A Prophecy to the Mountains of Israel

Ezekiel 36-:1-38
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Text:

Ezekiel 36-1-38,

1. “As for you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD!

2. This is what the sovereign LORD says: The enemy has spoken against you, saying “Aha!” and, “The ancient heights have become our property!”

3. So prophesy and say: ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Surely because they have made you desolate and crushed you from all directions, so that you have become the property of the rest of the nations, and have become the subject of gossip and slander among the people,

4. therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the sovereign LORD: This is what the sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, the ravines and valleys, and to the desolate ruins and the abandoned cities that have become prey and an object of derision to the rest of the nations round about—

5. therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Surely I have spoken in the fire of my zeal against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who with great joy and utter contempt have made my land their property and prey, because of its pasture.’

6. “Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, the ravines and valleys, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I have spoken in my zeal and in my anger, because you have endured the insults of the nations.

7. So this is what the sovereign LORD says: I vow that the nations around you will endure insults as well.
8. “But you, mountains of Israel, will grow your branches, and bear your fruit for my people Israel; for they will arrive soon.

9. For indeed, I am on your side; I will turn to you, and you will be plowed and planted.

10. I will multiply your people—the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities will be populated and the ruins rebuilt.

11. I will increase the number of people and animals on you; they will increase and be fruitful. I will cause you to be inhabited as in ancient times, and will do more good for you than at the beginning of your history. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

12. I will lead people, my people Israel, across you; they will possess you and you will become their inheritance. No longer will you bereave them of their children.

13. “This is what the sovereign LORD says: Because they are saying to you, “You are a devourer of men, and bereave your nation of children,”

14. therefore you will no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the sovereign LORD.

15. I will no longer subject you to the nations’ insults; no longer will you bear the shame of the peoples, and no longer will you bereave your nation, declares the sovereign LORD.”

16. The word of the LORD came to me:

17. “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living on their own land, they defiled it by their behavior and their deeds. In my sight their behavior was like the uncleanness of a woman having her monthly period.
18. So I poured my anger on them because of the blood they shed on the land and because of the idols with which they defiled it.

19. I scattered them among the nations; they were dispersed throughout foreign countries. In accordance with their behavior and their deeds I judged them.

20. But when they arrived in the nations where they went, they profaned my holy name. It was said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, yet they have departed from his land.’

21. I was concerned for my holy reputation which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they went.

22. ‘Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake that I am about to act, O house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy reputation which you profaned among the nations where you went.

23. I will magnify my great name that has been profaned among the nations, that you have profaned among them. The nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the sovereign LORD, when I magnify myself among you in their sight.

24. ‘I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries; then I will bring you to your land.

25. I will sprinkle you with pure water and you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols.

26. I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh.

27. I will put my Spirit within you; I will take the initiative and you will obey my statutes and carefully observe my regulations.
28. Then you will live in the land I gave to your fathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

29. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and multiply it; I will not bring a famine on you.

30. I will multiply the fruit of the trees and the produce of the fields, so that you will never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.

31. Then you will remember your evil behavior and your deeds which were not good; you will loathe yourselves on account of your sins and your abominable deeds.

32. Understand that it is not for your sake I am about to act, declares the sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and embarrassed by your behavior, O house of Israel.

33. “‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: In the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will populate the cities and the ruins will be rebuilt.

34. The desolate land will be plowed, instead of being desolate in the sight of everyone who passes by.

35. They will say, “This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; the ruined, desolate, and destroyed cities are now fortified and inhabited.”

36. Then the nations which remain around you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken—and I will do it!

37. “This is what the sovereign LORD says: I will allow the house of Israel to ask me to do this for them: I will multiply their people like sheep.
38. Like the sheep for offerings, like the sheep of Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.” (NET)

Introduction:

I. Verses 1-15 are addressed to the mountains of Israel and are worded in a similar manner to the condemnations spoken against the surrounding nations which were the enemies of Israel, Hamilton wrote.

II. Smith wrote that Ezekiel 36-39 constitute a unit addressed to the restoration of the exiles to the land, the rebirth of the nation, the rescue of the faithful and the results of their victory.

   A. Smith described chapter 36 as “the brightest chapter in the book of Ezekiel” because it speaks of “the redemption, repopulation and purification of the land of Israel.”

III. Coffman observed that this chapter falls into two major divisions: viz., . . .

   A. The external, physical restoration of Israel to their homeland (verses 1-15).

   B. The spiritual restoration of Israel (verses 16-38).

IV. McGee stated Israel’s sins had to be judged and forgiven before Israel could be restored to the Promised Land.

   A. This chapter is entirely devoted to the consolation of repentant Israel. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)
Commentary:

**The Physical Restoration of Israel to their Homeland**

**Ezekiel 36:1,** “As for you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD!’”  
(NET)

I. “Son of man prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord!’”

   A. Ezekiel 6 and 36 are prophecies to the mountains of Israel, chapter 6 being spoken against the mountains of Israel because of their sinfulness and chapter 36 being spoken because of their repentance to encourage the exiles. (See Fredenburg.)

   B. The mountains of Israel refer to the entire land of Israel/Judah along with its people and everything that was in it.

       1. “Mount Seir,” in a similar frame of reference, refers to the Edomites, both people and land.

   C. References to the mountains and hills of Israel are found in verses 1, 4, 6 because the mountains and hills are an outstanding physical feature of Israel’s homeland, Coffman advised.

       1. Coffman concluded that the references to mountains and hills were not references to previous idol worship which took place there.

       2. Clarke advised that in this chapter the Israelites “are encouraged to expect a glorious restoration; and that none of the evil wishes of their adversaries should take place against them.”

   D. The Pulpit Commentary states that what is said in Ezekiel 36 regarding the mountains of Israel must be read first in contrast with
what is said in Ezekiel 35 regarding the mountains of Seir and secondly with what was said earlier about the mountains of Israel while they were in rebellion against God.

1. Ezekiel 35:1-15, The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them: Say, ‘Mountains of Israel, Hear the word of the sovereign LORD! This is what the sovereign LORD says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: I am bringing a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be ruined and your incense altars will be broken. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols. I will place the corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. In all your dwellings, the cities will be laid waste and the high places ruined so that your altars will be laid waste and ruined, your idols will be shattered and demolished, your incense altars will be broken down, and your works wiped out. The slain will fall among you and then you will know that I am the LORD. ‘But I will spare some of you. Some will escape the sword when you are scattered in foreign lands. Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are exiled. They will realize how I was crushed by their unfaithful heart which turned from me and by their eyes which lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves because of the evil they have done and because of all their abominable practices. They will know that I am the LORD; my threats to bring this catastrophe on them were not empty.’ ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and say, “Ah!” because of all the evil, abominable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine, and pestilence. The one far away will die by pestilence, the one close by will fall by the sword, and
whoever is left and has escaped these will die by famine. I will fully vent my rage against them. Then you will know that I am the LORD—when their dead lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and all the mountaintops, under every green tree and every leafy oak, the places where they have offered fragrant incense to all their idols. I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the wilderness to Riblah, in all the places where they live. Then they will know that I am the LORD!” (NET)

2. Ezekiel 6:1-14, The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them: Say, ‘Mountains of Israel, Hear the word of the sovereign LORD! This is what the sovereign LORD says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: I am bringing a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be ruined and your incense altars will be broken. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols. I will place the corpses of the people of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. In all your dwellings, the cities will be laid waste and the high places ruined so that your altars will be laid waste and ruined, your idols will be shattered and demolished, your incense altars will be broken down, and your works wiped out. The slain will fall among you and then you will know that I am the LORD. “But I will spare some of you. Some will escape the sword when you are scattered in foreign lands. Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are exiled. They will realize how I was crushed by their unfaithful heart which turned from me and by their eyes which lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves because of the evil they have done and because of all their abominable practices. They
will know that I am the LORD; my threats to bring this catastrophe on them were not empty.’

‘“This is what the sovereign LORD says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and say, “Ah!” because of all the evil, abominable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine, and pestilence. The one far away will die by pestilence, the one close by will fall by the sword, and whoever is left and has escaped these will die by famine. I will fully vent my rage against them. Then you will know that I am the LORD—when their dead lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and all the mountaintops, under every green tree and every leafy oak, the places where they have offered fragrant incense to all their idols. I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the wilderness to Riblah, in all the places where they live. Then they will know that I am the LORD!” (NET)

E. The “mountains of Israel” was a familiar Biblical expression for the land of Israel. (The Pulpit Commentary)

1. Ezekiel 6:1, The word of the LORD came to me: (NET)

2. Ezekiel 17:22, “This is what the sovereign Lord says: “I will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it. I will pluck from the top one of its tender twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. (NET)

3. Ezekiel 33:28, I will turn the land into a desolate ruin; her confident pride will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will be so desolate no one will pass through them. (NET)

4. Ezekiel 34:14, In a good pasture I will feed them; the mountain heights of Israel will be their pasture. There
they will lie down in a lush pasture, and they will feed on rich grass on the mountains of Israel. (NET)

5. Ezekiel 37:22, I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king will rule over them all. They will never again be two nations and never again be divided into two kingdoms. (NET)

6. Ezekiel 38:8, After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come to a land restored from the ravages of war, with many peoples gathered on the mountains of Israel that had long been in ruins. Its people were brought out from the peoples, and all of them will be living securely. (NET)

7. Psalm 121:1, I look up toward the hills. From where does my help come? (NET)

8. Isaiah 52:7, How delightful it is to see approaching over the mountains the feet of a messenger who announces peace, a messenger who brings good news, who announces deliverance, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (NET)

Ezekiel 36:2, This is what the sovereign LORD says: The enemy has spoken against you, saying “Aha!” and, “The ancient heights have become our property!” (NET)

I. This is what the sovereign Lord says: . . .

A. This is such an important fact, statement that it is repeated ten times in this one chapter in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 13, 22, 33 and 37.

II. The enemy said of you, “Aha! The ancient heights have become our possessions.”
A. Foreign nations now populated the land promised to Abraham and his descendants.

1. Israel had been as sinful as the pagan nations around them.
   a. Justice demanded all those involved in such wickedness be punished, and so it was.

B. Israel’s enemies were not reasonable in their criticisms, but ravaged and hounded them from every side while engaging in malicious talk and slander.

1. To speak against Israel and the land was to speak against God.

2. God – land – Israel were inseparably connected. Actions taken or words spoken for or against one was taken as spoken against the other two as well. (See Fredenburg.)

3. Clarke viewed chapter 36 as a continuance of the theme of chapter 35.
   a. Consequently, the Edomites (Idumeans) thought they would shortly be put in possession of all the strong places of Israel.
   b. Chapter 36 states Israel would be again given control of all the ancient heights.

C. “Exulting over Israel’s misfortune” was a reason for God’s determination to punish the nations which surrounded Israel.

1. Ezekiel 25:3, Say to the Ammonites, ‘Hear the word of the sovereign Lord: This is what the sovereign Lord says: You said “Aha!” about my sanctuary when it was desecrated, about the land of Israel when it was made
desolate, and about the house of Judah when they went into exile.’ (NET)

2. Psalm 40:16, 17. May all those who seek you be happy and rejoice in you! May those who love to experience your deliverance say continually, “May the LORD be praised!” I am oppressed and needy! May the Lord pay attention to me! You are my helper and my deliverer! O my God, do not delay! (NET)

D. “The ancient high places” which Israel’s enemies coveted were the principal mountains of Palestine.”

1. Genesis 49:26, The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the eternal mountains or the desirable things of the age-old hills. They will be on the head of Joseph and on the brow of the prince of his brothers. (NET)

2. Deuteronomy 33:15, with the best of the ancient mountains and the harvest produced by the age-old hills; (NET)

Ezekiel 36:3, So prophesy and say: ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Surely because they have made you desolate and crushed you from all directions, so that you have become the property of the rest of the nations, and have become the subject of gossip and slander among the people, (NET)

I. Therefore prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: …

A. Ezekiel was to make clear to his listeners that what he was saying was the word of the Sovereign Lord!

1. This expression appears ten times in Ezekiel 36 which emphasizes how important it is that Ezekiel’s listeners knew
that what Ezekiel was telling them was exactly what God had said. (The Pulpit Commentary)

a. See verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 23, 33 and 37. See also verse 16.)

II. Because they ravaged and hounded you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people’s malicious talk and slander, . . .

A. Hamilton wrote, “. . . the nations uttered gossip, slander, insults and disgrace against God’s vanguished people.”

B. Heathens who still lived in Palestine slandered God and spoke maliciously against the Lord saying “Jehovah was a defunct god, no longer able to protect or bless his people.” Attitudes like this demanded their destruction as God determined. (See Coffman.)

1. It was generally believed that gods were local deities. (See Coffman.)

2. Many Hebrews held this view and believed Jehovah was their national deity, for them and against all other people. (See Coffman.)

   a. “Therefore,” Coffman wrote, “if disaster befell a people, it proved the incompetence and weakness of the god of the land.”

   b. This led gentile nations to disbelieve in Jehovah! . . . to regard God as impotent.

   c. This attitude regarding Jehovah required the destruction of these pagan nations.

Ezekiel 36:4, therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the sovereign LORD: This is what the sovereign LORD says to the
mountains and hills, the ravines and valleys, and to the desolate ruins and the abandoned cities that have become prey and an object of derision to the rest of the nations round about— (NET)

I. therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord: 

A. Ezekiel now urged the Israelites (the mountains of Israel to hear and take to heart the word of the Sovereign Lord.

II. This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, . . .

A. Through the ravines and valleys, mountain streams flowed.

1. Ezekiel 35:8, I will fill its mountains with its dead; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines, those killed by the sword will fall. (NET)

III. to the desolate ruins and the deserts and towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you - . . .

A. Because of Israel’s sins, God delivered the land to the rest of the nations around them.

1. Psalm 79:1-4, O God, foreigners have invaded your chosen land; they have polluted your holy temple and turned Jerusalem into a heap of ruins. They have given the corpses of your servants to the birds of the sky; the flesh of your loyal followers to the beasts of the earth. They have made their blood flow like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury them. We have become an object of disdain to our neighbors; those who live on our borders taunt and insult us. (NET)

2. This can be dated to 588-586 B.C. and the Babylonian invasion. (See Fredenburg.)
3. These surrounding nations took full possession of the land and claimed it as their own. (See Fredenburg.)

B. The surrounding nations would not for long profit by the disasters which had befallen Israel. (See Clarke.)

Ezekiel 36:5, therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Surely I have spoken in the fire of my zeal against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who with great joy and utter contempt have made my land their property and prey, because of its pasture.’ (NET)

I. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .

A. Ezekiel never let his listeners forget that what he said was the precise word of God!

II. In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, . . .

A. Jehovah was now ready to respond, this time in favor of Israel and against the surrounding oppressor nations.

1. Psalm 79:1-8, O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble. They have left the dead bodies of your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild. They have poured out blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury the dead. We are objects of contempt to our neighbors, of scorn and derision to those around us. How long, LORD? Will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; for they have devoured Jacob and devastated
his homeland. Do not hold against us the sins of past generations; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. (NET)

2. “Edom” is here used to represent all surrounding heathen nations. (See Coffman.)

B. McGee wrote that God made it clear that it is the meek, not the wicked, who will inherit the earth.

1. Matthew 5:5, Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (NET)

III. for with glee (joy) and with malice (despiteful minds) in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.

A. Ezekiel 25:6-7, For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart against the land of Israel, therefore I will stretch out my hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I will wipe you out from among the nations and exterminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD.”” (NET)

B. One reason given for the actions of these neighboring heathen nations was their desire to possess the land for the purpose of plundering its pastureland.

Ezekiel 36:6, “Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, the ravines and valleys, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I have spoken in my zeal and in my anger, because you have endured the insults of the nations. (NET)

I. Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: . . .
A. Ezekiel was directed to prophecy concerning the land of Israel, its mountains and hills, its ravines and valleys exactly what God was now to reveal to him.

II. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .

A. For Ezekiel and for today’s preachers, the commission remains the same, speak precisely what the Sovereign Lord says, the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

III. I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations.

A. The heathens had treated Israel with shame and contempt.

1. Ezekiel 34:29, I will prepare for them a healthy planting. They will no longer be victims of famine in the land and will no longer bear the insults of the nations. (NET)

2. Ezekiel 16:52, So now, bear your disgrace, because you have given your sisters reason to justify their behavior. Because the sins you have committed were more abominable than those of your sisters; they have become more righteous than you. So now, be ashamed and bear the disgrace of making your sisters appear righteous. (NET)

B. The way the heathens treated Israel, God’s chosen, caused the Lord to be jealous.

1. The Israelites had themselves gone after heathen gods, idols and this also kindled God’s jealousy against Israel.

Ezekiel 36:7, So this is what the sovereign LORD says: I vow that the nations around you will endure insults as well. (NET)

I. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .
A. Ezekiel repeatedly made this point.

1. Today’s preachers would do well to do likewise.

II. I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will suffer scorn.

A. God swore the nations surrounding Israel would suffer scorn.

B. See the following scriptures regarding God’s swearing.

1. Ezekiel 20: 5, 6, 15, 23, 28, “This is what the sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel I swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, “I am the LORD your God.” On that day I swore to bring them out of the land of Egypt to a land which I had picked out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them to the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands. I brought them to the land which I swore to give them, but whenever they saw any high hill or leafy tree, they offered their sacrifices there and presented the offerings that provoke me to anger. They offered their soothing aroma there and poured out their drink offerings. (NET)

2. Ezekiel 47:14, You must divide it equally just as I vowed to give it to your forefathers; this land will be assigned as your inheritance. (NET)
3. Exodus 6:8, I will bring you to the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob – and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord!” (NET)

4. Numbers 14:30, You will by no means enter into the land where I swore to settle you. The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. (NET)

5. Deuteronomy 32:40, For I raise up my hand to heaven, and say, “As surely as I live forever,” (NET)

Ezekiel 36:8, “But you, mountains of Israel, will grow your branches, and bear your fruit for my people Israel; for they will arrive soon. (NET)

I. “But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home.

A. The promised land was to be a fertile and productive land. (See Hamilton.)

1. Leviticus 26:1-13, “You must not make for yourselves idols, so you must not set up for yourselves a carved image or a pillar, and you must not place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down before it, for I am the LORD your God. You must keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. I am the LORD. “If you walk in my statutes and are sure to obey my commandments, I will give you your rains in their time so that the land will give its yield and the trees of the field will produce their fruit. Threshing season will extend for you until the season for harvesting grapes, and the season for harvesting grapes will extend until sowing season, so you will eat your bread until you are satisfied, and you will live securely in your land. I will grant peace in the land so that you will lie down to sleep without anyone terrifying you. I will
remove harmful animals from the land, and no sword of war will pass through your land. You will pursue your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword. Five of you will pursue a hundred, and a hundred of you will pursue ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. I will turn to you, make you fruitful, multiply you, and maintain my covenant with you. You will still be eating stored produce from the previous year and will have to clean out what is stored from the previous year to make room for new. “I will put my tabernacle in your midst and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you, and I will be your God and you will be my people. I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from being their slaves, and I broke the Bars of your yoke and caused you to walk upright. (NET)

2. Genesis 12:6-7, Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (NET)

3. Genesis 15:7, 16, 18, The LORD said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit.” That day the LORD made a covenant with Abram: “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River— (NET)

4. Genesis 35:11-13, Then God said to him, “I am the sovereign God. Be fruitful and multiply! A nation—even
a company of nations—will descend from you; kings will be among your descendants! The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you. To your descendants I will also give this land.” Then God went up from the place where he spoke with him. (NET)

B. Hamilton wrote that this promise applied to the exiles only and they did not completely receive all its provisions because they failed to genuinely repent and consistently live as God commanded.

C. Smith wrote, “They did not return soon, the land did not become all that was described for it here; the reason lay in the disobedience of the exiles.”

D. Coffman observed that from the time this oracle was given to Ezekiel another forty years passed before Israel returned home.

1. This is a very short period of time in God’s perspective and in the history of the middle east.

2. The return of Israel to their homeland was indeed “at hand.”

3. McGee reminded his readers that from God’s perspective one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

4. Clarke calculated that another forty-eight years were left of the seventy foretold before Israel would return.

5. Clarke wrote that the restoration of the Jews to their homeland was absolutely determined. It would definitely occur. . . . and so it was!!
6. The “soon return of Israel” was a correct concept since twenty years of the seventy years of the captivity as predicted by Jeremiah had already passed. (The Pulpit Commentary)

   a. Jeremiah 25:11, This whole area will become a desolate wasteland. These nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years.’ (NET)

   b. Ezekiel 33:21, In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth of the month, a refugee came to me from Jerusalem saying, “The city has been defeated!” (NET)

   c. Ezekiel 11:17, “Therefore say: ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.’” (NET)

Ezekiel 36:9, For indeed, I am on your side; I will turn to you, and you will be plowed and planted. (NET)

I. I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor;

   A. God now looks with favor on the previously forsaken land.

      1. The people will return home, cities will be rebuilt, bountiful crops will be harvested, God’s blessings would shower down upon them.

   B. Previously God’s message has been, “I am against you.” Now God’s message is, “I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor.”

      1. Fredenburg wrote that God’s wrath against his land had been satisfied.
B. Previously God’s message has been, “I am against you.” Now God’s message is, “I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor.”

1. Fredenburg wrote that God’s wrath against his land had been satisfied.

2. Ezekiel 5:8, “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: I—even I—am against you, and I will execute judgment among you while the nations watch. (NET)

3. Ezekiel 13:8, “Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you have spoken false words and forecast delusion, look, I am against you, declares the sovereign LORD. (NET)

4. God had not changed. Israel had changed. They had been punished and had repented. God welcomed Israel back to his love and care.

C. How wonderful it is to know that God is (concerned) for us and that he looks on us with favor! (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

1. Generally it is said that sinners turn toward God, but God turns toward sinners as well.

   a. John 3:16, For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (NET)

2. God would look upon Israel with favor, God turned toward Israel.

II. you will be plowed (filled) and sown, . . .
A. God’s favor will be shown by the land’s being plowed and sown by the returned Israelites.

Ezekiel 36:10, I will multiply your people—the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities will be populated and the ruins rebuilt. (NET)

I. and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel.

   A. God’s favor would be shown by the population of “the whole house of Israel,” both north and south, markedly increasing.

1. Ezekiel 20:40, For there on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD, all the house of Israel will serve me, all of them in the land. I will accept them there, and there I will seek your contributions and your choice gifts, with all your holy things. (NET)

2. Ezekiel 16:55, As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters will be restored to their former status, Samaria and her daughters will be restored to their former status, and you and your daughters will be restored to your former status. (NET)

II. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.

   A. God’s favor would be shown by Israel’s towns and ruins being rebuilt.

1. Isaiah 44:26, who fulfills the oracles of his prophetic servants and brings to pass the announcements of his messengers, who says about Jerusalem, ‘She will be inhabited,’ and about the towns of Judah, ‘They will be rebuilt, her ruins I will raise up, (NET)
2. **Isaiah 54:3**, For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your children will conquer nations and will resettle desolate cities. (NET)

3. **Isaiah 61:4**, They will rebuild the perpetual ruins and restore the places that were desolate; they will reestablish the ruined cities, the places that have been desolate since ancient times. (NET)

**Ezekiel 36:11**, I will increase the number of people and animals on you; they will increase and be fruitful. I will cause you to be inhabited as in ancient times, and will do more good for you than at the beginning of your history. Then you will know that I am the LORD. (NET)

I. I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous.

   A. God’s favor would be shown by the increase in numbers of both fruitful men and animals.

      1. The men and animals would be fruitful in numbers of offspring and in production of crops, things of value.

      2. The Israelites and their livestock would greatly increase in number, a definite sign of God’s favor. (See Clarke.)

      3. Clarke wrote that the actual fulfillment of this prophecy in the time between Ezra-Nehemiah-Zerubbabel and the birth of Christ is hard to document and that the correct fulfillment appears to a spiritual one; that is, the Christian era.

II. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before.

   A. The land, Hamilton reminded us, was an essential part of the promise to Abraham.
1. Genesis 12:6-7, Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (NET)

2. Genesis 13:14-18, After Lot had departed, the LORD said to Abram, “Look from the place where you stand to the north, south, east, and west. I will give all the land that you see to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone is able to count the dust of the earth, then your descendants also can be counted. Get up and walk throughout the land, for I will give it to you.” So Abram moved his tents and went to live by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron, and he built an altar to the LORD there. (NET)

3. Genesis 35:11-13, Then God said to him, “I am the sovereign God. Be fruitful and multiply! A nation—even a company of nations—will descend from you; kings will be among your descendants! The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you. To your descendants I will also give this land.” Then God went up from the place where he spoke with him. (NET)

B. God’s favor would be shown on Israel by making it more prosperous than ever before.

C. Coffman wrote, “Since all of God’s promises are contingent, absolutely, upon some acceptable degree of obedience and cooperation of the people themselves to whom the promises came and that no such obedience or cooperation on the part of Israel ever occurred, the prophecies have never been fulfilled, nor will they ever be.”
1. Jeremiah 17:7-10, My blessing is on those people who trust in me, who put their confidence in me. They will be like a tree planted near a stream whose roots spread out toward the water. It has nothing to fear when the heat comes. Its leaves are always green. It has no need to be concerned in a year of drought. It does not stop bearing fruit. The human mind is more deceitful than anything else. It is incurably bad. Who can understand it? I, the LORD, probe into people’s minds. I examine people’s hearts. I deal with each person according to how he has behaved. I give them what they deserve based on what they have done. (NET)

2. Isaiah 6:9, He said, “Go and tell these people: ‘Listen continually, but don’t understand! Look continually, but don’t perceive!’” (NET)

3. Coffman further wrote, “Look what Israel did. When God ordered them to go back to Palestine, and when Cyrus the king of Persia himself authorized their departure and even paid part of the cost, only a pitiful little handful of the captives responded. The vast majority, according to Josephus, already growing wealthy in Babylon, elected not to go. And yet, enough of the promises were fulfilled to encourage and bless the remnant who ‘waited for the Kingdom of God.’”

D. Israel’s condition would be better than ever before.

1. Deuteronomy 30:5, Then he will bring you to the land your ancestors possessed and you also will possess it; he will do better for you and multiply you more than he did your ancestors. (NET)
III. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

   A. This is the principal objective of all God’s dealings, both blessings and punishments; that is, that all people would come to know that Yahweh is Lord.

Ezekiel 36:12, I will lead people, my people Israel, across you; they will possess you and you will become their inheritance. No longer will you bereave them of their children. (NET)

I. I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you.

   A. God’s favor would be shown by causing his chosen people to again walk freely in the promised land.

II. They will possess you (the Promised Land) and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.

   A. God’s favor will be shown by enabling Israel to possess the promised land permanently and in perpetuity.

      1. Again, this has not been fully realized because of the people’s sinfulness.

Ezekiel 36:13, “This is what the sovereign LORD says: Because they are saying to you, “You are a devourer of men, and bereave your nation of children,” (NET)

I. “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .

   A. Ezekiel told it like it was, exactly as God directed him.

II. Because people say to you, “You devour men and deprive your nation of its children,” . . .

   A. Fredenburg listed several ways the land had devoured its people in past ages including “natural calamities of famine, wild animals and plagues” as well as by military enemies.
1. Ezekiel 5:17, I will send famine and wild beasts against you and they will take your children from you. Plague and bloodshed will overwhelm you, and I will bring a sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (NET)

2. Ezekiel 14: 13, 15, 19, “Son of man, suppose a country sins against me by being unfaithful, and I stretch out my hand against it, cut off its bread supply, cause famine to come on it, and kill both people and animals. “Suppose I were to send wild animals through the land and kill its children, leaving it desolate, without travelers due to the wild animals. “Or suppose I were to send a plague into that land, and pour out my rage on it with bloodshed, killing both people and animals. (NET)

3. Leviticus 26:22, 25, 26, I will send the wild animals against you and they will bereave you of your children, annihilate your cattle, and diminish your population so that your roads will become deserted. I will bring on you an avenging sword, a covenant vengeance. Although you will gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you and you will be given into enemy hands. When I break off your supply of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven; they will ration your bread by weight, and you will eat and not be satisfied. (NET)

B. Several things led to the nation’s being deprived of its children, one being child sacrifice. (See Fredenburg.)

Ezekiel 36:14, therefore you will no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the sovereign LORD. (NET)

I. therefore you will no longer devour men or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign Lord.
A. The land would no longer be used against the people to devour men or to make the nation childless. (See Fredenburg.)

B. The Pulpit Commentary calls attention to the nations which had encountered great difficulty as residents of Palestine, but assures the land that in the future Canaan would no longer devour its inhabitants. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

1. Deuteronomy 3:25, Let me please cross over to see the good land on the other side of the Jordan River—this good hill country and the Lebanon!” (NET)

2. Ezekiel 5:17, I will send famine and wild beasts against you and they will take your children from you. Plague and bloodshed will overwhelm you, and I will bring a sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken!” (NET)

3. Ezekiel 14:15, “Suppose I were to send wild animals through the land and kill its children, leaving it desolate, without travelers due to the wild animals. (NET)

4. 2 Kings 6:29, So we boiled my son and ate him. Then I said to her the next day, ‘Hand over your son and we’ll eat him.’ But she hid her son!” (NET)

5. Numbers 13:32, Then they presented the Israelites with a discouraging report of the land they had investigated, saying, “The land that we passed through to investigate is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw there are of great stature. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:15, I will no longer subject you to the nations’ insults; no longer will you bear the shame of the peoples, and no longer will you bereave your nation, declares the sovereign LORD.”” (NET)
I. No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

A. the taunts of the nations, suffering the scorn of the people, activities to cause the nation to fall would cease. (See Fredenburg.)

1. This was a wonderful promise and it is so tragic that Israel did not live in keeping with God’s will so that they could receive it.

2. Obeying the will of God would have saved Israel many problems including the Roman occupation and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple . . . among many other such like things.

3. Related Scriptures:

   a. Ezekiel 16:57, before your evil was exposed? Now you have become an object of scorn to the daughters of Aram and all those around her and to the daughters of the Philistines—those all around you who despise you. (NET)

   b. Ezekiel 22:4, you are guilty because of the blood you shed and defiled by the idols you made. You have hastened the day of your doom; the end of your years has come. Therefore I will make you an object of scorn to the nations, an object to be mocked by all lands. (NET)

   c. Joshua 5:9, The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have taken away the disgrace of Egypt from you.” So that place is called Gilgal even to this day. (NET)
d. **Micah 6:16**, You implement the regulations of Omri, and all the practices of Ahab’s dynasty; you follow their policies. Therefore I will make you an appalling sight, the city’s inhabitants will be taunted derisively, and nations will mock all of you.” *(NET)*

B. “This prophecy clearly looked beyond the return from exile under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, since under these leaders only a portion of the whole house of Israel reestablished themselves in Canaan, while the land was often subjected to reproach and oppression under heathen powers. At the same time, the homecoming from Babylon and the prosperity that ensued thereupon are partial fulfillments of the blessings here promised,” The Pulpit Commentary states.

**Note**: During the captivity, Israel remained in deplorable conditions while heathen nations were prosperous. Following the captivity conditions would be reversed.

**Note 2**: The oracle which begins with Ezekiel 36:16 continues through Ezekiel 37:14, according to The Pulpit Commentary.

**The Spiritual Restoration of Israel**

**Ezekiel 36:16**, The word of the **LORD** came to me: *(NET)*

I. Again the word of the Lord came to me: . . .

A. Ezekiel never let his audience forget for a minute that God had told him what to say and that is exactly what he was telling them.

**Ezekiel 36:17**, “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living on their own land, they defiled it by their behavior and their deeds. In my sight their behavior was like the uncleanness of a woman having her monthly period. *(NET)*
I. “Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions.

   A. Hamilton wrote that ancient Near Eastern theologies viewed deity-people-land as interdependent and inseparable.

      1. When God was displeased with the people, both the land and people would suffer.

      2. When a nation and/or land suffered, it was understood that their national deity was punishing them because he was displeased with them . . . or that he could not, was unable to care for them.

      3. This is the only way heathen nations viewed Judah’s troubles.

         a. God-land-people were all inter-related in the ancient Near Eastern view.

   B. God directed Ezekiel in what he was to say to explain his reasons for punishing Judah and Israel.

      1. If Israel had remained faithful they never would have been removed from their land.

         a. Righteous living would have saved Israel a world of trouble.

         b. Righteous living would certainly save us a world of trouble as well.

II. Their conduct was like a woman’s monthly uncleanness in God’s my sight.

   A. This makes it clear how very repulsive Jehovah regarded the sins Israel had committed!
1. A woman “in her uncleanness” was separated from the congregation of God.

2. By their sins Israel had separated themselves from fellowship with the Lord.

B. Fredenburg wrote that God’s covenant with Abraham, Moses and David was made in view of the objective, “They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

1. This was to be a means of glorifying God.

2. God intended for his people to be a righteous witness to the world.

3. Israel did not keep their covenant with God, were defeated and killed or exiled.

4. This caused the nations to regard Yahweh as impotent, too weak to care for Israel and their land.

5. This view was not the correct view, but, because the nations held this view, it presented a problem in regard to the Sovereign Lord’s reputation.

C. Israel’s sinfulness produced problems for Israel, the Promised Land and for God himself in the view of the nations. (See Fredenburg.)

1. God’s subsequent actions proved God was powerful.

2. Israel returned home and lived more faithfully than before.

3. The nations saw God had revisited his people and this caused them to know that God was both good and powerful.

D. Israel’s sins were as disgusting to God as a woman’s uncleanness was materially disgusting.
1. Isaiah 64:6, We are all like one who is unclean, all our so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in your sight. We all wither like a leaf; our sins carry us away like the wind. (NET)

2. Ezekiel 18:6, does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains or pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife, does not have sexual relations with a woman during her period, (NET)

3. Leviticus 15:19, “When a woman has a discharge and her discharge is blood from her body, she is to be in her menstruation seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:18, So I poured my anger on them because of the blood they shed on the land and because of the idols with which they defiled it. (NET)

I. So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols.

A. Because of these horrendous sins the Lord removed the people from Palestine for a while so the land could have rest from their wickedness. (See Hamilton.)

1. Leviticus 26:34, “Then the land will make up for its Sabbaths all the days it lies desolate while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and make up its Sabbaths. (NET)

B. Idolatry was a major sin of ancient Israel, but after their return from Babylonian captivity they never again were troubled by idolatry.

C. Israel had also defiled the land by shedding blood in Palestine.
1. Numbers 35:29-34, So these things must be a statutory ordinance for you throughout your generations, in all the places where you live. “Whoever kills any person, the murderer must be put to death by the testimony of witnesses, but one witness cannot testify against any person to cause him to be put to death. Moreover, you must not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death; he must surely be put to death. And you must not accept a ransom for anyone who has fled to a town of refuge, to allow him to return home and live on his own land before the death of the high priest. “You must not pollute the land where you live, for blood defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed there, except by the blood of the person who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land that you will inhabit, in which I live, for I the L ORD live among the Israelites.” (NET)

2. Leviticus 20:1-5, The L ORD spoke to Moses: “You are to say to the Israelites, ‘Any man from the Israelites or from the foreigners who reside in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death; the people of the land must pelt him with stones. I myself will set my face against that man and cut him off from the midst of his people, because he has given some of his children to Molech and thereby defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. If, however, the people of the land shut their eyes to that man when he gives some of his children to Molech so that they do not put him to death, I myself will set my face against that man and his clan. I will cut off from the midst of their people both him and all who follow after him in spiritual prostitution, to commit prostitution by worshiping Molech. (NET)

D. Sin had defiled the Promised Land!
1. Deuteronomy 9:4-5, Do not think to yourself after the LORD your God has driven them out before you, “Because of my own righteousness the LORD has brought me here to possess this land.” It is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out ahead of you. It is not because of your righteousness, or even your inner uprightness, that you have come here to possess their land. Instead, because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out ahead of you in order to confirm the promise he made on oath to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (NET)

2. Genesis 15:16, In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit.” (NET)

3. Ezra 9:11, which you commanded us through your servants the prophets with these words: ‘The land that you are entering to possess is a land defiled by the impurities of the local residents! With their abominations they have filled it from one end to the other with their filthiness. (NET)

E. Israel did not merit the glorious times this chapter foretells. That is a fact! (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

Ezekiel 36:19, I scattered them among the nations; they were dispersed throughout foreign countries. In accordance with their behavior and their deeds I judged them. (NET)

I. I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; . . .

A. This severe punishment was all because of their sins, rebellion against God.
1. Ezekiel 7:8, Soon now I will pour out my rage on you; I will fully vent my anger against you. I will judge you according to your behavior. I will hold you accountable for all your abominable practices. (NET)

2. Ezekiel 22:22, As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted in it, and you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out my anger on you.”” (NET)

B. This dispersion would not be permanent.

1. Leviticus 15:19-23, “When a woman has a discharge and her discharge is blood from her body, she is to be in her menstruation seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. Anything she lies on during her menstruation will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. Anyone who touches her bed must wash his clothes, bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Anyone who touches any furniture she sits on must wash his clothes, bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If there is something on the bed or on the furniture she sits on, when he touches it he will be unclean until evening, (NET)

C. Fredenburg wrote that the exiles had seen their population deported three, perhaps four times in 605, 597, 586 and 581 B.C.

1. This once prosperous nation had been decimated. (Fredenburg)

a. Isaiah 6:11-13, I replied, “How long, sovereign master?” He said, “Until cities are in ruins and unpopulated, and the land is ruined and devastated, and the LORD has sent the people off to a distant place, and the very heart of the land is completely abandoned. Even if only a tenth of the people remain in the land, it will
again be destroyed, like one of the large sacred trees or an Asherah pole, when a sacred pillar on a high place is thrown down. That sacred pillar symbolizes the special chosen family.” (NET)

b. Genesis 22:17-18, I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be as countless as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the strongholds of their enemies. Because you have obeyed me, all the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants.”” (NET)

c. Ezekiel 33:23-26, The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, the ones living in these ruins in the land of Israel are saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he possessed the land, but we are many; surely the land has been given to us for a possession.’ Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: You eat the meat with the blood still in it, pray to your idols, and shed blood. Do you really think you will possess the land? You rely on your swords and commit abominable deeds; each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife. Will you possess the land?’” (NET)

II. I judged them according to their conduct and their actions.

A. Israel did not deserve any of the favors God bestowed upon them and we don’t deserve any of the blessings God bestows on us.

1. Leviticus 20:19, You must not expose the nakedness of your mother’s sister and your father’s sister, for such a
person has laid bare his own close relative. They must bear their punishment for iniquity. (NET)

2. Leviticus 18:28, So do not make the land vomit you out because you defile it just as it has vomited out the nations that were before you. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:20, But when they arrived in the nations where they went, they profaned my holy name. It was said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, yet they have departed from his land.’ (NET)

I. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, . . .

A. The Israelites were thoroughly rebellious against God, so much so they profaned the Lord’s name wherever they went!

1. Of course, the heathens also profaned God’s name.

2. Grammatically this profaning of God’s name could have come from either the Israelites or the heathens or both. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

a. Isaiah 55:5, Look, you will summon nations you did not previously know; nations that did not previously know you will run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he bestows honor on you. (NET)

b. Romans 2:24, For just as it is written, “the name of God is being blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” (NET)

B. Israel had become so wicked they profaned the name of God even when they were living as exiles among those heathens who
had destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, killed thousands and
devastated all of Judah.

1. Clarke stated in amazement, “O what an abominable
people are these! . . . and what a being must that God be who
can have and own such for his people!”

II. “These are the Lord’s people, and yet they had to leave his land.”

A. Hamilton observed that the destruction of Jerusalem, the deaths
and exiles of the people caused the nations to ask why God did not
or could not take better care of his chosen people.

1. Jehovah took steps to counteract these charges as a prime
objective of all God did was to convince people he is indeed
the Sovereign Lord of the universe, not just of Israel. (See
Hamilton.)

2. By bringing a repentant people back to Palestine, the world
would see that God did indeed punish Israel, but that he
forgave and blessed them when they returned to him. (See
Hamilton.)

B. The heathen people among whom the Israelites had been
scattered continued to profane the name of Jehovah. (See
Coffman.)

1. These pagan nations regarded Jehovah as an incompetent
and impotent god, unable to protect his people because the
Israelites had been soundly defeated and exiled far away
from their homeland. (See Coffman.)

2. The sinful deeds of the Israelites and their failure to live
righteously also caused the heathens to profane God’s name.
(See Coffman.) Israel deserved to be punished and exiled
because of sins committed in Palestine and in the lands of
their dispersion. (See Coffman.)
C. The heathens recognized only local divinities and concluded Jehovah had either behaved capriciously toward his people and cast them off or had proved unequal to the task of protecting them, so that they had been driven off. In either case, the honour of Jehovah had been lessened in the minds of and tarnished by the words of the heathen,” The Pulpit Commentary states.

Ezekiel 36:21, I was concerned for my holy reputation which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they went. (NET)

I. I had concern (pity) for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

A. Both the sins of Israel and God’s exiling and separating them from their land cast the Lord in a bad light.

1. By these developments, other nations came to believe God could neither control his wayward people nor protect them from defeat and deportation.

a. Numbers 14:10-16, However, the whole community threatened to stone them. But the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting. The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me, and how long will they not believe in me, in spite of the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence, and I will disinherit them; I will make you into a nation that is greater and mightier than they!” Moses said to the LORD, “When the Egyptians hear it—for you brought up this people by your power from among them—then they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, LORD, are among this people, that you, LORD, are seen face to face, that your cloud stands over them, and that you go before them by day in a pillar of
cloud and in a pillar of fire by night. If you kill this entire people at once, then the nations that have heard of your fame will say, ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to them, he killed them in the wilderness.’ (NET)

b. 2 Kings 18:32-35, until I come and take you to a land just like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Then you will live and not die. Don’t listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, “The LORD will rescue us.” Have any of the gods of the nations actually rescued his land from the power of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Indeed, did any gods rescue Samaria from my power? Who among all the gods of the lands has rescued their lands from my power? So how can the LORD rescue Jerusalem from my power?”

2. The Lord was faced with convincing the nations that their views were incorrect and that Israel’s sins were responsible for their present predicament.

3. God’s name had been profaned by both Israel and the pagans by both words and deeds! (See Coffman)

4. McGee reminded us that God will not forever allow himself to be dishonored and disrespected.

   a. Be sure you do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain!
b. God will be glorified! You see what happened to Israel when they dishonored God by word and deed. Let that be a lesson for you!

c. “God will care for the honor of his holy name,” The Pulpit Commentary reads.

Ezekiel 36:22, “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake that I am about to act, O house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy reputation which you profaned among the nations where you went. (NET)

I. “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .

A. Ezekiel was repeatedly commanded to keep before his listening audience the fact that every word he spoke was dictated by the Lord, that he was only the conveyor of the message and served as a public address system, for example.

II. It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

A. Smith wrote, “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.”

B. In spite of all the evil they had done, God would show his great power and caring spirit by making them a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and a light to the nations. Fredenburg further wrote, “Yahweh’s intent to fulfill his covenant obligations was more than a matter of faithfulness to his word, it defined the essence of his holiness.”
1. God will defend his name! We had better take heed that we do not blaspheme his holy name!

C. Israel did not, could not merit even one of God’s blessings. It is also certain that Christians cannot merit or earn the salvation made available through Jesus Christ. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

1. Deuteronomy 9:6, Understand, therefore, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is about to give you this good land as a possession, for you are a stubborn people! (NET)

2. Romans 11:6, And if it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. (NET)

3. Ephesians 2:8-10, For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:23, I will magnify my great name that has been profaned among the nations, that you have profaned among them. The nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the sovereign LORD, when I magnify myself among you in their sight. (NET)

I. I will (sanctify) show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them.

A. In spite of all Israel had done to profane his name by words and actions, God would show the holiness of his name!

1. Coffman wrote that in the last analysis, salvation was undeserved by ancient Israel.
a. Salvation cannot be merited, deserved, or earned. (See Coffman.)

b. Luke 17:10, So you too, when you have done everything you were commanded to do, should say, ‘We are slaves undeserving of special praise; we have only done what was our duty.’” (NET)

2. The nations would then have come to see God and his actions in their true light.

3. When Israel repented, God would show them kindness more to glorify his name than to benefit Israel. (See Clarke.)

B. As the destruction of Jerusalem and the exiling of some of its residents caused God’s name to be dishonored, the restoration of Israel to their homeland would glorify the name of the Lord. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

1. Deuteronomy 28:58, “If you refuse to obey all the words of this law, the things written in this scroll, and refuse to fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, (NET)

2. Psalm 8:1, O LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your reputation throughout the earth! You reveal your majesty in the heavens above! (NET)

3. Malachi 1:11, For from the east to the west my name will be great among the nations. Incense and pure offerings will be offered in my name everywhere, for my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD who rules over all. (NET)

4. Ezekiel 38:23, I will exalt and magnify myself; I will reveal myself before many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.’ (NET)
II. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before your eyes.

A. When God had restored Israel to the Promised Land and they had been cleansed of their impurities and rededicated themselves to the Lord, the nations would see the Sovereign Lord in all his purity, justice and power.

B. God was now seen by all, Israelites and heathens alike, in his correct light, not as a feeble, local deity, but as the all powerful, loving universal God. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

Ezekiel 36:24, “I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries; then I will bring you to your land. (NET)

I. “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

A. God would return his people through Cyrus to the Promised Land uniting once more god – land- people and restoring Jehovah to his rightful place of honor and respect.

1. Ezekiel 11:17, “Therefore say: ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.’ (NET)

2. Ezekiel 20:41-42, When I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, I will accept you along with your soothing aroma. I will display my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. Then you will know that I am the LORD when I bring you to the land of Israel, to the land I swore to give to your fathers. (NET)
3. Ezekiel 37:21, Then tell them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I am about to take the Israelites from among the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from round about and bring them to their land. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:25, I will sprinkle you with pure water and you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols. (NET)

I. 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.

   A. This spiritual cleansing process recalls the menstruant’s purification responsibilities in cleansing herself of her ceremonial uncleanness. (See Hamilton.)

   B. This cleansing of Israel, according to Pearson via Coffman, involved (1) the cleansing of Israel, (2) regeneration, and (3) the reception of the Holy Spirit.

   C. Remarkably, after the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity, they never again worshiped idols.

   D. God would cleanse Israel from all their impurities.

      1. For Jehovah’s name to be honored and respected, Israel would have to undergo a moral renovation beginning with the forgiveness of their past sins. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

      2. A righteous people would lead to Jehovah’s being honored whereas a wicked people would cause God to be ridiculed.
3. The sprinkling of clean water would be familiar to a priest such as Ezekiel. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

a. Numbers 19:17-19, “For a ceremonially unclean person you must take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin and pour fresh running water over them in a vessel. Then a ceremonially clean person must take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all its furnishings, and on the people who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, or one killed, or one who died, or a grave. And the clean person must sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he must purify him, and then he must wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and he will be clean in the evening.(NET)

b. Numbers 8:7-21, And do this to them to purify them: Sprinkle water of purification on them; then have them shave all their body and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. Then they are to take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with olive oil; and you are to take a second young bull for a purification offering. You are to bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the entire community of the Israelites. Then you are to bring the Levites before the Lord, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on the Levites; and Aaron is to offer the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the Israelites, that they may do the work of the Lord. When the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, offer the one for a purification offering and the other for a whole burnt offering to the Lord, to make atonement for the Levites. You are to have the Levites stand before
Aaron and his sons, and then offer them as a wave offering to the Lord. And so you are to separate the Levites from among the Israelites, and the Levites will be mine. “After this, the Levites will go in to do the work of the tent of meeting. So you must cleanse them and offer them like a wave offering. For they are entirely given to me from among the Israelites. I have taken them for myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn sons of all the Israelites. For all the firstborn males among the Israelites are mine, both humans and animals; when I destroyed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them apart for myself. So I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn sons among the Israelites. I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the Israelites, to do the work for the Israelites in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the Israelites, so there will be no plague among the Israelites when the Israelites come near the sanctuary.” So Moses and Aaron and the entire community of the Israelites did this with the Levites. According to all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, this is what the Israelites did with them. The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothing; then Aaron presented them like a wave offering before the Lord, and Aaron made atonement for them to purify them. (NET)

c. Zechariah 13:1, “In that day there will be a fountain opened up for the dynasty of David and the people of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity. (NET)
d. Psalm 51:2, Wash away my wrongdoing! Cleanse me of my sin!

4. Israel was not only to get clean, they were to stay clean and this became a real, longstanding problem.

Ezekiel 36:26, I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh.  (NET)

I. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; . . .

A. Hamilton wrote, “This is not the indwelling Holy Spirit but the renewed national spirit.”

1. Ezekiel 37:1-14, The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and placed me in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones. He made me walk all around among them. I realized there were a great many bones in the valley and they were very dry. He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said to him, “Sovereign Lord, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and tell them: ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. This is what the sovereign Lord says to these bones: Look, I am about to infuse breath into you and you will live. I will put tendons on you and muscles over you and will cover you with skin; I will put breath in you and you will live. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’” So I prophesied as I was commanded. There was a sound when I prophesied—I heard a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to bone. As I watched, I saw tendons on them, then muscles appeared, and skin covered over them from above, but there was no breath in them. He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath,—prophesy, son of man—and say to the
breath: ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these corpses so that they may live.’” So I prophesied as I was commanded, and the breath came into them; they lived and stood on their feet, an extremely great army. Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are all the house of Israel. Look, they are saying, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope has perished; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and tell them, ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: Look, I am about to open your graves and will raise you from your graves, my people. I will bring you to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. I will place my breath in you and you will live; I will give you rest in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord—I have spoken and I will act, declares the Lord.’” (NET)

B. Smith wrote, “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.”

C. Fredenburg wrote, “The promised new spirit does not refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit given to Christians. The giving of the new spirit refers to renewed Israel’s coming to enjoy fully Yahweh’s attitude of reconciliation . . .”

D. Fredenburg wrote that the new heart would not simply be the old one circumcised; it would be a pliable heart of flesh that replaced their disobedient, calloused heart of stone. This speaks of Yahweh’s transforming spiritual renewal of his people.

1. Jeremiah 31:33-34, “But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in
the land,” says the Lord. “I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people. “People will no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me. For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me,” says the Lord. “For I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done.” (NET)

2. Fredenburg concluded “Together, the new heart and new spirit will move them to follow Yahweh’s decrees and be careful to keep his laws.”

E. Clarke wrote, “I (God) will renew your minds, also enlighten your understanding, correct your judgment, and refine your will; so that you shall have a new spirit to activate your new heart.”

F. God would give Israel a new heart and a new spirit, but God would hold Israel and us responsible for making this change. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

1. Ezekiel 11:19, I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts, (NET)

2. Ezekiel 18:31, Throw away all your sins you have committed and fashion yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why should you die, O house of Israel? (NET)

3. Zechariah 7:12, Indeed, they made their heart as hard as diamond, so that they could not obey the Torah and the other words the Lord who rules over all had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore, the
Lord who rules over all had poured out great wrath. (NET)

4. Ezekiel 11:19, I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts, (NET)

5. Jeremiah 32:39, I will give them a single-minded purpose to live in a way that always shows respect for me. They will want to do that for their own good and the good of the children who descend from them. (NET)

6. Jeremiah 24:7, I will give them the desire to acknowledge that I am the Lord. I will be their God and they will be my people. For they will wholeheartedly return to me.’ (NET)

7. Jeremiah 31:33, “But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land,” says the Lord. “I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people. (NET)

8. Ezekiel 11:20, so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. (NET)

9. John 3:3-8, Jesus replied, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time, can he?” Jesus answered, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the
kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’ The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (NET)

10. Romans 8:2, 5, 9, For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. For those who live according to the flesh have their outlook shaped by the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him. (NET)

11. Galatians 5:22, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (NET)

12. Titus 3:5-6, he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. (NET)

13. 1 Peter 1:22, You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart. (NET)

II. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.
A. It is said that Israel would be remade, regenerated, recreated! (See McGee.)

1. The death of the old corrupt Israel would be followed by a tremendous change for the good.

2. Has this happened? If not, it is because of the lack of repentance on the part of Israel.

B. The hard, stubborn, unfeeling, insensitive heart of stone would be replaced by a sensitive heart of flesh which would feel and demonstrate love for God and man. (See Clarke.)

Ezekiel 36:27, I will put my Spirit within you; I will take the initiative and you will obey my statutes and carefully observe my regulations. (NET)

I. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

A. When we (or ancient Israel) dedicate ourselves to God’s way he will help us achieve success.

1. Matthew 11:28-30, Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry.” (NET)

2. John 3:16, For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (NET)
3. Matthew 10:6, Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (NET)

4. Luke 15:24, because this son of mine was dead, and is alive again—he was lost and is found!’ So they began to celebrate. (NET)

5. Luke 19:10, For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (NET)

B. By our lives we are to glorify and honor God!

Ezekiel 36:28, Then you will live in the land I gave to your fathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. (NET)

I. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

A. At that time the God – people – land relationship will be re-established. (See Hamilton.)

1. Israel would permanently occupy the land of Canaan. (The Pulpit Commentary)

2. Israel would enter and sustain a covenant relationship with God. (The Pulpit Commentary)

B. Israel would dwell in the land which God had given their fathers and would enjoy a very special relationship with the Lord, Smith wrote.

1. Israel would dwell again in the land which would be prosperous. God promised physical blessings for his people, Israel. (McGee)
2. This promise was not realized fully because Israel failed to remain faithful to God.

3. The way in which Israel now can be God’s people and the Lord can be their God is by their becoming Christians. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

   a. Ezekiel 11:20, so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. (NET)

   b. Jeremiah 7:23, I also explicitly commanded them: “Obey me. If you do, I will be your God and you will be my people. Live exactly the way I tell you and things will go well with you.” (NET)

   c. Jeremiah 11:4, Those are the terms that I charged your ancestors to keep when I brought them out of Egypt, that place which was like an iron-smelting furnace. I said at that time, “Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement exactly as I commanded you. If you do, you will be my people and I will be your God. (NET)

   d. Jeremiah 30:22, Then you will again be my people and I will be your God. (NET)

   e. Exodus 19:5, And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine, (NET)

   f. Leviticus 26:12, I will walk among you, and I will be your God and you will be my people. (NET)
g. Deuteronomy 26:17-18, Today you have declared the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in his ways, keep his statutes, commandments, and ordinances, and obey him. And today the LORD has declared you to be his special people (as he already promised you) so you may keep all his commandments. (NET)

h. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, “I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” Therefore “come out from their midst, and be separate,” says the Lord, “and touch no unclean thing, and I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the All-Powerful Lord. (NET)

i. Revelation 21:3, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:29, I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and multiply it; I will not bring a famine on you. (NET)

I. I will save you from all your uncleanness.

A. “God would help them to overcome uncleanness,” Smith advised.
B. God would provide protection against future lapsing into idolatry and immorality. (The Pulpit Commentary)

C. God would abundantly supply Israel’s every need. (The Pulpit Commentary.)

II. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

   A. The land would be restored to productivity, Smith advised.

   1. Deuteronomy 30:9, The Lord your God will make the labor of your hands abundantly successful and multiply your children, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the Lord your God will once more rejoice over you to make you prosperous just as he rejoiced over your ancestors, (NET)

   2. 2 Kings 8:1, Now Elisha advised the woman whose son he had brought back to life, “You and your family should go and live somewhere else for a while, for the LORD has decreed that a famine will overtake the land for seven years.” (NET)

   3. Hosea 2:23, Then I will plant her as my own in the land. I will have pity on ‘No Pity’ (Lo-Ruhamah). I will say to ‘Not My People’ (Lo-Ammi), ‘You are my people!’ And he will say, ‘You are my God!’” (NET)

   4. Jeremiah 31:12, They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion. They will be radiant with joy over the good things the Lord provides, the grain, the fresh wine, the olive oil, the young sheep and calves he has given to them. They will be like a well-watered garden and will not grow faint or weary any more. (NET)
5. Zechariah 9:17, How precious and fair! Grain will make the young men flourish and new wine the young women. (NET)

Ezekiel 36:30, I will multiply the fruit of the trees and the produce of the fields, so that you will never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. (NET)

I. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.

A. Israel would no longer to subject to famine.

1. The heathens would no longer ridicule God and claim he was unable to feed his people.

Ezekiel 36:31, Then you will remember your evil behavior and your deeds which were not good; you will loathe yourselves on account of your sins and your abominable deeds. (NET)

I. Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.

A. Israel would deeply repent of their sins, loathe themselves for their detestable practices. (See Smith.)

1. Any and all sin is indeed detestable in the sight of God.

2. Ezekiel 16:61, Then you will remember your conduct, and be ashamed when you receive your older and younger sisters. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on account of my covenant with you. (NET)

3. Romans 2:4, Or do you have contempt for the wealth of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, and yet do not
know that God’s kindness leads you to repentance? (NET)

B. Clarke wrote, “You shall never forget that you 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.”

1. This caused these sinners to remember their evil ways and wicked deeds and to loathe themselves for their sins and detestable practices.

2. How much better to live righteously and enjoy holy, happy and useful lives. (See Clarke.)

C. Israel had a deepening sense of self-humiliation on account of and repentance for past sins. (The Pulpit Commentary.)

Ezekiel 36:32, Understand that it is not for your sake I am about to act, declares the sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and embarrassed by your behavior, O house of Israel, (NET)

I. I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord.

A. God did not bless Israel because of their repentance, but because of his grace and goodness and to demonstrate to everyone that God is indeed the Sovereign Lord. (See Fredenburg.)

B. Except for God’s grace, there would be nothing left except for judgment on God’s part and self-humiliation on the part of Israel. (The Pulpit Commentary.)

II. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

A. This was and is absolutely essential for anyone who wishes to be in God’s favor; that is, repentance of sins with shame and disgrace for all sins committed.
Note: “Verses 33-36 describe the effect of Israel’s restored prosperity on the surrounding nations,” The Pulpit Commentary states.

Ezekiel 36:33, “This is what the sovereign LORD says: In the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will populate the cities and the ruins will be rebuilt. (NET)

I. “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be built.

A. In the restoration of Israel, the Lord would cleanse the Israelites of all their sins.

B. The destroyed towns would be rebuilt and repopulated.

Ezekiel 36:34, The desolate land will be plowed, instead of being desolate in the sight of everyone who passes by. (NET)

I. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it.

A. The desert will bloom! The barren, desolate land will be cultivated and will produce abundant crops.

1. The people who pass by would be greatly impressed with the wonders God had wrought!

Ezekiel 36:35, They will say, “This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; the ruined, desolate, and destroyed cities are now fortified and inhabited.” (NET)

I. They will say, “This land that was laid waste has become like the Garden of Eden; . . .

A. The most wonderful, beautiful place there ever was on earth was the Garden of Eden which is here likened to the Promised Land in the post-exile period.
1. This would greatly impress all the nations with the sovereign Lord.

B. This is a picture of what sin and righteousness can do to a soul!

   1. A soul that had been laid waste by sin has now become a veritable Garden of Eden by righteousness.

C. Related references include the following: . . .

   1. Joel 2:3, Like fire they devour everything in their path; a flame blazes behind them. The land looks like the Garden of Eden before them, but behind them there is only a desolate wilderness—for nothing escapes them! (NET)

   2. Genesis 2:8, The Lord God planted an orchard in the east, in Eden; and there he placed the man he had formed. (NET)

   3. Ezekiel 28:13, You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, the ruby, topaz, and emerald, the chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, the sapphire, turquoise, and beryl; your settings and mounts were made of gold. On the day you were created they were prepared. (NET)

   4. Ezekiel 31:9, I made it beautiful with its many branches; all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God, envied it. (NET)

   5. Isaiah 51:3, I made it beautiful with its many branches; all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God, envied it. (NET)

   6. Revelation 2:7, The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who
conquers, I will permit him to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.’ (NET)

7. Revelation 22:1-3, Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life—water as clear as crystal—pouring out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, flowing down the middle of the city’s main street. On each side of the river is the tree of life producing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month of the year. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him, (NET)

II. The cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed are now fortified and inhabited.”

A. Cities which had been destroyed by the Babylonians had now been rebuilt, occupied and fortified, well able to defend themselves against enemy attacks.

1. The nations would be impressed with the Lord who had wrought such wonders among his people.

Ezekiel 36:36, Then the nations which remain around you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken—and I will do it! (NET)

I. Then the (heathen) nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate.

A. The emphasis in verses 33-36, Fredenburg observed, is on Yahweh’s reputation.

1. The nations around Israel that remained would know that Yahweh had rebuilt what had been destroyed and had replanted what was desolate.
2. The surrounding nations would be greatly impressed with the change God had made with Israel’s changing things from a state of destruction and desolation to a veritable Garden of Eden. (See Fredenburg.)

   a. *Isaiah 51:3*, Certainly the Lord will console Zion; he will console all her ruins. He will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of the Lord. Happiness and joy will be restored to her, thanksgiving and the sound of music. (NET)

3. As presented the condition of Israel after their restoration would be far greater than their condition prior to their devastation at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

   a. This would greatly impress the nations with the power and goodness of the Sovereign Lord!

   b. God’s reputation had been restored to its rightful place, level.

II. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it!

   A. The things promised would definitely occur!

      1. The Lord had spoken and he would do what he had promised!

      2. He would do it! Be sure of this!

   Ezekiel 36:37, “This is what the sovereign LORD says: I will allow the house of Israel to ask me to do this for them: I will multiply their people like sheep. (NET)

I. ““This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .
A. This is exactly and precisely what the Sovereign Lord had told Ezekiel to proclaim to the exiles.

II. Once again I will yield to the pleas of the house of Israel and do this for them: . . .

A. God refused to heed Israel’s pleas when they were living in sin, but now that they have repented, God again is attentive to their prayers. (See Hamilton.)

1. **Ezekiel 8:18**, Therefore I will act with fury! My eye will not pity them nor will I spare them. When they have shouted in my ears, I will not listen to them.” (NET)

2. **Ezekiel 14:3**, “Son of man, these men have erected their idols in their hearts and placed the obstacle leading to their iniquity right before their faces. Should I really allow them to seek me? (NET)

3. **Ezekiel 20:3, 31**, Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and tell them: ‘This is what the sovereign Lord says: Are you coming to seek me? As surely as I live, I will not allow you to seek me, declares the sovereign Lord.’ (NET)

4. **Ezekiel 3:26-27**, I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with you, I will loosen your tongue and you must say to them, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says.’ Those who listen will listen, but the indifferent will refuse, for they are a rebellious house. (NET)

5. **Ezekiel 34:22**, I will save my sheep; they will no longer be prey. I will judge between one sheep and another. (NET)
III. I will make their people as numerous as sheep, . . .

A. The Israelite population would be greatly increased which was regarded as a wondrous divine blessing! (See Smith.)

B. God’s previous resolute, “I am against them,” is replaced by, “I will make their people as numerous as sheep . . . “ (See Fredenburg.)

**Ezekiel 36:38**, Like the sheep for offerings, like the sheep of Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the **LORD**.” (NET)

I. They would become as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts.

A. The Israelites were to return to Jerusalem in great numbers.

1. On special feast days (especially during the three annual feasts) thousands of animals could be sacrificed.

   a. **1 Kings 8:63**, Solomon offered as peace offerings to the Lord 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. Then the king and all the Israelites dedicated the Lord’s temple. (NET)

   b. **2 Chronicles 35:7**, From his own royal flocks and herds, Josiah supplied the people with 30,000 lambs and goats for the Passover sacrifice, as well as 3,000 cattle. (NET)

   c. **Micah 2:12**, I will certainly gather all of you, O Jacob, I will certainly assemble those Israelites who remain. I will bring them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in the middle of a pasture; they will
be so numerous that they will make a lot of noise. (NET)

d. Deuteronomy 16:16, Three times a year all your males must appear before the L ORD your God in the place he chooses for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Temporary Shelters; and they must not appear before him empty-handed. (NET)

e. 2 Chronicles 29:33, and 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep were consecrated. (NET)

2. The returning penitent exiles were pure and free of blemishes as were the sheep which were to be sacrificed.

II. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people.

   A. Prosperity, spiritual and material, would be God’s gift to penitent Israel.

III. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

   A. When God’s blessings had been poured out abundantly upon repentant Israel, they would know Yahweh is Lord!

1. Isaiah 54:1-3, “Shout for joy, O barren one who has not given birth! Give a joyful shout and cry out, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one are more numerous than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord. Make your tent larger, stretch your tent curtains farther out! Spare no effort, lengthen your ropes, and pound your stakes deep. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your children will conquer nations and will resettle desolate cities. (NET)
Conclusion:

I. Hamilton observed that the expressions “I am (will be) your God and you are (will be) my people,” is used frequently in the Bible.

   A. As Christians, people of God must know that it is not enough to be children of God. We must be **faithful** children of God!

1. Deuteronomy 29:13, Today he will affirm that you are his people and that he is your God, just as he promised you and as he swore by oath to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (NET)

2. Hosea 2:23, Then I will plant her as my own in the land. I will have pity on ‘No Pity’ (Lo-Ruhamah). I will say to ‘Not My People’ (Lo-Ammi), ‘You are my people!’ And he will say, ‘You are my God!’” (NET)

3. Jeremiah 7:23, I also explicitly commanded them: “Obey me. If you do, I will be your God and you will be my people. Live exactly the way I tell you and things will go well with you.” (NET)

4. Jeremiah 11:4, Those are the terms that I charged your ancestors to keep when I brought them out of Egypt, that place which was like an iron-smelting furnace. I said at that time, “Obey me and carry out the terms of the agreement exactly as I commanded you. If you do, you will be my people and I will be your God. (NET)

5. Jeremiah 24:7, I will give them the desire to acknowledge that I am the Lord. I will be their God and they will be my people. For they will wholeheartedly return to me.’ (NET)

6. 2 Corinthians 6:16, And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple
of the living God, just as God said, “I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (NET)

7. Revelation 21:3, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. (NET)

II. The literal fulfillment of the prophecies in this chapter regarding Israel have not been realized either in the Old or New Testament eras.

A. Israel has generally rejected our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. Matthew 24:37, For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. (NET)

2. Luke 19:42-44, saying, “If you had only known on this day, even you, the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and surround you and close in on you from every side. They will demolish you—you and your children within your walls—and they will not leave within you one stone on top of another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.” (NET)

B. Clarke concluded that this chapter applies primarily to the Gospel dispensation.
Questions

on

Ezekiel 36:1-38

(Questions based on NEV text.)

1. Ezekiel 36:1-15 are addressed to the ___________ of ____________ and are ______________ in a similar manner to the ____________ spoken against the ______________ ___________ which were the ______________ of ______________.

2. Ezekiel chapters _______ - _______ constitute a __________ addressed to the ______________ of the ____________ to the ______________, the ______________ of the ______________, the ______________ of the ______________ and the ______________ of the ____________.

3. Why did Smith regard chapter 36 as “the brightest chapter in the book of Ezekiel?”

4. Into what two major divisions can Ezekiel 36 be divided? What is the topic of each division?
5. ______________'s ______________ had to be ______________ and ______________ before ______________ could be ______________ to the ______________ ______________.

6. To what do the mountains of Israel refer? ______________

7. How are Ezekiel 6 and 36 alike? How are they different?

8. To what does “Mount Seir” refer? ______________

9. The ______________ are ______________ to ______________ a ______________ ______________; and that ______________ of the ______________ ______________ of their ______________ should take place against them.

10. How many times is the statement “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: . . .” found in Ezekiel 36? What is the significance of these frequent repetitions? ______________
11. ______________ now ___________ the ______________ ______________ to ______________ and his ______________. ______________ had been as ______________ as the ______________ ______________ around them. ______________ demanded all those involved in such ______________ be ______________, and so it was.

12. What was the attitude of the heathen nations which now possessed Canaan toward the Israelites? ______________ _______________ ______________ ______________

13. In the view of the Near Eastern nations, what was the significance of the relationship: God – Land – People? ______________ _______________ ______________ ______________

14. “______________ over ______________’s ______________” was a reason for ______________’s ______________ to ______________ the ______________ which ______________ ______________.

15. “The ______________ ______________ ______________” which ______________’s ______________ ______________ were the ______________ ______________ of ______________.

16. “... the ______________ uttered ______________, ______________ __________ and ______________ against ______________’s ______________.”
17. ________ who still lived in ___________ ___________ and spoke ___________ against the ___________ saying “Jehovah was a ___________ ___________, no longer able to ___________ or ___________ his __________.”

18. It was generally believed that gods were ___________ ___________. Many ___________ held this ___________ and ___________ ___________ was their ___________ ___________, for them and against all other people. If ___________ befell a ___________, it proved the ___________ and ___________ of the ___________. This led ___________ ___________ to ___________ in ___________!

... to regard ___________ as ___________. This ___________ regarding ___________ required the ___________ of those ___________.

19. Because of ___________’s ___________, ___________ delivered the ___________ to the ___________ of the ___________’s around them. This can be dated to 588 586 B.C. and the ___________ ___________.

20. ___________ was now ready to ___________, this time in ___________ of ___________ and ___________ the ___________ ___________. ___________ made it clear that it is the ____________, not the wicked, who will ___________ the ___________.

21. The ___________ had treated ___________ with ___________ and ___________. The way the ___________ ___________ ___________, ___________’s ___________ caused the ___________ to be ___________.

22. ___________ had suffered the ___________ of the ___________. The ___________ around ___________ would now ___________ ___________.
23. What does the Bible say about God’s swearing? Why was it necessary for God to swear? _______________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

24. How soon did Israel return home? Explain your answer. _____
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

25. Did Israel receive everything God promised? If not, why not? ____
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

26. What happened to Israel when God was against them? _________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

27. What happened to Israel when God looked with favor on them? How would God show favor to Israel?________________________
28. What does it mean to “know the Lord”? ________________

29. How had the land of Palestine devoured both men (adult men and women) and children? ________________

30. The _____________ would no longer be used _____________ the _____________ to _____________ _____________ or to make the _____________ _____________, _____________ would no longer _____________ its ____________

31. The _____________ of the _____________, suffering the scorn of the people, and _____________ to cause the _____________ to _____________ would ____________

32. During the _____________, _____________ remained in _____________ _____________ while _____________ _____________ were _____________. Following the _____________, conditions would be _____________.

33. How did Israel, by conduct and action, defile their homeland? Be specific. ________________
34. ______________ intended for his ______________ to be a ______________ __________________ to the world. ______________ did not keep their ______________ with ______________, were ______________ and ______________ or ______________. This caused the ______________ to regard ______________ as ______________, to ______________ to ______________ for ______________ and their ______________. This was not the correct view, but it hurt the ______________’s ______________.

35. How disgusting to God were Israel’s sins? ______________

36. Why did God pour out his wrath on Israel? Of what did that wrath consist? ______________

37. When did Israel stop worshipping idols? Why did they stop practicing idolatry? ______________
38. List the punishments Israel suffered because of their sins. _______
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

39. _______________ did not ______________ any of the _______________
______________, bestowed upon them and we don’t ______________
any of the ______________ ______________ bestows on us.

40. List the punishments you have suffered because of your sins. _____
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

41. Even after having their capital city of Jerusalem and the temple
destroyed after being taken captive and exiled to Babylon, Israel
continued to profane the name of the Lord. How do you explain this
human behavior? Give present day examples of similar behavior. ____
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

42. What effect did Israel’s behavior and the destruction of Jerusalem
have on the opinion of the heathens regarding Jehovah, Israel’s
Sovereign Lord? ________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
43. ________________ will not ________________ ____________
himself to be ______________ and ______________.

44. What did God do to vindicate his holiness? ________________

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

45. ______________ ______________, ______________ ______________
__________ even one of ________________’s ______________. It
is also ____________ that ______________ ______________ ______
or ________________ the ______________ made ________________
through ______________ ______________.

46. In spite of all ________________ had done to ________________ his
__________ by ______________ and ______________, ______________
would show the ________________ of his ________________! The
______________ would then have come to see ________________ and
his ________________ in their ________________ ______________. As
the ________________ of ______________ and the ________________ of
some of its ______________ caused ________________’s ______________
to be ________________, the ________________ of ________________ to
their ________________ would ________________ the ________________
of the ________________.

47. Then the ________________ will ________________ that I am the
______________, declares the ________________ ______________, when I show ________________ ______________ through you before
your ________________.

48. When ________________ had ________________ ________________ to
the ______________ ______________ and they had been ________________
of their ________________ and ________________ themselves to the
______________, the ________________ would see the ________________
49. _______ would return his _______ through _______ to the _______ _______ _______ _______ once more _______ - _______ - _______ _______ and _______ _______ to his _______ _______ _______ of _______ and _______ _______.

50. Explain the connection between sprinkling clean water and the cleansing of Israel from all their impurities and from all their idols. _______ __________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

51. When did Israel’s long standing worshipping of idols cease? What caused this permanent change? __________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

52. What is meant by “a new heart?” What is meant by “a new spirit?” __________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

53. Contrast Israel’s actions, character and attitudes before and after receipt of the new heart and new spirit. __________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
54. How much of this change to a new heart and a new spirit was the responsibility of the Israelites? How much of this change required divine intervention? ____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

55. Give Biblical support for the statement, “When we dedicate ourselves to God’s way he will help us achieve success.” ______________ __________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

56. Verse 28 says ________________ would ___________ in the _______ God have given their ________________. They would be _____________ ’s _____________, and _____________ would be their ____________.

57. Verse 29 says ________ would ___________ __ __________ from _____________ their _____________. ___________ would make _____________ _____________ and would no more bring _____________ upon the people.

58. Verse 30 says _____________ would increase the _____________ of the _____________ and the _____________ of the _____________. ____________ would no longer _____________ _____________ among the _____________ because of _____________.

59. When were or will the promises of verses 28-30 (be) fulfilled? If they have not yet come to pass, why have they not yet come to pass?__
60. What, according to verse 31 and 32b, would God’s goodness cause Israel to do? _____________________________________

61. Would the traits mentioned in verses 31 and 32b be recommended by today’s mental health workers? Why or why not? ______________

62. Why, according to verse 32, did God bless Israel? Why does God bless us? ______________________________________

63. God promised in verses 33 and 34 to ____________________________ from all their ______________, ____________ their ________________, and _______________ the ______________. Their ______________ ________ would be ______________.

64. The land of Palestine, according to verse 35, would become like the Garden of Eden. Has this happened yet? If not, why not? __________
65. According to verse 35b, the ______________ that were ___________ in _____________, ___________ and ___________ would be ___________ and ___________.

66. The _______________ around _____________ that remained would ___________ that _____________ had ___________ what had been ___________ and had ___________ what was ___________.

The emphasis in verses 33-36 is on ______________’s ______________.

67. The _______________ around _____________ that remained would know that _______________ had ___________ what had been ___________ and had ___________ what was ___________.

The _____________ of _____________ after their _____________ would be for _____________ than their _____________ at the hands of _____________. This would _____________ ____________ the _____________ with the _____________ and _____________ of the ____________ _____________! ______________’s _____________ had been _____________ to its _____________ _____________, ____________.

68. When does God hear and grant the plea of people and when does God refuse to heed the pleas of people? ________________________

69. Verses 37 says God will make their ___________ as _____________ as _____________, as _____________ as the _____________ for _____________ at _____________ during her _____________ _____________.
The once _______________ _______________ will be filled with
_____________ of _______________.

70. _______________ _______________ and _______________, would be
_____________'s _______________ to _______________ _______________.

71. _______________ the _______________ have _______________, and _______________
will _______________ it. Then they will _______________ that _______________
am the _______________.

72. As _______________ _______________ of _______________ must know
that it is not enough to be _______________ _______________ of _______________. We
must be _______________ _______________ of _______________.

73. The _______________ _______________ of the _______________ in this
chapter regarding _______________ have not been _______________ either
in the _______________ or _______________ _______________ eras.

74. Why is this true? _______________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

75. Will these prophecies ever be literally fulfilled? If so, when? _____
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________