

God's Holiness Will Be Revealed When Israel Is Regathered

Our study is found in Ezekiel 36. The chapter summarizes several key important events. It will describe the final punishment or the destruction of the nations of the world because every nation has opposed Israel since the time of the ancient Egyptians. Once again Yahweh promises that He will regather Israel in the future. Then the chapter promises the spiritual conversion or the regeneration of Israel before the messianic kingdom starts. In future studies, chapters 37, 38, and 39 will dig down into more detail about those future events. So, Ezekiel 36 is a summary of those three chapters. Later we will discover that chapters 40-48 are about the millennial kingdom.

Some commentators have said that Ezekiel 36:1-15 is a continuation of the prophecy of Edom from Ezekiel 35. Yes, it is true that the ancient nation of Edom is mentioned in Ezekiel 36, but it is only referred to one time. It is more accurate to understand the opening fifteen verses of Ezekiel 36 as being about all the nations that have opposed Israel, or as Genesis 12:3 says, have cursed Israel. So, it is not a continuation of the prophecy about Edom from the last

chapter. It is a new prophecy that expands to include all of the nations in which Jews will live in the future during the tribulation period. In this study, you will discover three important biblical principles.

Promise—Israel's Enemies Will Be Destroyed (v 1-7). Ezekiel 36 has four major sections. But our study will only cover the first three sections. We will study the fourth section in part 2. The first section begins with verse 1 and ends in verse 7. It is titled, "Promise — Israel's Enemies Will Be Destroyed." Here is verse 1,

"And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD.'" Ezekiel 36:1 (NASB)

I wonder how the prophet Ezekiel felt when Yahweh told him to prophesy to the mountains of Israel? That is a strange command. He was not told to prophesy to all of the mountains of the world, but to just the mountains of Israel. When I read this verse, I remembered a woman who told me



that she was preaching the gospel to all of the animals on the earth. I was surprised. She wanted me to do the same thing. She explained that she believed the animals needed to be saved. Then she quoted the King James Version of Mark 16:15 which says,

And He said to them, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” Mark 16:15 (KJV)

She did not understand that the Greek word for “creation” did not mean animals. It was a general word that would suggest the humans of the world. But when Yahweh told the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy to the mountains, He used figurative language to refer to ONLY the people of Israel and to their mountains. This will become clear very soon.

Then in verses 2-3 we are told,

“Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because the enemy has spoken against you, ‘Aha!’ and, ‘The everlasting heights have become our possession,’ therefore prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “For good reason they have made you desolate and crushed you from every side, that you would become a possession of the rest of the nations and you have been taken up in the talk and the whispering of the people.”” Ezekiel 36:2-3 (NASB)

Now Yahweh tells the mountains that Israel’s enemies, at the time that the prophecy was given, had rejoiced that Israel had been conquered by the Babylonian army. This defeat made it possible for Israel’s enemies to occupy the land. Yahweh added that there were good reasons for Israel to be occupied by other nations that insult and slander Israel. If you recall, Ezekiel 25-32 described seven nations that had rejoiced Israel had been conquered. So, Yahweh’s point is that was a good reason for the horrible things to happen to them.

Then in verses 4-5, the prophet spoke to the mountains again,

Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the

desolate wastes and to the forsaken cities which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of the nations which are round about, therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and with scorn of soul, to drive it out for a prey.” Ezekiel 36:4-5 (NASB)

At this point it is clear that Ezekiel was to speak to the mountains for Yahweh. This included the hills, ravines, valleys, and the forsaken cities. The mountains represented the land Yahweh had given Israel. The land did not disappear. It did not die, but the wicked Israelites would die. So, Yahweh encouraged the mountains by speaking against Israel’s enemies for their “wholehearted joy” in taking control of the land. The picture is that the land did not like the enemies occupying its territory. So, Yahweh promised to drive them out. Yahweh promised to destroy Israel’s enemies!

Next, Yahweh told the prophet to say,

“Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My wrath because you have endured the insults of the nations.’ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘I have sworn that surely the nations which are around you will themselves endure their insults.’” Ezekiel 36:6-7 (NASB)

So, Yahweh accused Israel’s enemies of taking possession of the land in verses 2-3, taking spoils from the cities of the land in verse 4, and insulting Israel in verse 7. Clearly, these Gentile nations were guilty of violating Genesis 12:3. They had cursed Israel.

This gives us our first biblical principle. The principle is that Yahweh will punish any nation that curses Israel, or any nation that does not bless Israel. Yahweh prophesied that He would punish Edom in chapter 35, and now He expands that prophecy to include every nation in the world. I believe

this occurred since at the battle of Armageddon every nation in the world will be defeated (Joel 3:1-2, 12; Zechariah 12:3, 8-11; 14:1-4; Revelation 16:16; 19:18-19).

Promise — Blessings Will Be Showered On Israel (v 8-15). Verses 8-15 is the second section of Ezekiel 36 and it is titled, “Promise — Blessings Will Be Showered On Israel.” It repeats Yahweh’s promise of restoration to Israel.

“But you, O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. Yes, I will cause men — My people Israel — to walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.’ Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because they say to you, “You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children,” therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,’ declares the Lord GOD. I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer,” declares the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 36:8-15 (NASB)

Notice how many times Yahweh said, “I will.” We saw that in Ezekiel 35. Once again Yahweh is declaring that He will cause all of this to happen. He promised that He will shower Israel with extraordinary blessings. He promised to give Israel six blessings.

The first blessing is given in verses 8-9. He promised to make the trees of the land of Israel fruitful and the vegetation productive. The mountains will be cultivated, and seed will be sown. The implication is that the deserts

of Israel will flourish.

Then in verses 10-11, Yahweh promised that both the human and animal populations of Israel will grow dramatically. Consequently, the exploding population will build and inhabit cities. That is the second promise.

The third promise is given in verse 10. The waste places refers to deserts and wilderness areas. This means that Yahweh promised that deserts and wilderness will no longer exist in Israel. The fruit trees and vegetation will sprout in the desert and grow significantly. Since 1948, Israel has developed an irrigation system that is causing the vegetation in the arid desert land to grow. But the fulfillment of this promise has not yet been fully realized today. So, this prophecy will be completely fulfilled in the future.

The fourth blessing is found in verses 12-14. The promise is that married couples will never be barren or childless if they are old enough to have children.

The fifth blessing is given in verse 15. It is an amazing promise. It promises that Israel will not hear insults anymore, nor will they experience humiliation from the Gentile nations. It is obvious that this promise has not been realized yet, but it will occur in the millennial kingdom. The prophets of the Old Testament have revealed that Jerusalem will become the capital of the world during the Messiah’s reign over the world. Zechariah 8:18-23 reveals that in the kingdom, people will want to come to Jerusalem to speak with the Messiah, who will be Jesus Christ. It is a picture of Israel restored in the millennial kingdom. But today, Israel is insulted, threatened, and not respected. This reveals that this promise of blessing will be realized in the future.

The sixth, and most amazing blessing is that Jews will never cause their nation to stumble in the future again. This means that Israel will never be rebellious and wicked again. They will never again worship other gods.

We will discover in the next study that this will occur later in the kingdom.

Finally, returning back to verse 9, Yahweh promised He will be “for them.” That is the seventh blessing. That is, Yahweh will be their champion. He will make all of these prophecies a reality. That gives Israel the promise and the assurance that the blessings will occur someday. It is

important to note that ultimately this prophecy of blessing will be fulfilled only in the millennial kingdom. We will study that in Ezekiel 40-48.

This gives us a second biblical principle. God always keeps His promises to His saints and that includes blessings. History tells that God has been punishing those who curse Israel, and He will continue doing that. He promised to bless Israel and we have been seeing a partial fulfillment of that promise since 1948.

Promise — God Will Protect His Great Name (v 16-24). The third section of the chapter is verses 16-24. It is titled, “Promise — God Will Protect His Great Name.” An alternate title is “Promise — God Will Regather Israel.” We are told,

Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.” Ezekiel 36:16-19 (NASB)

Once again, Yahweh reminded Israel of their past rebellious and sinful behavior when they lived in the land of Israel. That is why He scattered them to the Gentile nations.

Then verse 20 states,

“When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.’” Ezekiel 36:20 (NASB)

Now Yahweh stated that even though they were scattered, they were still rebellious and wicked. The nations to which they were scattered noticed that even though they were God’s chosen people, yet they were expelled from the land.

So Yahweh had a concern. He now explains His concern,

“But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.”’ Ezekiel 36:21-22 (NASB)

Because Israel had profaned His holy name, Yahweh had concern for His holy name. Therefore, He planned to regather Israel to the land that He had given them. He did not plan to regather them because they were wonderful people or righteous people. He did not plan to regather Israel because they worshiped and served Him. Verse 23 continues with,

“I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Ezekiel 36:23-24 (NASB)

The Hebrew word that is translated as “vindicate the holiness” is *qadas*. It can also be translated as “sanctify,” “hallowed,” and “to be holy.” That is, Yahweh wants the nations to know He is holy. We can imagine Israel criticized Yahweh for scattering them. The nations probably criticized Yahweh for what appeared to them to be unloving treatment. So, Yahweh promised again that He will regather Israel to the land that He gave to them.

Now there is an important fact we need to notice in these two verses. The first fact is that Yahweh must be the one who protects or proves that He is holy. Yahweh was not being proud when He made this statement. Just ask yourself, do you understand what is holy? Romans 11:33-34 tells us that the answer is “no” when it says that no one knows

God’s wisdom, knowledge, judgments, and ways. Here is the passage,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Romans 11:33-34 (NASB)

Only God can protect Himself, for only God perfectly understands what is holy and what is evil. Further, His holiness is the most important characteristic that we fail to correctly understand.

But when the Holy Spirit helps us get a glimpse of God’s holiness, then we understand we are sinners. We understand what is required to go to heaven. We understand that we

must be as righteous as Christ in order to go to heaven (2 Corinthians 5:21). So, He must protect the holiness of His own name so that men will seek Jesus Christ as their Savior, Lord, and King.

In addition, Jesus has commanded us to protect the Father’s holiness for His holy name is worthy of being protected. In Matthew 6:9 He said,

Pray, then, in this way:
Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Matthew 6:9 (NASB)

The word “hallowed” is translated from the Greek word which means to make holy. It is equivalent to the Hebrew word for “vindicate the holiness” in Ezekiel 38:23. That Hebrew word can be translated as “to sanctify” and “to

EZEKIEL — THE GLORY OF THE LORD

Author: Ezekiel, son of Buzi
Date Written: 590 -- 570 B.C.

Glory of God		Destruction of Jerusalem Prophesied				Judgment of Gentile Nations			Restoration of Jerusalem				
1:1	3:27	4:1	7:27	8:1	11:25	12:1	19:14	20:1	24:27	25:1	32:33	33:1	48:35
* Introduction		1st Cycle Prophecies		* 2nd Cycle Prophecies		3rd Cycle Prophecies		4th Cycle Prophecies		*** Prophecies Against Israel's Enemies		**** Promised Land, Millennial Kingdom & Glory of God	
First Vision		2nd Vision		12:1 "Word of the Lord" Occurs Predominately In This Section (54 of the 60 times in the book)						43:1 Third Vision			
Ezekiel Called	Certainty of Judgment		Necessity of Judgment		Justification of Judgment		The Justice of God Is Revealed		God Will Restore Israel For He Keeps His Promises				
Before the Babylonian Empire's Siege of Jerusalem (593 – 588 B.C.)						During & After Siege (588-585, 571 B.C.)			After the Siege (Future)				
Dates of Prophecies While In Chebar, Babylonian Empire (July 593 – March/April 571 B.C.)†													
593 B.C.	593 B.C.	592 B.C.	592 B.C.	592 B.C.	592 B.C.	591 B.C.	589 B.C.	588 B.C.	588 B.C.	586 B.C.	585 B.C.	585 B.C.	573 B.C.

*Visions of God with Cherubim.
**Prophecy about the Messiah.
***Prophecy about the fall of Satan.
****Prophecies about Israel's restoration, Valley of Dry Bones, and Battle of Gog and Magog.

†Ezekiel 29:17-21 was given in 571/570 B.C.

hallow.” So, we are commanded to make God holy. How do we do that? The answer is that we must be holy in every thought and action. Maybe the best illustration is given to us in Numbers 20. In that passage we are told that God commanded Moses to speak to a rock in the view of all Israel. But Moses called the people rebels, implied that he would give them water, and then hit the rock. We are never told what sin Moses committed, but he did get angry with the people, claimed that he would give them water, and then in anger hit the rock instead of speaking to it. Numbers 20:12 says that since he did not treat God as holy he could not enter the promised land. Later, Deuteronomy 3:23-28 reveals that he begged God to let him enter the promised land, but God told him no! So, Moses never entered the promised land because by his actions he did not make God holy before the children of Israel.

God’s great name is connected to His holiness. The final blessing in this study is that Yahweh will protect His great name. We have the privilege of making Him holy before others. I encourage you to be concerned about how others view our God.

Conclusion. In summary, the Abrahamic Covenant included a promise to curse Israel’s enemies. So Ezekiel 36: 1-7 will be fulfilled. In addition, because the Abrahamic Covenant included a promise of blessing, verses 8-15 will be fulfilled. Then in this study, we have discovered another reason for Israel’s regathering. It will protect God’s holy name. This chapter teaches us that God is holy. We have discovered how God protects His holy name. Finally, since Yahweh is infinitely holy and we cannot add to His holiness, these actions will not make God holy, but they will reveal that Yahweh is holy. We have been commanded to reflect His holiness to others.