into their possession (cf. 6:3; 20:29). The Hebrew word *bamoth*, usually translated "high places," the places where pagan altars stood in Israel, more generally, and here, refers to the mountains themselves. Second, the enemy of Israel had destroyed her for good reason, namely, her sinfulness. Third, now she was the possession of the nations of the world and the subject of their scorn (cf. Deut. 28:37; Jer. 24:9). They talked publicly and privately about her fate. This prophecy concerns the land of Israel primarily, not the people of Israel.⁶

ESV 1-7: In vv. 1-7 there are a series of nested "because" and "therefore" statements whose relationships are difficult to disentangle, as apparent outcomes simply introduce further grounds. Three factors are intertwined: the encroachment of Israel's enemies, the desolation of the land, and the wrath of God. The enemies come to the fore in vv. 2 and 7, the situation of Israel is the focus of vv. 3-4 and 6, and God's wrath is the theme of v. 5.

Clarke: Prophecy unto the mountains of Israel—This is a part of the preceding prophecy though it chiefly concerns the Jews. In it they are encouraged to expect a glorious restoration, and that none of the evil wishes of their adversaries should take place against them.

LAN: In this prophecy, Ezekiel said that Israel would be restored as a nation and would return to its own land. The mountains were symbolic of Israel's strength (see the note on •Ezekiel 35:6-8). To the exiles in Babylon, this seemed impossible. This message again emphasizes God's sovereignty and trustworthiness. He would first judge the nations used to punish Israel (Ezekiel 36:1-7) and then restore his people (Ezekiel 36:8-15).⁷

WBC 1-7: 1. **The mountains of Israel**, denounced for idolatry in 6:1-7, are granted gracious promises in this chapter. 2. The enemy. Edom and other nations (vv. 3-7). Cf. 35:3, 5, 10, 11. Note that in verses 2-7 "thus saith the Lord" recurs six times. Verses 3-7, 14 all begin with *lākēn*, "therefore." 5. In the fire of my jealousy. Cf. v. 6; 5:13; 23:25; 38:19; 39:25. 6. Cf. verses 2, 3. The shame of the nations. Being scorned by and occupied by them (see v. 2; 34:29). 7. I swear (RSV). Literally, *I lift up my hand* (cf. 20:5, 6).⁸

⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

⁷ Life Application Bible Notes

⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:1). Chicago: Moody Press.

BKC 1-7: God promised to punish Israel's enemies for their sin in hounding, slandering (v. 3), plundering (vv. 4-5), rejoicing over, and having malice against Israel. Therefore God swore with uplifted hand (a gesture accompanying an oath; cf. 20:5, 15, 23; 47:14) that the nations who had scorned her (36:6) will also suffer scorn. Surrounding nations seemed to have triumphed, but their victory was merely temporary. They would suffer for their sin.⁹

OTS Redemption of the Land (36:1-7).

Ezekiel began by describing the plight of the land after the fall of Jerusalem. The enemy coveted and claimed the mountains of Israel as their own. The land was desolate, the cities forsaken. The land had been swallowed up by the nations to which Israel had been prey. Observers now spoke derisively about the land (36:1-4).

How did the Lord react to the plight of the land? He had spoken against the surrounding nations, especially Edom, in the fire of his jealousy or zeal for his people. He regarded with anger the joy of their heart and the disdain of their soul as they contemplated the occupation of Israel. He could not restrain himself when Israel suffered the reproach of the nations. The Lord had taken an oath that the nations would soon bear their own reproach, i.e., they would experience the same fate which Judah had experienced (36:5-7).¹⁰

1-7: The land of Israel itself was addressed—the mountains—because the nations desired to own it and, in seeking possession, destroyed it physically and defamed it verbally. Israel was termed the ancient heights because of the hill country central to its geography. God is glorified and the exiles comforted by the following: (1) exposing the crimes of the enemies of His nation; (2) exonerating His land from false charges (see vv. 13-15); and (3) executing judgment and justice against the foreign nations. Edom: This nation was singled out because of its long history of animosity toward Israel (see 35:5). The rest of the nations were the others who in some way had mistreated Israel and thus received a sentence of judgment (see chs. 25-32).

The “mountains of Israel” represent the nation, land, and people (cf. 6:2, 3). Ezekiel was about to receive a word concerning restoration, but first the fall of the nation was again presented (vv. 1-7).

Daniel: 36:1-7 The Nations Will Be Judged

In Babylon, Ezekiel would have been facing southwest towards Mount Seir as he spoke of Edom's doom. Now, He is instructed to look west to the mountains of Israel, and speak another prophecy.

Israel was to be reminded that the nations who came against them were allowed by God to do so. It was "for good reason" - they had to be judged for their sin.

But they are also told that God is jealous for His people and His land. Those nations who were used to judge the Jews and who sought to take over the land are going to be judged by God for what they have done.

⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:1-7). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 36:1-7). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

The idea of "enduring insults" is placed in juxtaposition in verses six and seven. The Hebrew "naw-SAW kel-im-MAW" literally means "to carry disgrace." The King James translation as translates it as "bear the shame." I think that's probably more all-encompassing than the NAS's "enduring the insults" because there was more disgrace that the Jews endured than just being insulted. The very act of being removed from their land and being brought captive into another nation was a shame.

But God says that they had endured that shame and disgrace from the nations, but soon the roles would be reversed, and the nations would be the ones enduring shame and disgrace.¹¹

Ezekiel 36:2

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession:

ESV: The claim to the ancient heights points back to the intended dispossession of Israel's land, judged in ch. 35.

[Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession] Edom was greatly rejoicing in the fall of Israel. In their own plans they had already divided Israel's land; but Jehovah pronounced judgment upon them so they could not take advantage over Israel as intended (Ezekiel 36:2,5; Ezekiel 35:5).

Because the enemy hath said—The Idumeans thought they would shortly be put in possession of all the strong places of Israel; the ancient high places shall be ours.

LAN: "The ancient heights" refers to the promised land—the land of Israel. Israel's enemies challenged not only their boundaries but also God's promises to Israel.

It took him quite a while to get to the message to the mountains, but he finally made it.

Ezekiel 36:3

Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people:

ESV: The enemy is seen to be legion: they came from all sides, without further identification (until v. 5). The derision (v. 4) inspired by the fall of Israel and Judah will be the closing concern of this oracle (vv. 13–15).

¹¹ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

[talkers] Hebrew: *lashown* (HSN-3956), a fork of flame; babblers; evil speaker; accuser, slanderer; calumniate; wag the tongue. Compare Titus 1:10, the only other place where the word talkers is found.

Ezekiel 36:4

Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that *are* round about;

Constable 4-5: Therefore the sovereign Lord had something to say to the whole land that had fallen prey to Israel's neighbor nations. Because Edom and the other nations had taken over the Lord's land joyfully and had scorned the Israelites, He would pronounce judgment on them in his hot jealousy. The Promised Land was the Lord's land in the same sense that the Sabbath was His day and the tithe was His possession. These parts were not just segments of their wholes over which God claimed ownership, but they represented and illustrated His ownership of all lands, all days, and all possessions. Israel's enemies had dealt with her in their anger and envy (35:11), but now Yahweh would deal with them in His fierce jealousy over Israel's welfare.¹²

[to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken] Six subjects of God's prophecy:

1. To the mountains (Ezekiel 36:4,6)
2. To the hills
3. To the rivers
4. To the valleys
5. To the wastes (Ezekiel 36:4)
6. To the cities that are forsaken

Clarke: Therefore—thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, etc.—They shall neither possess mountain nor valley, hill nor dale, fountain nor river; for though in my justice I made you desolate, yet they shall not profit by your disasters.

Ezekiel 36:5

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all *their* heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

ESV: That the judgment of Edom in ch. 35 was in part exemplary is seen here, as it takes its place within the welter of enemies that came against God's people.

¹² Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

McGee: God is determined that the wicked will not inherit the earth. He has made it clear: "... the meek ... shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). The meek are not inheriting it today. The wicked are the ones who have it, and they are the ones who are prospering.

This chapter contains the prophecy concerning the fact that the land of Israel is to be restored. All you have to do is drive through that land, and you will know this prophecy is not yet fulfilled. A great many people like to think they see prophecy being fulfilled on every hand, but when *God* brings them back to the land, the land is to be *blessed*. It is not blessed today, my friend.¹³

God, Jealous—Zeal and jealousy are translations of the same Hebrew word. See note on 16:38.

Ezekiel 36:6

Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

Constable 6-7: Ezekiel was to announce to the whole Promised Land that Yahweh had spoken in His jealousy and wrath because Israel had suffered the insults of the nations (cf. Gen. 12:3). The nations round about Israel would surely have to endure the consequences of their insults against Israel.¹⁴

6-8: "For they are at hand to come" could be translated "For they are *soon* to come." "Soon" to God is different from what it is to us; after all, a day is as a thousand years with Him.

Ezekiel 36:7

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that *are* about you, they shall bear their shame.

[**lifted up mine hand**] This was a sign of swearing, or making an oath or solemn vow.

Ezekiel 36:8

But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.

they are about to come: This was spoken to the land, picturing it as eagerly awaiting the quick return of its rightful and most respectful owners. The first return from exile would come under the Persian king Cyrus, about 50 years later (538 B.C.).

¹³ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 36:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁴ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

Chuck Smith 8-11: And so the restoration of the nation Israel is here being prophesied. And if you go over to Israel today, surely you can see the fulfillment of these prophecies as the waste places are now inhabited. As they have built so many cities, as they have planted so many beautiful orchards and cultivated the fields, and this land that laid wasted and desolate for many centuries has now been reclaimed. The marshy valleys have been drained and have become very fertile, fruitful fields. And so, it's exciting to take this thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel in your lap and go over to Israel and see how God has fulfilled this particular prophecy concerning the mountains of Israel.¹⁵

Constable 8-9: Verses 8-15 contain four promises concerning the land. First, the land would become productive because the Israelites would soon come back into the land. Yahweh assured the land that He was for it, He would bless it, and it would become cultivated again instead of desolate and uninhabited. Formerly the Lord had said that He was against Mount Seir (35:3).¹⁶

ESV 8-15: **But you** signals a transition: although the address has been to the “mountains of Israel,” now the focus is on Israel's promising future, rather than its bleak, enemy-ridden past. As in the “covenant of peace” (34:25-30), the prosperity of people is bound up with the bounty of the land. Verses 8-11 of ch. 36 present a series of blessings, reminiscent of the restoration of Job 42 as the new exceeds the old. The people themselves become the focus of Ezek. 36:12, reiterating right ownership (cf. v. 2).

Clarke: For they are at hand to come—The restoration of the Jews is so absolutely determined that you may rest assured it will take place; and be as confident relative to it, as if you saw the different families entering into the Israelitish borders. It was near at hand in God's determination, though there were about fifty-eight of the seventy years unelapsed.

WBC Restoration of Israel. 36:8-15.

In the approaching age of the regeneration, the land will be fruitful (vv. 8, 9); populous (vv. 10-12); free from scarcity (vv. 13, 14); and free from reproach (v. 15). Cf. Isa 54:1-8.

8. For they (my people Israel) are at hand to come from exile. Cf. 4:5, 6. 10. All the house of Israel. Both Israel and Judah (cf. 37:16ff.). 11. As in your former times (RSV). At the time of the Exodus (Hos 11:1-4; Jer 2:1-3, 6, 7).

12b, 13, 14. The mountains, scourged by famine or wild beasts, are compared to beast of prey and said to devour their inhabitants or to bereave their nation (cf. Num 13:32). In Ezk 36:13, 14, 15 Israel is called a *gôy* or nation, the usual designation for the heathen (cf. 2:3). Read the word as a singular, along with the Hebrew marginal *kftîb* and the versions. 15. Shame ... reproach. Occupation by hostile neighbors (v. 6), destitution and impoverishment (v. 30).

¹⁵ Chuck Smith, Notes on Ezekiel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries

¹⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

BKC 8-12: In contrast with the judgment about to be inflicted on Israel's enemies, Israel herself could look forward to restoration and blessing. In a reversal of the catastrophe that God had earlier called against the mountains of Israel (6:1-7), He said the mountains will produce branches and fruit for His people ... will soon come home. God will restore the land so that it can provide for the restored remnant.

God's blessing will involve numerical growth, for the number of people will be multiplied. The nation that had been decimated in the land (6:3, 5-7) will replenish it. Israel's latter state will be far superior to her former. When God finally restores the people to the land He will prosper the land; He guarantees the permanence of this arrangement. Once Israel is restored to the land her inheritance will be secure. The land will never again deprive Israel of her children. Rather than being a cruel wilderness with drought, famine, and death (cf. Lev. 26:18-22; Num. 13:32; Deut. 28:20-24), it will be a place of blessing. This will take place when Israel possesses her land during Christ's millennial reign.¹⁷

At this point Ezekiel received a more hopeful message. Israel was to be restored by the power of God after the Exile. In the coming day of restoration, the land again will be populated, enjoying fruitfulness and peace (v. 11; cf. Eccl 7:8).

Daniel 8-11: The Mountains Will Bear Fruit

The prophesy towards the mountains of Israel continues with God promising that the land would become fruitful, in preparation for the return of the Jews from Babylon. When the people of Israel come back, the mountains will once again be inhabited, increasing in population and fruitfulness.¹⁸

OTS Repopulation of the Land (36:8–15).

Yahweh is now *for* the land. Therefore the land of Israel would yet be tilled and sown, would yet be fruitful. God's people were about to return to that land. The Lord would multiply "all the house of Israel" upon that land. Cities would be inhabited, waste places built up. Men and cattle would be multiplied so that the land would be inhabited as in former times. In fact, the Lord promised to treat the land better than he had treated it before. Those who repopulate the desolate land would be "my people Israel." God would cause his people to walk on that land, to possess it. The land would again be their inheritance. No more would those hills rob God's people of their children through war, pestilence or famine. This turn of fortune would help the people have a better perspective on the true nature of God (36:8–12).

A popular saying about the land would be silenced in that day. Because of what had happened to those who dwelled there, people were saying to the land: "You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children." That may have been true once, but not any more. No longer would the land hear the insults of surrounding nations. The land would not again devour its people because she would never again cause the nation which dwelled upon it to stumble into idolatry. The same judgment which

¹⁷ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:8–12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁸ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

devastated Judah, devastated the Canaanite population which had led God's people so frequently into sin (36:13–15).¹⁹

God, Grace—God turns from His wrath to renew His people in His grace. See note on 20:17.

Revelation, Author of Hope—The God of redemption and hope declared Israel's future to be good, beginning with the land and its yield, and the people and their development. The fulfillment of His promises would introduce Him anew to His people. See note on 34:25-31.

Ezekiel 36:9

For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

Clarke: Ye shall be tilled and sown—The land shall be cultivated as it formerly was, when best peopled and at peace.

Ezekiel 36:10

And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:

Constable 10-11: Second, the Lord promised to fill all the land with Israelites, to enable them to live in their cities and rebuild the places that had become ruins (cf. 6:3, 5-7). Earlier the Lord promised to desolate all the land of Edom (35:15) and to lay waste her cities (35:4). The mountains of Israel would again become populated with people and animals that would become fruitful and multiply. The Lord would bless them more greatly than ever before. Then His people would know that He is God.²⁰

This restoration would involve all the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 36:11

And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

I will multiply upon you man and beast—The agriculturalist and the beast of burden.

And will do better unto you than at your beginnings—I agree with Calmet, that it would be difficult to show the literal fulfillment of this prophecy from the days of

¹⁹ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 36:8–15). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

²⁰ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

Zerubbabel to the birth of Christ. The colouring is too high for that period; and the whole falls in better with Gospel than with Jewish times.

Ezekiel 36:12

Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, *even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.*

Constable 12: Third, the Lord would cause the people of Israel to take possession of these mountains as their inheritance and never leave them again (cf. Gen. 12:7). The Edomites had formerly determined to possess these mountains (35:10).

My people Israel: Despite all their sinfulness, which the book has taken enormous pains to detail and describe, the nation was still referred to as the people of God. They would finally and forever take possession of their land, symbolized by the mountains and the central hills of Palestine, which are personified as **you** in this verse.

Daniel 12-15 Bereaving Them Of Children

God has made promises of fruitfulness and habitation regarding the mountains of Israel, but it is interesting to read what else God has to say about these mountains: they had bereaved the Jews of children and were devourers of men. They had caused the nations to stumble. What do these things that mean?

Some commentators say that the "devourers of men" refers to the fact that no matter who lived in this land, they were consumed. The Canaanites were driven out by the Jews, and then the Jews were driven out by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

However, I think that in context the key is the children. "Shaw-KOLE" in Hebrew means "to make childless." You see, the law spoke of people being childless when they violated the commands of God (Lev. 20:20-21). If they obeyed the law, then God would bless the fruit of their wombs (Deut. 7:13).

What did this have to do with the mountains? God said through Hosea the prophet,

Hos. 4:12-13 *My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and they have played the harlot, departing from their God. They offer sacrifices on the tops of the mountains and burn incense on the hills...*

There was also a more insidious way that the mountains were making people childless. Often, the Jews who fell into idolatry would make their children into sacrifices for their false gods. This was the very thing to which God attributed the Assyrian Captivity:

2Kings 17:17-18 *Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him. So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah.*

We were reminded of this in chapter 20, when the Lord said,

Ezek. 20:28-31 *"When I had brought them into the land which I swore to give to them, then they saw every high hill and every leafy tree, and they*

offered there their sacrifices and there they presented the provocation of their offering. There also they made their soothing aroma and there they poured out their drink offerings. Then I said to them, 'What is the high place to which you go?' So its name is called Bamah to this day." Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and play the harlot after their detestable things? When you offer your gifts, when you cause your sons to pass through the fire, you are defiling yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you."

So, in that sense, the mountains of Israel devoured men, made people childless, and caused the nation to stumble (This idea is also confirmed in verses 17 and 18). It would seem that God's promise is that the mountains of Israel would no longer be used for this sort of idolatry. And indeed, we have not seen idolatry of this kind in Israel since the Jews returned from the Babylonian Captivity.²¹

And now God is telling the reason why the land became desolate for so long.

Ezekiel 36:13

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou *land* devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations;

Constable 13-15: The nations had accused the Promised Land of devouring its inhabitants (cf. Num. 13:32), but Yahweh would see that it no longer did that.

Fourth, He would not allow the Israelites to hear insults from their neighbors any longer, to bear disgrace any longer, or to stumble in their affairs any longer. He would restore them to their prestigious position as His Chosen People (cf. Deut. 28:13; Zech. 8:13, 20-23).

All the connections between how God would deal with Israel relative to the nations illustrate the retributive justice of God. He would deal with the enemies of His people as they had dealt with Israel, and He would bless Israel in the very ways the nations sought to humiliate Israel.

A typical covenant theology interpretation follows.

From the perspective of the New Testament, these promises all apply to the church as the new Israel. How could such seemingly materialistic images have relevance for God's people who are not a single earthly nation farming in a single part of the world? The answer is that they apply literally but not literalistically. The church may take great comfort in the fulfillment of the sort of greatness, confidence, certainty of success, and ultimate victory over all its foes that such a compound oracle (i.e., 35:1—36:15) guarantees. . . . We may instead rejoice that God has had in mind for us things that the eye had not seen nor the ear heard (1 Cor. 2:9)—things that the present description of the abundance of the mountains of Israel is intended only to symbolize.²²

²¹ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

²² Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

ESV 13–14: The identity of the “mountains” with the “land” is seen here: the **you** of v. 13 is plural, but the **you** addressed in v. 14 is feminine singular, referring to the land (soil) of Israel (v. 6). The long history of unsettled relationship between people and land will no longer hold in God's restoration—a vision to sustain future hope.

BKC 13-15: Besides punishing Israel's enemies (vv. 1-7) and restoring Israel's land (vv. 8-12), God will also remove Israel's reproach (vv. 13-15). The mockery and humiliation (taunts and scorn) Israel had been forced to endure (vv. 3-6) will cease (cf. 16:57-58). She will once again be restored to her position of prestige as God's Chosen People (cf. Deut. 28:13; Zech. 8:13, 20-23).²³

Ezekiel 36:14

Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 36:15

Neither will I cause *men* to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.

The reproach that went beyond insulting people to dishonoring God is also consigned to the past.

The mountains addressed as you would no longer cause the nation to stumble, for God would make the nation secure from foreign armies. God Himself would reestablish the nation and place His prince on its throne (see 34:24).

Ezekiel 36:16

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Constable 16-17: The Lord told Ezekiel that when the Israelites had lived in the Promised Land they had defiled it by the way they lived. They resembled a woman during her menstrual period who defiled everything she touched (cf. Lev. 15:19-23; Isa. 64:6).

ESV 16–38: Restoration for the Sake of God's Name. This key passage sets out in concentrated form Ezekiel's entire theology. It is one of the primary restoration passages, though it also contains an analysis of human failure that calls for divine judgment. It carries forward some ideas from the preceding “mountain” oracles, in particular the joint restoration of land and people, and the silencing of blasphemous taunts. Far

²³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:13–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

overshadowing these, however, are the towering claims of the supremacy of a holy God. The impurity of God's people impelled him to scatter them (vv. 16–21). This in turn led to derision (v. 20), so in order to vindicate his reputation, God was moved to act on behalf of his people (vv. 22–32). The restoration of the land of Israel silences the nations, compelling them to recognize the true God (vv. 33–36), just as the flourishing of Israel confirms their recognition of their own God (vv. 37–38).

ESV 16–21: State of Impurity. With v. 15 ending on the note of reproach being lifted, this return to scrutinize Israel's failings initially jars. However, this account of Israel's impurity is the basis on which God's intervention to restore his people must be understood. The metaphor of menstrual impurity (v. 17; see Lev. 15:19–30) is likewise jarring, but Ezekiel uses it for at least two reasons: (1) it accords with his earlier portrayals of the abandoned child (Ezekiel 16) and the sisters (ch. 23), and (2) it emphasizes Israel's defiling the sacred. That is, the activity used as a metaphor for Israel's sin is not a criminal or moral failure so much as a willful disregard of the holiness of God. However, the judgment itself (36:18–19) resulted in God's holiness being yet further profaned (v. 20). So God looked now to his own interests (v. 21).

WBC 3) Restoration of the People of Israel: Restoration Inward. 36:16-38.

This section containing a divinely imparted philosophy of history declares that Israel's sins deserved the chastisement of exile (vv. 16-21); but that the Lord will restore Israel, not because of any merit of hers, but to sanctify his name. The glorious accompaniments of the restoration are enumerated (vv. 22-32). In two appendices the Lord foretells that Israel's prosperity and increased population will cause the nations to acknowledge His greatness (vv. 33-36, 37, 38).

Verses 16-23 constitute the prophetic lesson or *haphtarah* to the weekly Sabbath reading, Num 19:1–22:1, the *Pārah*, “The Red Cow.”²⁴

WBC Israel Exiled for Her Sins. 36:16-21.

17. **The uncleanness of a ... woman.** A figure for idolatry. Compare 7:19; 18:6. (For the figure, see Lev 15:19ff.) 18. Idols (*gillûlîm*). Cf. 6:4; 20:7, 8; 30:13. 20. Profaned my holy name. Israel's exiling led to the profanation of the Lord's holy name by the nations. Note the expression “my holy name” in verses 20-23. Cf. discussion at 20:9, 14, 22. The people of the Lord. Cf. Ex 6:7; Lev 20:24; Deut 4:20; 7:6.²⁵

BKC 16-21: Before dwelling on Israel's future cleansing, Ezekiel reminded the exiles of their past sin which caused their judgment. When they were ... in the land, they defiled it by their conduct and actions (cf. v. 19). This profaning was like a menstrual discharge that rendered a woman ceremonially unclean and defiled everything she touched (cf. Lev. 15:19-23). How did the people defile the land? By bloodshed and idolatry (cf. Ezek.

²⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:8–16). Chicago: Moody Press.

²⁵ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:16–22). Chicago: Moody Press.

33:25). As a result God removed them from the defiled land. Yet even when scattered among other nations, they profaned God's holy name.²⁶

Again may I emphasize that the land and the people belong together. The Mosaic Law was not only given to a people, it was given for a land.²⁷

OTS Purification of the Land (36:16–38).

When the house of Israel was living in their own land they defiled it by their ways and deeds. Their idolatry rendered the land as unclean as a menstruous woman before God. From Canaanite religion the Israelites learned calloused disregard for human life. Because of the blood shed on the land, God poured out his wrath upon his people. He scattered them among the nations. He judged them according to their ways. This judgment, however, resulted in the profanation of God's name among the nations. Gentiles mocked a God who would allow his people to be cast forth from their land. God was concerned about his "holy name," i.e., his reputation (36:16–21).

Israel was totally undeserving of any favorable action on the part of the Lord. Yet he was about to act for the sake of his holy name. What God planned to do would vindicate the holiness of his great name which had been profaned among the nations. Gentiles would come to realize that Yahweh was God when he demonstrated his holiness by acting in grace on behalf of his people (36:22f.).

What dramatic move did God plan to make? He would gather up his people and bring them back to their land. He would then cleanse his people from the filthiness of idolatry. Like a priest performing a purification rite the Lord would sprinkle clean water upon them. From those purified souls the Lord would remove the heart of stone, i.e., obstinate heart, and replace it with a "new heart, a heart of flesh," i.e., one which was tender and responsive. He would fill them with a "new spirit," his Holy Spirit which would enable them to walk in his statutes. This new people would be conscientious about observing all of the divine ordinances (36:24–27).

Ezekiel outlined several consequences of the regeneration of Israel. They would dwell in the land which God had given their fathers. They would enjoy a very special relationship with the Lord. God would save them from uncleanness, i.e., help them to overcome it. God would restore fertility to the land. He would speak to the grain on their behalf. There would be no more famine, and no more reproach caused by famine. On the contrary, God would increase for them the "fruit of the tree and the produce of the field." Overwhelmed by the love of God, the redeemed would loathe their former life of sin; they would be ashamed and confounded because of their ways. They would understand the grace of God (36:28–32).

The land as well as the people would be restored. The regenerate people would repopulate the desolate land of Canaan. Cities would be inhabited and fortified. The land would be tilled. Those who passed by would marvel at the beauty of the place, comparing it hyperbolically to the garden of Eden. The restored land would bear testimony to the power and faithfulness of God (36:33–36).

²⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:16–21). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 36:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The restored people of God would pray for an increase in the population. God would answer that prayer. He would increase their numbers like a holy flock such as filled Jerusalem during festivals. The waste cities would be filled with flocks of men. This glorious increase in the numbers of the people of God would give further insight into the true nature of Yahweh (36:37–38).²⁸

Daniel 16-19: Like The Uncleaness Of A Woman

The word picture God uses is quite disgusting. You may recall that a woman was considered to be unclean during menstruation (Lev. 12:1-8; 15:25-30) and not to have relations with her husband (Lev. 20:18). God equates the blood shed on the land of Israel from their idolatrous human sacrifices to the blood of a woman in that state. He says that the Jews' sinful ways were like a woman's uncleaness, and they were judged for it.²⁹

Ezekiel 36:17

Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleaness of a removed woman.

Chuck Smith 17-22: Now the Lord is telling the reason why the dispersion took place and they were scattered is because of the blood that they had shed in the land, because of their worship of idols, and God had scattered them into the many different countries. But God said when they were scattered they profaned God's name. That is, because of their actions and attitudes they caused people to hate and curse God. They said, "Oh, these are the people of God and look at what they are doing."

And so, you remember when David sinned with Bathsheba, when the prophet rebuked David for this sin, one of the indictments that the prophet made against him is he said, "You have caused the enemies of God to blaspheme." You see, these people were to be God's representatives. God intended that they represent Him. But they misrepresented Him. And thus, people were cursing God because of their actions. You say, "Oh, that's terrible." But wait a minute. You are now God's representatives. You see, you go by the name of a Christian and as a Christian you represent God. But if you're out there ripping off people or cheating people or you're out there lying or deceiving or getting involved in these kind of things, then you are misrepresenting God and people are cursing God and blaspheming God because of what you are. You see, God has been so misrepresented by those people who were called by His name. All the way through people have a false concept of God because people supposedly representing God have so misrepresented God that people say, "Well, if they're a Christian then I don't want anything to do with it. I don't need it." It is an awesome thing to realize that we are God's representatives and people are drawing their opinions of God from what they see in us.

Now as a representative of God, God holds me responsible for how I represent Him. God doesn't appreciate being misrepresented. As Moses found out. For when Moses went out before the people angry and struck the rock with his rod and said, "Must I strike this rock again and give you water?" Though the water came, God said, "Moses, I want to talk

²⁸ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 36:16–38). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

²⁹ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

to you. Moses, I can't let you go into the Promise Land." "Why, Lord? That's been the ambition of my life." "Moses, you failed to represent Me before the people. You misrepresented Me out there. You went out there all angry in a huff, smiting the rock in anger. I'm not angry with them, Moses. They think I am because of what you did. They think I'm upset with them and angry. I'm not upset and angry with them, Moses. I know they need water. I want to give them water. But they think I'm angry and upset because you're My representative and you went out there in a huff and did your little thing. And so, Moses, I just can't let you take the people into the land." And Moses was robbed of his lifelong ambition because he failed to represent God there at the water of Meribah. Now you are God's representative and that's a heavy responsibility to be God's representative, but that's what we are. And the people are drawing their conclusion of Christianity, of Jesus Christ, from what they see you do. That's heavy. God help us that we will be proper representatives of our Lord. That people will come to know that He is so loving, that He is so kind, that He wants to help, that He will go out of His way to help. And let us, O God, be a true representation of what You are to the world around us who so desperately need to know the truth about God.

Paul writing to the Corinthians said, "You are my living epistle, and you are known and read of all men" (II Corinthians 3:2). People may never pick up a Bible to crack its pages, they may never read the Bible, but they're reading your life. And they're drawing their opinions of Jesus Christ by what they see in you.

Now, God said when Israel was scattered into the nations, they profaned the name of the Lord. They caused people to hate God. They didn't represent God in those nations where they were scattered, and so people were cursing God and cursing the name of God. And so God now declares, "Look, not for your sake I'm going to bring you back. Not because you're so good or you're deserving, but for My name's sake I'm going to do it. My name that has been profaned among the heathen."

"And thus saith the Lord God," verse 22, "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake which you have profaned."³⁰

Missler: This is where it is most evident that there is a shift of emphasis, style and focus on the part of the Lord's message through Ezekiel. It is all building up to Chapter 37, the Vision of the Dry Bones.

It is exciting because we have seen the prophecy of Ezekiel fulfilled in our day, before our very eyes. To make it more dramatic, just read some of the learned commentaries over the last several centuries which claimed that it would never happen.

Yet, it is happening in our lifetime! There are a dozen chapters leading up to this, showing what Israel was in terms of her defilement in the land.³¹

[they defiled it by their own way and by their doings] In Ezekiel 36:17-21 we have the cause of God in scattering Israel among the heathen, and a preview of their lives while among them. In a technical sense this section is prophecy, the purpose of the message being to show latter-day dealings with Israel; but the events are recorded as having already been fulfilled. They will have taken place by the time of the fulfillment of

³⁰ Chuck Smith, Notes on Ezekiel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries

³¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Ezekiel 36:22-38, but in Ezekiel's day they were only partially fulfilled, for the rest of Israel was yet to be scattered among the nations.

When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land—Had they continued faithful to me, they had never been removed from it: but they polluted it with their crimes; and I abhorred the land on that account, and gave both them and it up to the destroyers.

like the uncleanness of a woman: The uncleanness of the blood of menstruation (not the woman herself) was compared to the past behavior of Israel in Canaan (see 18:6; 22:10; Lev. 12:2–5; 15:19–30).

Ezekiel 36:18

Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it:

Constable 18-19: Yahweh had poured out His wrath on them because of their bloodshed and idolatry. He had judged them for their deeds by scattering them among the nations (cf. Deut. 29:1—30:10).

Israel had defiled God's territorial gift in two main ways: (1) The nation had **shed** innocent people's **blood**. (2) The nation had worshiped **idols** by mixing the true worship of the Lord God with involvement in the idolatrous and immoral practices of pagan religions.

Ezekiel 36:19

And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

This is not just Babylon we are looking at. Note that the text says "nations," it is plural, and "countries," plural.

God **judged them according to their ways**. Israel had been hypocritical and unholy; they had not separated themselves or made themselves distinct from the pagan world around them (see v. 18). God had given His people the Promised Land as a place where they could show the world the difference it makes to follow the true God (see Deut. 7:1–11). They failed to follow God, so He forced them out of the land. Through either their obedience or their disobedience, God would demonstrate to the watching world His personality, power, and plans.

Ezekiel 36:20

And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These *are* the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

Constable 20-21: Their dispersion made Yahweh look impotent since the nations concluded that He could not keep them safe in His land. The Lord had risked His reputation by driving Israel out of the land, but He cared about His reputation, which the Israelites had made common. We need to remember that how Christians represent God by our words and deeds likewise concerns Him (cf. Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2).

Israel was guilty of two great sins, the first of which was *polluting God's land* (vv. 16-19).

Their second sin was that of *profaning God's name before the Gentiles* (Ezek. 36:20-23).³²

Clarke: And when they entered unto the heathen—So bad were they, and so deeply fallen, that they profaned the Lord's name among the heathen; and, on their account, the true God was blasphemed. These, say they, are the people of Jehovah! O what an abominable people are these! and what a being must that God be who can have and own such for his people!

God, Holy—God's people are His only representatives that many people see. When we sin, we profane His name before the peoples. God acts to defend His holy name. He wants all people to know the awesome holiness which separates Him from all other gods. See note on 20:12, 14, 40, 41.

Daniel 20-23: God's Concern For His Name

The Jews were carried off into captivity, which made the other nations say, "What's the deal? Aren't these 'God's people'? If their God is so great, then why were we able to remove 'God's people' from 'God's land' that He supposedly gave to them?"

God's response is that He would not tolerate this profaning of His name. He tells Israel that He is about to act - not for their sake, but for the sake of His name. He is going to "vindicate the holiness" of His name. In Hebrew, that is just the one word (Kaw-DASH), meaning "make holy, consecrate, sanctify." God is going to insure that His name is set apart from all the other so-called gods of the nations. He is going to prove Himself strong by bringing the Jews back into the land in plain sight of the nations.³³

³² Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

³³ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

Ezekiel 36:21

But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.

[I had pity for mine holy name] (Dake) This is a peculiar expression, indicating that God was zealous to protect His holy name from being profaned by Israel among the heathen. Compare this with the idea of God working to clear His name from being polluted among pagans (Ezekiel 36:20; Ezekiel 20:9,14,22). The thought here seems to be that Israel caused the name of Jehovah to be blasphemed and dishonored among the nations where they were scattered. The pagans would say with scorn, These are the people of Jehovah. They saw the miserable state of Israel and concluded that Jehovah was no more than a national god, powerless to protect his subjects. God then predicted that He would not deliver Israel for their own sake, but for His holy name's sake, which they had profaned among the nations (Ezekiel 36:22); that He would sanctify His name among the heathen; and that they would then know that He was Jehovah and more than an idol god (Ezekiel 36:23). Sanctifying His name is the opposite of profaning it as in Ezekiel 36:20-22.

LAN 21-23: Why did God want to protect his holy name—his reputation—among the nations of the world? God was concerned about the salvation not only of his people, but also of the whole world. To allow his people to remain in sin and be permanently destroyed by their enemies would lead other nations to conclude that their pagan gods were more powerful than Israel's God (Isaiah 48:11). Thus, to protect his holy name, God would return a remnant of his people to their land. God will not share his glory with false gods—he alone is the one true God. The people had the responsibility to represent God properly to the rest of the world. Believers today have that same responsibility. How do you represent God to the world?

McGee 21-23: You see, God has yet to defend His name in this earth. There are a great many people who ridicule the church today and the people who are in it. They blaspheme God because of it. God is going to justify Himself in this earth, and he is going to sanctify His name down here. Many take His name in vain today, but God says, "That's going to stop, and you are going to honor Me." This is *His* world, you see.³⁴

The most tragic outcome of Israel's sin (see vv. 18, 19) was that the nation profaned God's holy name. Defeat and dispersion, especially in the ancient world, were negative reflections on the character (or the *name*, see 20:9) of a nation's god. God's reputation as wholly set apart from other so-called gods in power and purpose was compromised by Israel's refusal to trust in His ways, whether in their own land or in exile. To rescue His holy reputation and His rebellious people, God remained faithful to His promises in the Mosaic covenant.

³⁴ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 36:23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The method of Israel's restoration 36:22-32

The next verses in the chapter are among the most glorious in the entire range of revealed truth on the subject of Israel's restoration to the Lord and national conversion.

Ezekiel 36:22

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

The issue here was not the partiality towards Israel. The issue is God's glory. The fact that they were called by His Name gives God an equity in how they represent Him. [How about in us?]

Constable 22-23: Ezekiel was to tell the Israelites that it was in spite of them that He would act for them; He would deliver them for the sake of His own reputation that they had profaned (cf. 20:39). He would vindicate His reputation as being a holy (unique) God when He proved Himself such in the sight of the nations (cf. Exod. 5:2; 9:16; 32:11-18; Lev. 18:21; 20:3; 22:31-33; Num. 14:13-19; Deut. 29:1—30:10).³⁵

ESV 22–32 Divine Intervention: A New Spirit. This theologically central passage is often compared to Jeremiah's "new covenant" text (Jer. 31:31–34; cf. 32:36–41). The overtones carried by Jeremiah's language resonate with political loyalty. Ezekiel's overtones, by contrast, have to do with ritual purity, as Ezek. 36:17–19 bears out. The structure of this passage reinforces its message. The outer verses relate the responses of God (vv. 22–23) and people (vv. 31–32). Nested within the next layer are the movements of return and purification brought about in renewal (vv. 24–25, 28–30). At the heart of the passage is the divine gift of the new heart and spirit, which enables right response (vv. 26–27). The physical return was only the beginning of the fulfillment for these prophecies.

ESV 22–23 It is not for your sake. The fundamental reason given for God's acting on Israel's behalf is not grace and mercy (though it is gracious and merciful) but to uphold the sanctity and greatness of God's reputation: but for the sake of my holy name. Although the "recognition formula" (will know that I am the Lord, v. 23; cf. Introduction: Style) is used repeatedly throughout the book of Ezekiel, here its significance is made plain. It is not just that Israel's God is "great" and "holy"; it is also imperative that God be given the recognition and respect, indeed the honor, that he is due. To vindicate the holiness of God's *great name* is also to "hallow his great name" (cf. Matt. 6:9) and is contrasted to "profaning his name" (i.e., treating it, and so him, as not holy).

BKC 22-23: Other nations viewed the sovereign God through the actions of Israel, thus besmirching His holy name. Therefore God said He would restore Israel ... not for her sake ... but for the sake of His holy name. Israel had no intrinsic value which prompted God to act on her behalf. He would restore the nation because His character was at stake.

³⁵ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

He would show the holiness of His great name (cf. 20:41; 28:22, 25; 38:16; 39:27). God had shown His justice when He punished Israel for her sin; He will show His grace and faithfulness when He restores her and renews His covenant promises.³⁶

The preview of the return to the **land** in the Mosaic covenant is related to the promise of perpetual—but not necessarily uninterrupted—possession of the land of Canaan in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:14–18; 15:12–21; Hos. 3:4).

Ezekiel knew that God’s action was just. As he looked at the people, he saw little evidence that God could return them to the land in justice in their spiritual condition. However, God was always faithful to His covenant, and He would restore them to the land for His “holy name’s sake.” Restoration was not because of the merit of Israel, but rather because of God’s holy name. This verse is crucially important. Opponents of millennial truths often suggest that premillennialists believe that God is partial to Israel, demonstrating greater love for them than for the Gentiles. This, they argue, must be so if God deals with Israel as a nation in the future. However, God’s program for Israel does not grow out of superior merit on the part of Israel, but rather is the result of God’s grace. Nor does this action reflect partiality in God. What God does for Israel, He does because He is a faithful God and will perform what He promised in antiquity (cf. 37:11, note).

Revelation, History—The release from Babylonian captivity would be God’s revelation of Himself to the nations to carry out His purposes and honor His name. God redeemed not because of Israel’s behavior or repentance but because of His character. His historical revelation occurred to continue His purposes in the original Exodus—to create a loyal people for Himself (Eze 11:20; Ex 6:7).

Ezekiel 36:23

And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

So He refers to this time when He will be sanctified in them before the eyes of the world. We’ll get to that when we get to chapter 38.

Fifty-four times Ezekiel says, “And they shall know that I am the Lord.” This phrase is not just directed at Israel. What happens in Chapters 38 and 39 is that the whole world will know that God has once again put His Hand on Israel.

[I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes] Two things sanctified:

1. I will sanctify My great name.
2. I will be sanctified in you God's name and His person were to be sanctified, though neither was involved with any sin.

³⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:22–23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Clarke: I will sanctify my great name—By changing your hearts and your conduct, I shall show my hatred to vice, and my love to holiness: but it is not for your sakes, but for my holy name’s sake, that I shall do you good in your latter days.

WBC: I will sanctify. Or set apart as sacred. The return of Israel after her chastisement will make manifest to the nations that the Lord is the supreme and holy God, and that he desires to reveal himself to all the world. See also verse 36; 29:6; 37:28; 39:7; Mal 1:11; Eph 1:3-10.

The next passage, verses 25-29, though referring primarily to Israel, is used in Christian liturgy, and is dear to the whole church.³⁷

Ezekiel 36:24

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Missler: I recommend that you mark that verse. It is the simplest, crispest description of the return of Israel to the Land of Israel.

“I will take you from among the Nations” plural. This is not talking about Babylon; that was a singular. “From among the nations” and “out of all countries” - from Ethiopia, the Soviet Union, from all over the world! They will be gathered out of all countries and brought into whose land, “your own land.” And there is no “West Bank” there. It is called Judea and Samaria. The media has fallen into the opponent’s trap of referring to it idiomatically as the West Bank.

Chapter 36 is the acid test of taking prophecy literally. I do not believe you can read this chapter any other way than to recognize we are talking about a literal Israel, a literal land, and a literal spiritual regeneration.

God’s motive: His glory (verse 22); Israel will ultimately know the Lord their God (verse 38); and they will have an abhorrence for their sins; and secular humanism will give way to the recognition of their sinfulness and their need for God’s mercy. Their forgiveness will be realized; regeneration will be effective; and the gift of the Holy Spirit will be granted to them.

No Old Testament prophet was more precise in terms of defining the role of the Holy Spirit in regeneration than Ezekiel was in this chapter.³⁸

Constable 24-25: The Lord promised, first, to take the Israelites from all the nations, to regather them, and to bring them back into their land (cf. 11:16-17; 20:34; 34:13; 37:21). He would then, second, purify His people and cleanse them from all their former uncleanness (cf. v. 17; 11:18; Exod. 12:22; Lev. 14:4-7; Ps. 51:7; Jer. 31:31-34; 1 Cor. 6:11). Justification, not sanctification, is in view.⁴⁹⁸

The new exodus motif occurs ten times in Ezekiel, but it gains increasing prominence in the restoration oracles.³⁹

³⁷ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament (Eze 36:23)*. Chicago: Moody Press.

³⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

ESV 24–25 The restoration of God's reputation first requires the external renovation of his people. God's actions are naturally sequential: gathering and return (v. 24) precede cleansing (v. 25). Purification with clean water echoes God's earlier cleansing of his people (16:4, 9) and once again relates to ritual cleansing in the Mosaic law (cf., e.g., Lev. 17:15–16; 22:6; Num. 19:19–21). The reference to cleansing by sprinkling “clean water on you” recalls the cleansing by sprinkling for touching a dead body (Num. 19:13, 20), perhaps suggesting that the idols of Ezek. 36:25 are comparable to dead things. Many interpreters see this picture of cleansing by water as the background to Jesus' words in John 3:5, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”; cf. the mention of “my Spirit” in Ezek. 36:27. Thus, Ezekiel's prophecy refers both to outward cleansing by a ceremony and to inward, spiritual cleansing.

[gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land] God has said repeatedly that He will gather all Israel, not only Judah, but all the tribes from among the nations and bring them back to their own land to live forever under the Messiah. See Future.

Clarke: I will take you from among the heathen—This does not relate to the restoration from Babylon merely. The Jews are at this day scattered in all Heathen, Mohammedan, and Christian countries. From these they are to be gathered, and brought to repossess their own land.

BKC 24-32: The means God will use to show His holiness are explained in these verses. He will first restore the nation physically: He will gather her from all the countries and bring her back into her own land (v. 24). Headlining God's future program will be the restored nation of Israel.

However, Israel's restoration will be more than physical. God promised, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. This did not refer to water baptism. In Old Testament times sprinkling or washing with water pictured cleansing from ceremonial defilement (cf. Lev. 15:21-22; Num. 19:17-19). Since Israel's sin was like the ceremonial impurity of menstruation (Ezek. 36:17) her cleansing was now compared to the ceremonial act of purification. The point is that God will purify Israel from her sins. This cleansing will be followed by the impartation of new life. God will give the converted nation a new heart and ... a new spirit. In place of a heart of stone He will give Israel a heart of flesh (cf. 11:19). With God's Spirit indwelling them (cf. 37:14), they will be motivated to obey His decrees and laws (cf. 37:24). God's restoration will not simply be an undoing of Israel's sin to bring her to a state of neutrality. Rather it will involve the positive implanting of a new nature in Israel's people that will make them righteous. Jeremiah called this work of God the “New Covenant” (cf. comments on Jer. 31:31-33).

Implanting God's Spirit in believing Israelites will produce a new relationship between Israel and her God: You will be My people, and I will be your God (cf. Ezek.

³⁹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes.htm>

11:20; 14:11; 37:23, 27). God will extend all His graciousness to His people. Being delivered from their sin, they will experience the bountiful provision of the land including grain ... fruit, and crops (cf. 34:27) without famine (cf. 34:29).

When Israel reflects on God's grace and her former character (her evil ways and wicked deeds), she will realize she does not deserve His favor. In fact she will loathe herself because of her detestable practices, looking back in horror at them. The blackness of her past actions will contrast starkly with the light of God's grace. In the future, when Israel recalls her past actions, she will recognize that God had not saved her because of her merit. God will be doing this not for her sake, but to magnify His own name.⁴⁰

There is clearly more in mind here than the immediate restoration after the Babylonian captivity. At a future time, the nation will be gathered from "among the nations" and "all countries" to be restored in the land God promised to them.

God, Savior—God is our Savior, intimately related to His people. See note on Jer 50:34.

Holy Spirit, Indwells—Only God's Spirit in our lives can lead us to obey. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophets Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34) and Ezekiel gave messages of hope. They prophesied that in a coming age God would restore His people. This action included physical restoration of the city and spiritual renewal. The people would experience a new covenant or relationship with God (Jer 31:31), a new heart, and a new spirit (Eze 36:26). God would put His Spirit in His people. The Spirit would help the people obey the law (v. 27). Jesus fulfilled these promises. He gave His life to establish a new covenant (1 Co 11:25) and poured out the Spirit of God on His followers at Pentecost (Ac 2). The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, and other qualities in Christians today as then (Gal 5:22), changing us from spiritually lifeless people to living, fruitful people of God.

Salvation, Definition—God's salvation is His cleansing from sin. The new covenant which He has made with us through the death of Christ makes possible cleansing from all impurities. He gives us a new heart or will and puts His Spirit in us to lead us to obey and serve Him. See note on 11:17-21.

Daniel 36:24-38: Israel Regathered

God's promise to the Jews is that they will be brought back from being scattered among the nations, and into the land of Israel again. There is some disagreement as to whether the Lord is speaking about the return from the Babylonian Captivity, about the return to the land in the 1940's, or about the return to the land after the Great Tribulation is over. I believe that the clues before us show that He is referring to the regathering yet future, after the Great Tribulation. Notice:

- Cleansed from all filthiness and their iniquities
- A new heart and new spirit
- Walking in God's statutes, careful to observe His ordinances
- Saved from all uncleanness

⁴⁰ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:24–32). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- The land like the garden of Eden
- The nations left round about them will know that God has done this.

We have not seen all of these things happen - neither after the return from Babylon, nor when Israel became a nation again. But we do see these things prophesied about Israel's future during the thousandyear reign of Christ.

When Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation, the Jews are going to confess their sin of rejection, walk in righteousness, and be saved.

Rom. 11:26 *and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."*

They will dwell securely in the land, and all of the nations who remain will acknowledge that they were God's people.

Zech. 8:23 *"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"*

The population of the Jews will explode - far beyond the meager 4.8 million Jews who live in Israel now, or the 13 million who are in the whole world. And so it is quite certain to me that we haven't see these prophecies fulfilled just yet.⁴¹

Ezekiel 36:25

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

Chuck Smith 25-26: Jeremiah prophesied the day was going to come when God would no longer write His law upon tables of stone but upon the fleshly tablets of our heart. God is saying, "I'm going to take out the stony heart. I'm going to put in a heart of flesh." That is, God will make His will known to us by planting in our heart His desires and His purposes. Now you know the glorious thing about serving the Lord and following the Lord that you find that this particular psalm is true. The Bible said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Well, what that psalm doesn't say, but what is also true, that as you begin to delight yourself in the Lord, the Lord begins to redirect the desires of your heart. According to that which He wants and according to that which He has purposed. So that doing the will of God becomes really the most glorious thing of your entire existence. It becomes the fulfillment of your dreams and of your desires. And it's marvelous.

Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). We see people going around talking about, "Oh, God laid this heavy burden on me. I don't know if I'm going to be able to stand up under it." Wait a minute. If you've got a heavy burden that's pushing you down into the ground, you better take a close look at that burden. It didn't come from Him. He said, "My burden is light." We take upon ourselves, many times, things that the Lord didn't really put on us. Or we let men put things on us and pressure us into things that aren't really of God. I think of all of the poor people who have been

⁴¹ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel3501.pdf>

pressured by their churches in pledges. Especially if they say, "Let's make a faith pledge." That's even worse, because there are many people who are straining under a sense of obligation to God because I made a pledge and they're straining and being pressed by it, and it's become a heavy yoke on them. A heavy burden. It's not of the Lord. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. Peter said, "Let's not put a heavy yoke on the people, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." And yet the heavy yokes that men will put on you. But when the yoke gets hard and the burden is heavy, know that it's not the Lord's. It's something that you have taken on yourself, or you have allowed people to put on you, but not really from God.

God puts His desires now in our heart so that we can honestly say with Jesus, "I delight to do thy will, O Lord." I don't know how many times during the week I just kick back and just start praising the Lord and thanking the Lord for all that He's done for me. For the joy and blessedness of the life that I have. It's just overwhelming to me. The goodness and the blessing of God. And every once in a while I'll just go, "Oh no!" And if anybody's around, they say, "What's happening?" "Oh, I'm just thinking about how good God is. Unreal, beautiful, you know." My son said, "Dad, why don't you retire? You don't have to keep going sixteen hours a day. Why don't you retire? Kick back, Dad. Why don't you move to Hawaii and retire? You can do it." I said, "But what would I do?" I love so much doing what I'm doing. My wife gets after me because I want to come out here on my day off. She says, "You always figure out a way to go out there on your day off." But it's just such a joy, such a blessing. For God has written His law in my heart. It's just the delight and the joy of life to be doing that which God has in mind for you to do. No heavy burden, no big strain. It's a delight; it's a joy.

And so God says, "I will write. I will give them a new heart, a heart of flesh. Take away that heart of stone."⁴²

Missler: In Leviticus 15 and Isaiah 64 we find references to a woman who cannot enter the sanctuary until she is purified by the sprinkling of the water of purification. Has that happened to Israel yet? No. She will ultimately know the Lord God (verse 38), they will have an abhorrence for their sins, and their secular humanism will give way to a recognition of their sinfulness and their need for God's mercy. Their forgiveness will be realized, regeneration will be effective, and the gift of the Holy Spirit will be granted to them.

God is already regathering Israel in the land; but He is also going to do some other things. In fact, He is going to do a whole sequence of things to rattle the cage, if you will, not just of Israel, but of the entire world. What we have seen in the land of Israel so far have been things that can be ascribed to human endeavor.

The pride of Israel is very evident in terms of their accomplishments. Quite apart from the warfare they have been under, they have indeed overcome the malaria swamps and other pestilences, to conquer that land and make it productive. Yet, what has happened so far allows itself to be explained away in terms of secular humanism.

God is not going to leave it at that. He has a very specific event that is going to occur that will go far beyond their capability to handle, and He will stage that event specifically, not only to get their attention, but to get the attention of the entire world.

⁴² Chuck Smith, Notes on Ezekiel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries

God's concern for the land is the way He is represented. We might, as we read that, keep conscious of that same accountability. If we are called by the name of the Lord, then how we represent ourselves before others is something He has a very, very big equity in, and will deal with.⁴³

[Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you ...] Then—at the final regathering of all Israel from among the nations, God will fully redeem them and make them His eternal people (Ezekiel 36:25-30).

[will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you] (Dake) Israel's 13-fold conversion:

1. I (Jehovah) will sprinkle clean water upon you (Ezekiel 36:25).
2. You will be clean.
3. I will cleanse you from your filthiness.
4. I will cleanse you from your idols.
5. I will give you a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26).
6. I will put a new spirit within you.
7. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh.
8. I will give you a heart of flesh.
9. I will put My Spirit (the Holy Spirit) within you (Ezekiel 36:27).
10. I will cause you to walk in My statutes.
11. You will keep My judgments and do them.
12. You will be My people (Ezekiel 36:28).
13. I will be your God.

[sprinkle] (Dake) Hebrew: *zaraq* (HSN-2236), to sprinkle fluid or solid particles; scatter; strew.

Seven Things Used in Sprinkling:

1. Ashes (Exodus 9:8-10; Hebrews 9:13)
2. Blood (Exodus 24:6-8; Exodus 29:16,20; Leviticus 1:5,11; Leviticus 3:2,8,13; Leviticus 4:6,17; Leviticus 5:9; Leviticus 6:27; Leviticus 7:2; Leviticus 8:11,19,24,30; Leviticus 9:12,18; Hebrews 9:19-21)
3. Water and blood (Leviticus 14:4-7,51)
4. Water and ashes (Numbers 19:9,17-21)
5. Oil (Leviticus 14:16,27)
6. Water (Ezekiel 36:25)
7. Dust (Job 2:12)

⁴³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Fifteen Sprinklings of Scripture:

1. Of ashes into the air (Exodus 9:8-10)
2. Blood on altars (Exodus 29:16,20)
3. Blood on the priests (Exodus 29:21)
4. Blood on the book (Exodus 24:6)
5. Blood on the people (Exodus 24:8)
6. Blood on the ground (Leviticus 4:6,17)
7. Blood in the holy place (Leviticus 6:27)
8. Blood on the tabernacle (Hebrews 9:21)
9. Hearts (Hebrews 10:22; Hebrews 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2)
10. Blood on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14-19)
11. Water and ashes on unclean persons, tent, and vessels (Numbers 8:7; Numbers 19:13-20)
12. Nations (Isaiah 52:15)
13. Clean water upon Israel (Ezekiel 36:25)
14. Blood upon garments (Isaiah 63:3)
15. Blood of Christ sprinkled (Hebrews 10:22; Hebrews 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2)

Clarke: Then—At the time of this great restoration—will I sprinkle clean water upon you—the truly cleansing water; the influences of the HOLY SPIRIT typified by water, whose property it is to cleanse, whiten, purify, refresh, render healthy and fruitful.

From all your filthiness—From every sort of external and internal abomination and pollution.

And from all your idols—False gods, false worship, false opinions, and false hopes.

Will I cleanse you—Entirely separate you.

LAN 25-27: God promised to restore Israel not only physically, but spiritually. To accomplish this, God would give them a new heart for following him and put his Spirit within them (see Ezekiel 11:19-20; Psalm 51:7-11) to transform them and empower them to do his will. Again the new covenant was promised (Ezekiel 16:61-63; Ezekiel 34:23-25), ultimately to be fulfilled in Christ. No matter how impure your life is right now, God offers you a fresh start. You can have your sins washed away, receive a new heart for God, and have his Spirit within you—if you accept God’s promise. Why try to patch up your old life when you can have a new one?

WBC 25-27: The steps in the redemption of Israel are forgiveness, regeneration, and the gift of the Spirit of God. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you. Ezekiel the priest recalls the Mosaic ritual (cf. Ex 30:17-21; Lev 14:5-7, 9; Num 19:9, 17-19) which is a picture of forgiveness. See also Ps 51:7; Jer 33:8; Heb 9:13; 10:22. 26. A new heart ... a new spirit. God’s part in regeneration is stressed here. Cf. 11:19; 18:30-32. See also Jer 31:31-34; Ps 51:10-12. On new things in God’s redemptive scheme, see Isa 42:9, 10; 62:2; 66:22; II Pet 3:13; Rev 5:1; 21:1, 5. 27. I will put my spirit within you. The pouring

out of God's Spirit is to be a feature of the coming age (cf. 37:14; 39:29 Isa 42:1; 44:3; Joel 2:28, 29; Hag 2:5; Acts 2:16-21; Rom 8:23; Eph 1:13, 14; 4:30).⁴⁴

Sprinkle clean water on you symbolizes cleansing from sin (see v. 17; 11:18; 37:23; Jer. 33:8). This is God's forgiveness based on a blood atonement (see Ex. 12:22; Lev. 14:4-7, 51; Num. 19:14-22; Ps. 51:7; Zech. 13:1; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:22.).

God's promise to "sprinkle clean water" is a figure of the purification and forgiveness of all the sins of Israel, including idolatry.

Salvation, As Cleansing—God is determined to cleanse His people from their sins. He provided a new covenant in which His people will be cleansed from all impurities, idols, and sins. This cleansing is fully accomplished only in Christ (1 Jn 1:7). See note on Jer 33:8.

The new covenant with Israel (to be inaugurated for them at the second coming of Christ, Rom. 11:26-27) provides for the spiritual regeneration of those Jews living at that time (cleansing, new heart, and presence of the Spirit are specifically promised in these verses).

Ezekiel 36:26

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Missler: Flesh in contrast with stone; a soft heart, not a stubborn heart is the idiomology.

The concept that there is an "Old Testament doctrine and a New Testament doctrine" is a carryover from some unfortunate perspectives we sometimes got in Sunday School - that there is an Old Testament God and a New Testament God. Nonsense. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Nowhere in Scripture is our heart said to be cured. Isaiah tells us that our heart is incurable, "incurably wicked." The concept in Scripture is that of being given a new heart; therefore a new birth, being "born again," as we would say from John 3. The doctrine of the new birth that Jesus Christ talked about to Nicodemus in John 3 is where we get this whole idea about being born again. Jesus said, "Nicodemus, you are a leader of the people, and you know not these things?" Where was Nicodemus supposed to learn of these things? From Ezekiel 36:26, and from Jeremiah 31; the concept of having a new heart.⁴⁵

Constable: He would, third, give them a new heart and spirit and would remove their hardness of heart and give them soft hearts (i.e., regenerate them; cf. 11:19; 18:31; 2 Cor. 3:3-6). Perhaps this passage was in the Lord Jesus' mind when He spoke to Nicodemus

⁴⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:25). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

about the new birth.⁵⁰⁰ The heart stands for the whole person—mind, will, and emotions (cf. 2:4; 3:7)—and the spirit describes the motivation that drives thought and conduct.

The temptation to find the fulfillment of the 'new heart' and 'new spirit' of 36:25-27 exclusively in Christian conversion in this age should be resisted. New Testament conversion is only a preview of the massive spiritual revival God has in store for all of true Israel and Gentiles who believe.⁴⁶

ESV 26–27 God's initiative moves from external to internal with the gift of a new heart and new spirit (see 11:19; cf. 18:31). The outer purification will be no use without the inner disposition to live rightly before God (36:27). The connection of “water” (v. 25) and “Spirit” (v. 27) lies behind John 3:5. I will put my Spirit within you predicts an effective inward work of God in the “new covenant.”

Clarke: A new heart also will I give you—I will change the whole of your infected nature; and give you new appetites, new passions; or, at least, the old ones purified and refined. The heart is generally understood to mean all the affections and passions.

And a new spirit will I put within you—I will renew your minds, also enlighten your understanding, correct your judgment, and refine your will, so that you shall have a new spirit to actuate your new heart.

Clarke: I will take away the stony heart—That heart that is hard, impenetrable, and cold; the affections and passions that are unyielding, frozen to good, unaffected by heavenly things; that are slow to credit the words of God. I will entirely remove this heart: it is the opposite to that which I have promised you; and you cannot have the new heart and the old heart at the same time.

And I will give you a heart of flesh—One that can feel, and that can enjoy; that can feel love to God and to all men, and be a proper habitation for the living God.

God says what He is going to do. A change is going to take place. “A new heart also will I give you”—they are going to be born again.

The ritual of purification from sin would be empty and meaningless apart from true repentance and the regenerating and empowering work of the Holy Spirit on the inner spirit of individuals. God would not only restore the people physically to the land, but would restore them spiritually, by giving them a new heart and new spirit to help them follow Him and do His will. (See 11:19–20; 18:31; 37:14; 39:29; Jer. 31:31–34; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:17, 18; Rom. 7:7–8:11; 2 Cor. 3:3–18; Heb. 8:6–10:39.)

26-27 The promise of a “new heart” parallels Jeremiah’s vision of the covenant in the heart (Jer 31:31-34). This is the clearest statement of the N.T. concept of conversion to be found anywhere in the O.T. In the N.T. a new heart is the result of conversion (Matt 5:8; 22:37; Rom 10:10; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 6:6; 1 Pet 3:15). Receiving the “spirit” is also fulfilled

⁴⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

in Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18, 23; 16:7-15) and the ultimate fulfillment at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). One day all of this shall also be true for repentant Israel.

The Church, Covenant People—God gives that which is necessary to change our lives and to enable us to follow Him. See 11:17-20, note; Jer 31:31-34, note

Ezekiel 36:27

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

Why? Because God's Spirit is in me. That power of His Spirit to do His statutes, to keep His judgments.

Constable: God would, fourth, also put His Spirit within the Israelites and cause them to obey His commands carefully (cf. 11:19-20; 18:31; 37:14; 39:29; Jer. 31:31; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18; Rom. 7:7—8:4; 2 Cor. 3:6-18; Heb. 8:6—10:39). This is a coming of the Holy Spirit on Israel in the future, not His coming on the church at Pentecost.⁴⁷

Clarke: And I will put my Spirit within you—To keep the heart of flesh alive, the feeling heart still sensible, the loving heart still happy. I will put my Spirit, the great principle of light, life, and love, within you, to actuate the new spirit, and to influence the new affections and passions; that the animal spirit may not become brutish, that the mental powers become not foolish. I will put my Spirit within you, so that as the new spirit may influence the new heart, so will MY SPIRIT influence YOUR new spirit, that each may have a proper mover; and then all will be pure, regular, and harmonious, when passion is influenced by reason, and reason by the Holy Ghost.

And the cause shall be evidenced by the effects; for I will cause you to walk in my statutes—not only to believe and reverence my appointments relative to what I command you to perform; but ye shall walk in them, your conduct shall be regulated by them. “And ye shall keep my judgments;” whatsoever I enjoin you to avoid. And ye shall do them—ye shall not only avoid every appearance of evil, but keep all my ordinances and commandments unblamably.

Here is the salvation that God promises to give to restored Israel; and here is the salvation that is the birthright of every Christian believer: the complete destruction of all sin in the soul, and the complete renewal of the heart; no sin having any place within, and no unrighteousness having any place without.

“But where are they that are thus saved?”

Ans. Wherever true Christians are to be found.

“But I know many true Christians that have not this salvation, but daily mourn over their evil hearts?”

⁴⁷ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

Ans. They may be sincere, but they are not true Christians; i.e., such as are saved from their sins; the true Christians are those who are filled with the nature and Spirit of Christ. But I will ask a question in my turn:

“Do those you mention think it a virtue to be always mourning over their impurities?” Most certainly. Then it is a pity they were not better instructed. It is right they should mourn while they feel an impure heart; but why do they not apply to that blood which cleanses from all unrighteousness, and to that Spirit which cleanses the very thoughts of the heart by his inspiration? Many employ that time in brooding and mourning over their impure hearts, which should be spent in prayer and faith before God, that their impurities might be washed away. In what a state of nonage are many members of the Christian Church!

McGee: This is what Joel meant in his prophecy—there is a day coming when God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, not just *some*. The Spirit was poured out upon very few on the Day of Pentecost. All Peter said on that day was, “Don’t ridicule us and say we are drunk. This is *like* what Joel said is going to happen in the last days.” The Spirit has come upon a few, and today God is calling out a people for His name. The minute you turn to Christ, you are regenerated by the Holy Spirit; you are indwelt and baptized by the Holy Spirit; you are put in the body of believers. “In that day,” God says, “I’ll put My Spirit within you.”⁴⁸

Ezekiel 36:28

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Not because you're so deserving or you're so good, but it's just God's grace.

Missler: Those are exciting words. These words were injected to be an encouragement to those people. Remember that when Ezekiel was writing this, it was when Jerusalem fell. He was focusing on their restoration, focusing on their spiritual rebirth as a nation.

Has this happened yet? No, conspicuously not. If you visit Israel today, it is very visible that they are there. They are beginning to prosper in a sense. They do have problems, but they are clearly, vigorously secular humanists. So there is an event which God will use to trick them, if you will into a form of orthodoxy.

The classic reference in the Old Testament of the New Covenant is in Jeremiah 31:31-33. A New Covenant; a New Heart. The concept of the New Covenant emerges from this and, of course, is the label by which we speak of the whole New Testament. “His Spirit” goes all the way through the Old Testament (Ezekiel 39; Isaiah 44 and 59; Joel 2; Peter makes reference to it: Acts 2).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 36:27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Constable 28-30: They would, fifth, live in the Promised Land and enjoy a permanent, intimate relationship with God (cf. Jer. 31:33). He would also deliver them from their uncleanness (v. 25) and, sixth, give them abundant harvests constantly so they would never experience famine (cf. 34:29). In other words, He would bless them with consistent fertility and fruitfulness (cf. 34:29).⁵⁰

ESV 28–30: With God's people now graced with an inclination to keep faith with God, so too there will be an enduring habitation of the land (v. 28)—this time with no occasion for it to prove “treacherous” (cf. vv. 13–14). The conjunction of restoration of people and land is a continuing theme through this part of Ezekiel (see e.g., 34:25–31). The restoration of the people to the land is symbolic of, and probably implies the reality of, the return of the people to live in the presence of God, knowing once again his blessings on their lives (see 36:27).

Ye shall be my people—Wholly given up to me in body, soul, and spirit.

And I will be your God—To fill you with love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, fidelity and goodness, to occupy your whole soul, and gratify your every desire.

WBC 28-32: The results of Israel's regeneration will be: her permanent occupation of the land (v. 28a); a covenant relationship with God (v. 28b); protection against relapse into idolatry (v. 29a); the abundant supply of every want (vv. 29b, 30); and self-humiliation and repentance on account of past sin (vv. 31, 32; cf. Plumptre, *Pulpit Commentary, in loco*). These benefits are of pure grace (v. 22).⁵¹

They will dwell in the land, and there will be prosperity in the land. God has promised to them *physical* blessings, just as He has promised to us *spiritual* blessings.

you shall be My people: See vv. 1–15; 34:29. The purpose of the Mosaic covenant would finally be realized (see Deut. 26:16–19; 29:13; 30:8). The Israelites would become a people dedicated to God's ways.

Ezekiel 36:29

I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

In other words, God will give supernatural fertility to the land.

Not only will Israel be saved from all sin, but her land will be saved from all the curse (Ezekiel 36:29-30).

⁵⁰ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

⁵¹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:28). Chicago: Moody Press.

Clarke: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses—I repeat it; “I WILL save you from all your sins.”

Ezekiel 36:30

And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

Clarke: Ye shall receive no more reproach of famine—Ye shall be daily and hourly fed with the bread that endures unto eternal life. “But will not those get proud, who are thus saved, if there be any such? and will they not undervalue the blood of the covenant, for then they shall not need it?” Ans. Hear what the Lord saith:—

Ezekiel 36:31

Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

In other words, they will be repentant of them. They will have an awareness and a remorse for the way they behaved historically. Do they have that yet? No; not in the spiritual sense.

Constable 31-32: Then the Israelites would, seventh, remember their former sins and loath themselves (cf. 6:9; 20:43). Again, the Lord would not accomplish this regathering for the sake of His people, but for the sake of His reputation among the rest of the world's population (cf. v. 22). This present announcement of God's gracious dealings with His people should shame them and bring them to their knees in repentance.

This context and that of similar accounts of God's restoration of Israel to her land, along with the historical perspective, make it clear that the return mentioned in this passage does not refer to the return to Canaan under Zerubbabel but to a final and complete restoration under the Messiah in the end times. The details of Israel's reestablishment on her land set forth above simply did not occur in the returns under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

This new covenant passage in Ezekiel 36:22-32 has much in common with the new covenant passage in Jeremiah 31:31-34. A significant difference is that Jeremiah put more emphasis on the role of God's Word in Israel's transformation whereas Ezekiel put more emphasis on the role of God's Spirit. Both His Word and His Spirit will be crucial in Israel's future restoration.⁵²

ESV 31–32: you will loathe yourselves. The response of the renewed people is to see themselves as God sees them. not for your sake. The assertion of God acting for his own sake repeats and confirms the basis of God's action spelled out already in v. 22, thus bracketing this overtly theological account of renewal.

⁵² Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

Then—when Israel and her land are fully redeemed from all the curse, they will remember their own sins and evil doings, and loathe themselves for their own abominations (Ezekiel 36:31-32).

Clarke: Then shall ye remember your own evil ways—Ye shall never forget that ye were once slaves of sin, and sold under sin; children of the wicked one; heirs to all God’s curses, with no hope beyond hell. Such cleansed people never forget the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which they have been brought. And can they then be proud? No; they loathe themselves in their own sight. They never forgive themselves for having sinned against so good a God, and so loving a Savior. And can they undervalue HIM by whose blood they were bought, and by whose blood they were cleansed? No! That is impossible: they now see Jesus as they ought to see him; they see him in his splendor, because they feel him in his victory and triumph over sin. To them that thus believe he is precious, and he was never so precious as now. As to their not needing him when thus saved from their sins, we may as well say, as soon may the creation not need the sustaining hand of God, because the works are finished! Learn this, that as it requires the same power to sustain creation as to produce it, so it requires the same Jesus who cleansed to keep clean. They feel that it is only through his continued indwelling, that they are kept holy, and happy, and useful. Were he to leave them the original darkness and kingdom of death would soon be restored.

These verses restate the reasons for the planned restoration and renewal of God’s people. The restoration from the Exile would recover God’s glorious reputation among the nations and erase the guilt of the Israelite’s sin. This is all a product of God’s favor on the Israelites—even though they had done nothing to merit such mercy.

The blessings God promises, through His spokesman Ezekiel, to the people in their restoration to the land are numerous: (1) morality (vv. 26, 27), (2) security (v. 28), (3) purity (v. 29), (4) prosperity (vv. 34-36), and (5) posterity (vv. 37, 38). Thus, the covenant is renewed again, according to the faithfulness of YAHWEH

Ezekiel 36:32

Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

Chuck Smith: Oh, the Sharon valley, the Sharon plain, the valley of Megiddo, waste desolate marshland, they're like the Garden of Eden, so lush and so beautiful. This prophecy is fulfilled. You can go over and just travel around Israel and see how verdant and productive that little land is.⁵³

[Not for your sakes do I *this*] Again God emphasized the fact that such corrupt, stiffnecked people as Israel were not saved for any worthiness of their own, but rather for

⁵³ Chuck Smith, Notes on Ezekiel, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries

His sake, that He might complete His program of man's restoration from the curse in order that things might continue eternally as before the fall.

LAN: God said his people should be ashamed of their sins. The people had become so callous that they had lost all sensitivity to sin. First they had to “remember” (Ezekiel 36:31) their sins, then despise them, and finally repent of them (see James 4:8-9). As we examine our lives, we may find that we too have lost our sensitivity to certain sins. But if we measure ourselves against God’s standards of right living, we will be ashamed. To regain sensitivity we must recognize our sin for what it is, feel sorry for displeasing God, and ask his forgiveness. The Holy Spirit will guide us, making us responsive and receptive to God’s truth (John 14:26; John 16:8, 13).

Ezekiel 36:33

Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

Constable 33-34: Future cleansing from sin and restoration of the Jews to the land and restoration of the land to fruitfulness would all occur at the same time. This shows that the Jews' present occupation of the Promised Land does not fulfill these promises; they have not yet experienced God's cleansing for their sins, which comes with regeneration (cf. Rom. 11:26-27).⁵⁴

ESV 33–36: Land Renewed. As seen in vv. 28–30, the land enjoys the benefits of the people's cleansing (v. 33). The impact on the land is not simply on its fertility (vv. 34–35). The cityscape is renewed as well as the landscape (v. 33). The mention of Eden (v. 35) emphasizes the nature of this act as re-creation (see 28:13; cf. 37:1–14). One appointed function of Israel's experience in the land was to show the whole world a restored Edenic life, lived in God's presence and with his. Another assurance of the full conversion of Israel and restoration of the land of promise from the curse, as stated in Ezekiel 36:29-30.

WBC Effect of Israel’s Prosperity on the Nations. 36:33-36.

Israel’s restoration will cause those who pass by (v. 34b), of the nations (AV, *heathen*) that are left round about you (v. 36) to recognize the supremacy of the Lord. 35. History moves from Eden to Eden. Cities ... fortified. Contrast 38:11.⁵⁵

BKC 33-36: When Israel is restored and the land ... cultivated, people will note that this wasteland will be like the Garden of Eden. Israel’s cities, formerly in ruins, will be fortified and inhabited. To the surrounding nations Israel will become an object lesson of

⁵⁴ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

⁵⁵ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 36:33–37). Chicago: Moody Press.

God's grace. They will be forced to acknowledge God's sovereign power in restoring His people: they will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed.⁵⁶

Ezekiel 36:34

And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

Dake: God's Choice of Jerusalem

For centuries, even to this day, men have wondered what God saw in Jerusalem and the promised land which caused Him to choose this above all other places for His eternal capital on earth. The land has been desolate for many years in fulfillment of prophecy and it is but now beginning to be restored in a measure to its original fertility and blessing. It should not be forgotten that the land was once a place "flowing with milk and honey ... the glory of all lands" (Ezekiel 20:6,15); but God said He would make it totally desolate if Israel transgressed His commandments and rebelled against Him. Thus, when they persisted in disobedience He destroyed the nation and scattered the people among all others on the earth (Ezekiel 6:14; Ezekiel 15:8; Ezekiel 19:7; Ezekiel 25:3; Ezekiel 33:28-29; Ezekiel 34:3-15; Ezekiel 36:1-36; Exodus 23:29; Leviticus 26:22-43; 2 Chron. 36:21; Isaiah 1:7; Isaiah 6:11; Jeremiah 4:7,27; Jeremiah 6:8; Jeremiah 7:34; Jeremiah 9:11; Jeremiah 10:22; Jeremiah 22:11; Jeremiah 18:16; Jeremiah 19:8; Jeremiah 25:38; Jeremiah 26:9; Jeremiah 32:43; Jeremiah 33:10-12; Micah 6:13; Micah 7:13; Zech. 7:14). The land will again blossom as a rose and waters will spring forth in the desert (Ezekiel 36:35-36; Isaiah 35).

Ezekiel 36:35

And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities *are become fenced, and are inhabited.*

This little country of less than 4 million inhabitants is the 4th largest fruit exporter in the world, and it has grown from a desert. It has a high technology and industrial industry of over 10 billion dollars a year. It is just incredible!

Constable 35-36: People would marvel at the lushness of the formerly desolate land and at the strength of the formerly ruined cities of Israel (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; 51:3; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-15; Rom. 8:19-22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-4, 23-27). The other nations of the world would recognize that Israel's God was responsible for this transformation.⁵⁷

This land that was desolate by sin, is become like the garden of Eden by righteousness—Satan's blast is removed; God's blessing has taken place.

⁵⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:33–36). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵⁷ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes.htm>

McGee: “And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.” You can say that if you want to, but it wouldn’t be true today.

“And they shall know that I am the LORD.” They don’t know that in Israel, they don’t know it in the United States, and they don’t know it in the world today. But the day is coming, my friend, when Israel will know that He is the Lord.⁵⁸

The garden of Eden is mentioned here to suggest beauty, fertility, and productivity so great that people would be reminded of the “garden eastward in Eden” (Gen. 2:8; contrast 28:13).

Ezekiel 36:36

Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places*, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*.

Then the heathen—They shall see how powerful Jehovah is, and how fully he saves those who come unto and worship him.

Ezekiel 36:37

I will do *it*.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for* this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

Constable 37-38: The Lord also promised to respond to the prayers of the Israelites to increase their population.

For the first time in the book he permits himself to be entreated by the house of Israel. The Jews would fill the cities like the sheep used to fill Jerusalem during the feasts when the people offered large numbers of them as sacrifices to the Lord. These would not be sheep for slaughter but living sacrifices in God's service. This increase in the population in the Promised Land would also convince people of Yahweh's unique deity.

In analyzing Ezekiel's doctrine of the salvation of Israel, the salient factors are as follows: (1) The preeminent motive in their redemption is the glory of God (vv. 22, 32). (2) Israel will know ultimately that their God is the Lord (v. 38). (3) There will be an abhorrence of their sins (vv. 31-32). (4) Forgiveness of their sins will be realized (v. 25). (5) Regeneration will be effected (11:19; 18:31; 36:26-27). (6) The gift of the Holy Spirit will be granted (v. 27; 37:14). No prophet before him assigns the ministry of the Holy Spirit in regeneration such a precise place as Ezekiel does. (7) Included is obedience to God's laws (v. 27; 11:20).

By faith in Jesus Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews presently experience many of the same blessings that God promised here to bring to the entire nation of Israel in the future.

⁵⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 36:38). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But this should not lead us to conclude that these promises have no future fulfillment with Israel but are only fulfilled spiritually in the church. One writer pointed out that God added blessings to this covenant as He revealed it progressively through history before its ratification at the Cross.⁵⁹ Ezekiel added some revelation that Jeremiah did not give, for example.

It should be clear that the realization of these promises did not come to fruition in the postexilic period, nor have they been fulfilled today. Israel as a nation is not regathered and has not experienced spiritual regeneration, and the land of Palestine is not characterized by the supernatural fecundity described in Ezekiel 36:22-38.⁵⁹

ESV 37–38: Populace Increased. The flourishing of the people in terms of a flock recalls the pastoral imagery of ch. 34 (see also 37:24). Applying the metaphor to a flock for sacrifices (36:38) may seem ironic, but the imagery suggests not impending death but festivals and great numbers, all set aside for God. Then they will know. The recognition formula (cf. Introduction: Style) is a fitting conclusion to a passage in which recognizing the true God is seen to be paramount.

[I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them] Israel will yet pray for full restoration before God brings it to pass. The great tribulation of the future will bring them to full repentance and dependence upon God (Isaiah 64; Zech. 12:10-13:1; Matthew 23:37-39; Romans 11:25-29).

Clarke: Thus saith the Lord God—In answer to the question, “Who shall have such blessings?” we say, they that pray, that seek earnestly, that strive to enter in at the strait gate. “Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel.” Neither Jew nor Gentile shall be thus saved who do not earnestly pray to God; and for this thing; for this complete salvation; this setting up of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and particularly in their own souls.

LAN 37-38: God said that if the people asked, he would come to their aid. We cannot expect his mercy, however, until we have sought new hearts from him (Ezekiel 36:26). We can be thankful that his invitation is open to all.

BKC 37-38: God will also cause the nation to increase numerically. This was considered a sign of God’s blessing (cf. Gen. 12:2; 15:1-6; 1 Sam. 1:5-6; 2:1-11; Zech. 8:4-5). Ezekiel, a priest, compared the swelling population of Israel to the numerous ... flocks of sacrificial animals gathered for the feasts in Jerusalem. As tightly packed herds jostle for space because of their vast numbers, so Israel’s ruined cities, then empty and desolate, will be filled with flocks of people.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes.htm>

⁶⁰ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 36:37–38). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel 36:38

As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

[in her solemn feasts] All nations will be required to go to Jerusalem to worship in the days of the Messiah (Isaiah 2:1-4; Zech. 14:16-21); and this will continue in the New Earth (Isaiah 66:22-24).

Like a flock ... flocks of men: Animals offered for sacrifice had to be free from any observable impurity or disfigurement. The returned people of God will be living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1, 2), pure and unblemished. **I am the LORD:** This is the constant refrain of Ezekiel; God would make Himself known as the one true God in both His judgment and His restoration of His people.

As the holy flock—The Church of Christ, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Clarke: The flock of Jerusalem—The Jerusalem that is from above, the city of the living God, the place where his Majesty dwells. As they came in ancient times to the solemn national feasts so shall they come when they have fully returned unto the Lord, and received his salvation by Christ Jesus.

I do not ask my reader's pardon for having considered this most beautiful chapter as relating, not to the restoration from the Babylonish captivity, but to the redemption under the new covenant by Jesus Christ. There is no period of the Jewish history from that time until now, to which it can be applied. It must belong to the Gospel dispensation, and if the Jews will still refuse, contradict, and blaspheme, let no Christian have any fellowship with them in their opposition to this Almighty Savior. Let none be indifferent to his salvation; let all plead his promises; and let the messengers of the Churches proclaim to the Christian world a FREE, a FULL, and a PRESENT SALVATION! And may great grace rest upon themselves, and upon all their flocks!

Missler: That is the overview. Now we are going to get into specifics. But first let us track down another concept: Leviticus 26:32-35; Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:3-5.

Leviticus 26:34 is the prediction of their being dispersed. But again, I want to get this idea that the land, when they are not in it, is desolate. And when they are brought back into the land, the land blossoms.

Again, we have this awareness that the Bible is 66 books written by 40 authors, but actually of One Author, an done idea, one concept, one theme, one set of idioms that tie the whole book and give it its integrity of its message. One of the things to get out of your mind is the idea that the Old Testament has one view and the New Testament another. One of the things in Chapter 36 alone, you could take as an exercise if you are so inclined, is to compare Ezekiel's spiritual doctrines here with Paul.

The concept of forgiveness is the basis of verse 25. Regeneration in verse 26. The indwelling and ruling spirit of God is in verse 27. The spontaneous keeping of God's Law is in verse 27 which corresponds to Romans 8:4. And the inseparable connection between Israel's history and God's self-revelation in verses 32 through the end. Of course, the

conversion of the nation is in this whole passage we just read which ties to Romans 11 by Paul. So you will find a very interesting consistency between Paul and Ezekiel that I think is worth mentioning.⁶¹

Missler: Glory of All Lands

See Ezekiel 20:6, 15. In verse 6 he notes “which is the glory of all lands.” And again in verse 15 he notes “which is the glory of all lands.” We could, of course, speak of the entire earth as being the Lord’s. In fact, the Psalmist does in 24:1, 2 and 72. The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof. So all the earth belongs to the Lord; and yet, there is a particular parcel of ground that the Lord has a peculiar interest in; He always had, and always will. God’s dealing with Israel is all tied up with the land in a very unique way.

The relationship of Israel with the land is quite different than any other relationship you and I have or will encounter in the Scripture. It is worthy of our attention to take a sweep through some of those passages to get the flavor for that.

Leviticus gives instruction about the land. It is never to be sold. There were leases in which the land reverted back to the family if not in one generation, later. We talked about that when we studied the Book of Ruth (see our briefing package, *The Romance of Redemption*, for a study of the Book of Ruth.) It was not fee simple like you and I would think of the sale of property. See Leviticus 25:23; Isaiah 14:25-26; Jeremiah 2:7; Joel 3:2; Deuteronomy 11:11-12; Psalm 121:4.

The History of His Land

The Lord’s possessiveness about this particular parcel of ground gets all linked up with a tribe and then a nation. The history of Israel, at least in one sense, starts with Abraham. You start a study of the land with the promise that God gave to Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant is found in Genesis 13:14-17. Then the promise is given to Isaac, see Genesis 17:7-8. Speaking then to Jacob in Genesis 35:11-12. Deuteronomy 1:8 is God talking to Moses. This is all summarized in Psalm 105:7-11. Israel was given an everlasting covenant.

Now this all may seem obvious to those of you who have been into the Bible to any extent. This is very familiar ground. However, remember that Ezekiel is writing from Babylon. They had been uprooted from the land. In more recent history they were removed from the land by the Diaspora.

Let us take a look at a few verses with the promise of the return to the land. See Jeremiah 31:17; Ezekiel 20:42. Remember that there were NO conditions on the promise of the land to Israel. There were comments about being put out of the land for sin; but never without the promise that they were to return to the land. The promise of the land, included a few borders worth mentioning, see Genesis 15:18; Exodus 23:31; and Joshua 1:2-4. The river of Egypt is not necessarily the Nile; it depends upon how you translate the word, it might be the Wadi el Arish which is what most people believe is the boundary.

⁶¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

We have been spending time in Ezekiel which of course had been dealing with the captivity, the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. Trained as a priest, but called to the office of a prophet, Ezekiel had been writing primarily about the captivity that they were experiencing under the heel of Babylon, pointing out that Babylon was the instrument of God in judging Israel. There is also a judgment of Israel prophesied which was much broader in scope than that of the Babylonian captivity. The Babylonian captivity was a major milestone in their history, turn to Deuteronomy 28:37, 64-67. This may be an elaborate way to set the stage to Dry Bones Vision.

Deuteronomy continues this flavor, which we could go on with. This obviously is one of the prophecies of what we call the Diaspora. They were returned to the land under Ezra and Nehemiah after the Babylonian captivity. After the Babylonians came the Persians; after the Persians the Greeks; and after the Greeks the Romans. The Roman oppression brings us to the time of Christ, when He came into the city the week He was crucified, and He wept over Jerusalem and predicted it would shortly be destroyed, leaving not one stone upon another, until the Times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.

From that point on, to be a Jew meant to be a wanderer. For 1900 years the nation has suffered probably under no greater persecution than under the banner of Jesus Christ. They have been murdered and tortured and abused more by people misguided, people under the Christian banner, the crusades and all of that. If you have never read about that, you are in for a real shock. They have suffered more under the symbol of the cross than they have under Islam.

For 1900 years the Church has taught that the Jews murdered the Messiah, and therefore, they are being punished for that. So that all the promises which had been made to Israel were forfeited, and those promises somehow got spiritualized and devolve upon the Church. There was only a very small minority of scholars during that time who argued that such claims were nonsense. They claimed that the promises to Israel were unconditional and the promises given to her of returning to the land, and ultimately to a time of glory, were in the same passages which predicted that her Messiah would in fact be killed. Daniel 9 and other places. So there was a scholarship which said that the promises to Israel were literal and were to be literally fulfilled.

You and I might have a tough time relating to that kind of debate, because we can point to May 14th of 1948, when David ben Gurion declared the existence of the State of Israel, using Ezekiel as his authority for naming the new Jewish State *Israel*. Clearly, Israel is back in the land; and because it is, Ezekiel 36 and 37 start to get much more interesting to us. These are prophecies that are being fulfilled before our very eyes. When the Nation Israel was separated from the land, the land dried up! It did not bear fruit. It became barren waste land. You can go through historical books of centuries ago, and it always shows up as swamps and deserts, and useless when Israel was not there. You can see film footage of what the land was like prior to their return; it was desolate.

You need to visit Israel if you haven't because there is a 10 billion dollar economy supplying most of the flowers and produce for Europe! The productivity of the land is green; the agriculture is fantastic. The Negev, which had never been anything but desert and dunes, is now bearing like an oasis. They have found ways to get things to grow using saltwater. Their technology is being exported to underdeveloped countries.

See Isaiah 60:12. It is interesting that not only is the land wasted (for those that do not serve Israel), but sometimes the country. Note that the British Empire started to decline when they failed to deal with the issue of Israel. Several authors have even written books that chronicle world history in terms of how nations deal with Israel.

Promises of returning from the Diaspora are interesting ones to look at. Do see Isaiah 43:5-6; Jeremiah 31:15-17; Micah 4:6-7; Isaiah 61:4, 58:12; Amos 9:14-15. Remember that there is no “West Bank” there; the area’s proper name is Judea and Samaria.⁶²

⁶² Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org