

## Israel's Future Blessing and Restoration Ezekiel 35-36

Ezekiel 35 - Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it, <sup>3</sup> and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O Mount Seir, I am against you; I will stretch out My hand against you, and make you most desolate.

<sup>4</sup> I shall lay your cities waste, and you shall be desolate. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> "Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end, <sup>6</sup> therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. <sup>7</sup> Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. <sup>8</sup> And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall. <sup>9</sup> I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I am the Lord.

<sup>10</sup> "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess them,' although the Lord was there, <sup>11</sup> therefore, as I live," says the Lord God, "I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. <sup>12</sup> Then you shall know that I am the Lord. I have heard all your blasphemies which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are desolate; they are given to us to consume.' <sup>13</sup> Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me and multiplied your words against Me; I have heard them."

<sup>14</sup> "Thus says the Lord God: "The whole earth will rejoice when I make you desolate. <sup>15</sup> As you rejoiced because the inheritance of the house of Israel was desolate, so I will do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom—all of it! Then they shall know that I am the Lord."

Ezekiel 36:1-15 - "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord, <sup>2</sup> Thus says the Lord God: "Because the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession,'" <sup>3</sup> therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Because they made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you are taken up by the lips of talkers and slandered by the people"— <sup>4</sup> therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and the cities that have been forsaken, which became plunder and mockery to the rest of the nations all around—<sup>5</sup> therefore thus says the Lord God: "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country."

<sup>6</sup> "Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have borne the shame of the nations." <sup>7</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: "I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame. <sup>8</sup> But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. <sup>9</sup> For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. <sup>10</sup> I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. <sup>11</sup> I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you bereave them of children."

<sup>13</sup> 'Thus says the Lord God: "Because they say to you, 'You devour men and bereave your nation of children,' <sup>14</sup> therefore you shall devour men no more, nor bereave your nation anymore," says the Lord God. <sup>15</sup> "Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore," says the Lord God.'"

## Background Notes

Ezekiel 33 through 39 contain six messages with words of encouragement and hope for Israel. In chapter 34 we saw the sure hope that a good and true Shepherd was coming in the future, and He would remove and replace the false shepherds of Israel. In the third message, the destruction of Edom was part of an overall message of encouragement and hope for Israel. The removal of Edom (and other enemies represented by Edom) would be good news and blessing for Israel.

Notice that the mountains of Israel were contrasted with the mountains of Edom throughout this third message. The mountains of Edom would become a waste and desolation, but the mountains of Israel would be blessed.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Edom was judged and destroyed because of God's covenant with His people.

Why did God pronounce judgment against Edom? Why did Edom become a waste and desolation? Why was Edom destroyed? Why does Edom no longer exist? Answer: because they hated and mistreated the people of Israel, and because of they did not treat the Land of Israel properly. The people of Israel were God's chosen people by covenant. The Land of Israel was God's Land, and it was given to Israel by covenant. This was all part of God's covenant with Abraham, that is found in Genesis 12 and other Scriptures.

The Edomites certainly knew of the covenant and its stipulations, because they were the descendants of Esau. But they hated the Israelites (35:5) - in fact, they helped the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and killed many of the Jewish people, including the refugees who were trying to escape. Read more about this in the prophecy of Obadiah. Furthermore, Edom coveted the land that God had given to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Notice that God referred to the Land of Israel as **His** Land in 35:5.

Because of the bloodshed, and because of Edom's ancient hatred of the Jewish people, the people of Edom would experience bloodshed and total defeat (v6-9). Because they mistreated God's people and God's Land, God would take Edom's land away from her and make it desolate (35:11-15). In turn, Israel would be delivered from the oppression, anger, hatred, envy, and insult of Edom and the rest of the anti-Semitic nations (36:1-7). As a result, the land and the people of Israel would be blessed (36:8-15).

Notice the four promises made to Israel about their Land:

- a. The Land would be *productive* (36:8-9)
- b. The Land would be *populated* (v10-11)
- c. The Land would be *possessed* (v12)
- d. The Land would be *purified* (v13-15).

**When God makes a covenant, He keeps it!** Edom was judged and destroyed because of God's covenant with His people.

## 2. Israel will be re-gathered and restored because of God's covenant with His people.

Ezekiel 36:16-38 - *"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: <sup>17</sup> 'Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. <sup>18</sup> Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. <sup>19</sup> So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. <sup>20</sup> When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.' <sup>21</sup> But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.*

*<sup>22</sup> 'Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. <sup>23</sup> And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. <sup>24</sup> For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. <sup>28</sup> Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. <sup>30</sup> And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. <sup>31</sup> Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. <sup>32</sup> Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"*

*<sup>33</sup> 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. <sup>34</sup> The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. <sup>35</sup> So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' <sup>36</sup> Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it."*

*<sup>37</sup> 'Thus says the Lord God: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. <sup>38</sup> Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.'"*

This second half of Ezekiel 36 is the fourth of the six messages of encouragement and hope in Ezekiel 33-39.

First of all, notice that *in the context*, this message of hope was addressed to **Israel**. This message was **not** addressed to the Church. The Church is **not** 'the New Israel.' The Church does not replace Israel in the prophecies and promises that God made to Israel, neither in Ezekiel nor elsewhere in the Bible. **Israel is Israel** - throughout the Bible.

The people of Israel turned away from the Lord and defiled the land with their idolatry and immorality, and God had to pour out His wrath on Israel. He had to remove Israel from their Land and scatter them among the nations (v16-21) - and even then, scattered Israel continued to profane the name of the Lord. To this day they willfully reject God's message. But the good news is that this sad state of affairs is only *temporary*. In spite of Israel's continued rejection, God will re-gather and restore Israel - not only as a secular nation, but also as a *godly* nation! This restoration will be done for the sake of His own great, glorious, and holy Name (v21-23). ***When God makes a covenant, He keeps it!***

In Romans 11, the Lord made it clear that these promises must not be taken away from Israel and "spiritualized" as promises to the Church. The promise here is of the re-gathering of the ***Jewish people*** to the ***Land of Israel***. (It was ***not*** referring to the ingathering of Christians to Heaven, as is sometimes taught!)

And the sprinkling of clean water in 36:25 is ***not*** a reference to Christian baptism. Verse 25 was speaking of the red heifer sacrifice of Numbers 19, in which the ashes of the heifer were mixed with water for cleansing from defilement. This cleansing was certainly a "type" or illustration that believers are cleansed from sin because of the work of Christ, but in the context here in Ezekiel, this "sprinkling is part of the New Covenant.

The New Covenant will be made with *re-gathered Israel* in the Land that God gave them through their forefather, Abraham. Verse 28: "*Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.*" This promise was not addressed to the Church, but to Israel. The promise was not fulfilled when the Jewish people came back from their captivity in Babylon, because their "heart of stone" was not really changed at that time. They were not obedient and open to the Holy Spirit at that time because they did not accept their Messiah. But the story is not over yet!

In the future, the Jewish people ***will*** be re-gathered to their homeland. As a nation they ***will*** repent of their sins, and they ***will*** turn to the Lord (v31). And the Lord ***will*** bless the people and the Land (v33-38). ***Israel will be re-gathered and restored because of God's covenant with His people, and when God makes a covenant, He keeps it!***

## Practical Application

### All we have to do is ask.

In Ezekiel 36:37 the Lord said that He would grant the request of re-gathered and restored Israel - all they had to do was ask! Of course, as a people who were now restored to their God, their request would be in line with God's will.

This is true for us as well - if we are walking with the Lord! If we are walking with the Lord, our minds and thoughts will increasingly be transformed to be more like the mind of Christ. Thus our requests will increasingly begin to line up with the will of God, and according to John 16:23, we will receive from the Father what we request in the name of the Lord Jesus. All we have to do is ask!