

Ezekiel 36 - Prophecy Concerning the Mountains of Israel: Desolation & Blessing; Israel's Dispersion & Restoration to the Land During the Millennial Kingdom

III. Restoration of Israel (Ezek 33:1—48:45)

(4) Restoration of Israel (36:1-38)

(A) Israel to prosper again (36:1-15)

(B) Israel's past sins (36:16-21)

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Ezekiel 36

(4) Restoration of Israel (36:1-38)

(A) Israel to prosper again (36:1-15)

This section of Ezek 36 (v1-15) belongs to the larger segment that started in 35:1. It describes the divine judgment of Israel's foreign oppressors, which paves the way for the Jewish people to become the sole possessors of the Promised Land. The central theme is renewal—both of the people and of the land. The passage describes the unbreakable bond between the land and its people. Despite millennia of persecution and dispersion, this connection has remained steadfast.

The prophetic time frame is still the dawn of the Messianic Age. "Mount Seir" is contrasted with "the mountains of Israel," both of which represent the larger countries that contain these mountain ranges—Edom and Israel. According to 35:15, the nation of Edom will experience complete and perpetual desolation at the end of the Tribulation. In contrast, the Promised Land will overflow with God's blessings, welcoming a restored Jewish people back to their eternal homeland at the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

1 "Now you, son of man, prophesy to the **mountains of Israel** and say, 'You **mountains of Israel**, hear the word of the LORD.

1 "And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD.

1 "Now as for you, Son of Man, prophesy to Israel's mountains and tell them, 'Listen to this message from the LORD, you mountains of Israel:

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

- "...mountains of Israel" [2x] - 5x in this chapter; a specific prophecy not to Israel in general, but specifically directed to her "mountains" (Cf. v4,6,8; 39:2,4)

— In 6:1-3, these same mountains of Israel were the focus of condemnation; now they are promised a blessing.

— Prior to the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel didn't "own" "her" mountains. In defending herself against enemy attack, she gained the mountain range that runs north/south down the center of the nation; the "backbone" of the country.

— This is a time-bound prophecy: it could not have happened before 1948 because Israel was not a nation before that time, and it could not have happened before 1967 because Israel did not possess her mountains before that time.

— Just recently, during the first Trump administration, Israel was allowed to annex the Golan Heights in northern Israel, a buffer between Israel & Syria. Before this time, it was viewed as international territory, not within the borders of Israel.

— This area is very strategically important for Israel's militarily, and it also adds additional mountains to the nation of Israel

According to Ezek 39:2,4, Israel must possess the 'mountains of Israel' when this invasion occurs...The famous Six Day War in 1967 helped set the stage for this to be fulfilled. Before the Six Day War, all the mountains of Israel, with the exception of a small strip of west Jerusalem, were in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs. Only since 1967 have the mountains of Israel been in Israel, thus setting the stage for the fulfillment of this prophecy. [Mark Hitchcock, The Amazing Claims of Bible Prophecy: What You Need to Know in These Uncertain Times (Harvest House: Eugene, OR, 2010), 211]

But where in the Land of Israel will the invading armies be destroyed? The exact location is revealed in Ezek 39:2,4a: 'and I will turn you about, and will lead you on, and will cause you to come up from the uttermost parts of the north; and I will bring you upon the mountains of Israel...you shall fall upon the mountains of Israel.' The phrase 'the mountains of Israel' refers to the central mountain range that makes up the backbone of the country. In the Hebrew Scriptures [OT], these mountains were known as the Hill Country of Ephraim and the Hill Country of Judah. Some of the famous biblical cities that lie within these mountains include Dothan, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Bethel, Ai, Ramah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Debir, and most importantly, Jerusalem, which seems to be the target of the invading army.

However, from 1948 until the Six-Day War in 1967, these mountains were not in Israel, but in Jordan. They are now referred to politically as the West Bank. In 1948, Jordanian forces took over these mountains and annexed them as part of Jordan. All Israel had was a small corridor leading west to Jerusalem. The border between Israel and Jordan ran down the foot of these mountains, then cut into the mountains, dividing Jerusalem in two, and then went out again and continued along the foot of these mountains. Israel had maybe five percent or less of the mountains, while the rest belonged to Jordan. Only since 1967 have the mountains of Israel been in Israel. Besides the Temple compound falling into Jewish hands, another by-product of the Six-Day War was that these mountains also fell into Israeli sovereignty. Therefore, not only could this prophecy not have been fulfilled before 1948, but it could also not have been fulfilled before 1967.

The mountains of Israel (the West Bank) are yet to have a very important and relevant role in Bible prophecy. As for the present State of Israel, they became part of Israel in 1967. This is yet another way the modern Jewish State fits within Bible prophecy.

[Fruchtenbaum, The Modern State of Israel in Bible Prophecy]

2 This is what the Lord GOD says: "Since the enemy has spoken against you, 'Aha!' and, 'The everlasting heights have become our possession,'

2 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because the enemy has spoken against you, 'Aha!' and, 'The everlasting heights have become our possession,'

2 "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'The enemy has been saying about you, "Good! The ancient heights are back in our possession!"'"

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

- As Israel is returning to her land, she has enemies; and as she's going back into *her* land, the enemies are saying that she's going back into *their* land.

— This reflects the same assertion made by the Edomites in 35:10. This is the first offense committed by Israel's enemies: they will attempt to take possession of the land.

— We'll see over and over again in this chapter that God says, This is *My* land. It's doesn't belong to any people-group other than God.

3 **therefore** prophesy and say, '**This is what the Lord GOD says:** "For good reason **they have made you desolate and harassed you from every side**, so that you would become a possession of the rest of the nations; and you have been **taken up in the talk and the rumor of the people.**"'"

3 therefore prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "For good reason they have made you desolate and crushed you from every side, that you would become a possession of the

rest of the nations and you have been taken up in the talk and the whispering of the people.'""

3 "Therefore this is what you are to prophesy: 'Here's what the Lord GOD says, "You've been turned into a desolate wasteland and crushed by everyone who surrounds you for a very, very good reason. You've become the property of all the other nations and you've become the object of gossip and whispering campaigns of the nations.'""

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

- "therefore" - 5x in five verses (v3,4,5,6,7) emphasizing the severity of the judgment to come. Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy in response to the offense described in v2, namely that Israel is occupying *their* land.

- "...This is what the Lord GOD says" - repeated 6x in six verses (v2,3,4,5,6,7); the beginning of a prophetic announcement

- "...they have made you desolate and harassed you from every side" - during the Tribulation, Israel's enemies will devastate the land, consuming it from all directions with the intent of claiming it for themselves

- "...taken up in the talk and the rumor of the people" - the Jews are in someone else's land is the rumor or whisper that people utter. Israel will become the target of mockery, and become a laughingstock because of the ravaging of their land.

— As Israel is re-populating her land, the world community has a different mindset: that the Jews are re-populating *their* land. They develop policies and philosophies that get people to believe that Israel is an occupier of someone else's land.

4 Therefore, you mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the desolate ruins and to the abandoned cities which have become plunder and an object of ridicule to the rest of the nations which are all around—

4 Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the forsaken cities which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of the nations which are round about,

4 "Therefore listen to what the Lord GOD has to say, you mountains of Israel: 'This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains, to the hills, to the waterways, to the valleys, to the desolate wastelands, and to the abandoned cities that have become an object of derision to the mountains that surround you:

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

- Now begins God's response, with a message to the land of Israel. Now He is speaking not only to the mountains of Israel, but to the hills, the ravines, the valleys, the desolate ruins and the abandoned cities. All are called to hear His word.

— All of these places will become "a prey" and objects of "derision" for the nations surrounding Israel.

Lev 26:43: For **the land will be abandoned by them, and will restore its Sabbaths while it is made desolate without them.** They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their wrongdoing, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul loathed My statutes.

Ezek 38:8: After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years **you will come into the land** that is restored from the sword, *whose inhabitants* have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel **which had been a continual place of ruins**; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.

5 **therefore** the Lord GOD says this: "Certainly in the fire of My **jealousy** I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated **My land** for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy *and* with contempt of soul, in order to *make* its pastureland plunder."

5 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy *and* with scorn of soul, to drive it out for a prey."

5 "'Because this is what the Lord GOD says: "Motivated by my burning zealousness, I have spoken against the rest of the surrounding nations, including Edom, who confiscated my land, taking possession of it with joyful enthusiasm and with animal-like malice, in order to plunder Israel's pastures.'

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

- The purpose of this message is to express God's passionate zeal for Israel.

- "therefore" - because the Gentile nations have plundered and ridiculed Israel

- "...jealousy" - *kinah*, can also mean "zeal"; when paired with "fire" it conveys the intensity of God's passionate commitment to Israel

— God's jealousy is ignited because the actions of Israel's enemies call God's reputation into question. Their attempt to claim God's land could be seen as opportunists moving in and grabbing the territory of their crushed neighbors (Israel).

— This act is, at its core, an insult to the true Owner of the land—God Almighty—and a direct challenge to His authority.

- "...My land" - the land promised to Israel doesn't belong to any people-group, it belongs to God. God, out of His sovereignty, granted it as an inheritance to the Jewish people (Cf. 35:15), making it rightfully theirs. Any nation or people who lay claim to it will face God's wrath.

— God cares deeply about the land of Israel. If your definition of Jesus doesn't include His love for Israel, then you're worshiping the wrong Jesus and you've turned God into a liar.

Lev 25:23: 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, because **the land is Mine**; for you are *only* strangers and residents with Me.

Deut 11:11-12:

11 But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven,

12 a land for which **the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it**, from the beginning even to the end of the year.

If God can abrogate His numerous promises to Israel, then what's stopping Him from abrogating His numerous promises to us as Church Age believers? If God can cancel His unconditional promises to Israel, then you may as well burn every promise God made to NT believers because they don't mean anything. If God can cancel the promises given in the Abrahamic Covenant, then every single promise He's given to us as Gentile Church Age believers don't mean anything. That makes God like Mohammed, a deceiver; He's free to abrogate the OT in favor of what He said later. This is why Rom 9-11 follows the beautiful promises of Rom 8.

6 Therefore prophesy in regard to the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'Behold, I have spoken in **My jealousy** and in My wrath because **you have endured the insults of the nations.**'

6 Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My wrath because you have endured the insults of the nations.'

6 "Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and speak to its mountains, hills, ravines, and valleys. Tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "Pay attention! In my zealous anger I'm speaking because you've had to endure the mockery of the world's nations.'"

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

- "...My jealousy" - once again highlights God's rightful claim to the land, which has been violated by Israel's enemies. The enemy's attempt to seize the land is a violation of God's exclusive right of possession, which invokes His jealousy and stirs His wrath.

- "...you have endured the insults of the nations" - God acknowledges that Israel has fulfilled the prophecy of Ezek 1-24. Now that it has been fulfilled, the time of Israel's shame has come to an end.

7 **Therefore** the Lord GOD says this: **'I have sworn** that the nations that are around you will certainly endure their insults themselves.

7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'I have sworn that surely the nations which are around you will themselves endure their insults.

7 "Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: "I hereby raise my hand to swear this oath: the nations that surround you will have their own mockery to endure!

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

- "Therefore" - because Israel has borne the shame and ridicule of the nations, God now declares that their shame will be transferred to the surrounding nations

- "...I have sworn" - '*ani nasati 'et yadi*, literally "I have lifted up My hand." It pictures God, with hand raised, taking on an oath

— In the closing days of the Tribulation, the Gentile nations will experience scorn and desolation.

In summary, v1-7 describe the desolation of the mountains of Israel as the result of God's judgment on His people during the tribulation. In the aftermath of this desolation, Israel's enemies will claim ownership of the land, violating God's exclusive right of possession. This violation provokes God's jealousy, which in turn stirs His wrath. It is this divine wrath that will bring about the exchange of shame—from Israel to the Gentiles—at the end of the tribulation, when the Gentile nations will face their own desolation.

The Future of Israel's Mountains

8 But as for you, **mountains of Israel**, you will grow your branches and bear fruit for My people Israel; for they are about to come.

8 But you, O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come.

8 But you mountains of Israel are going to sprout branches and bear fruit for my people Israel, because they'll be coming soon.'"

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

- "...mountains of Israel" - the mountains of Israel are the subject of this prophecy; once desolated, they, along with the entire Promised Land, will experience great blessings during the millennial kingdom.

— This is a prophecy that once Israel is regathered back in the land, it will become agriculturally productive during the millennial kingdom (Cf. v35)

— Despite years of desolation, the Land will be tilled again and the inhabitants of the Land will be greatly increased (Cf. Is 30:23-26; 35:1-2; 65:21-24; Jer 31:1-6,11-14; Ezek 34:25-31; Joel 2:18-27; 3:18).

9 For, behold, **I am for you**, and **I will turn to you**, and you will be **cultivated and sown**.

9 For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown.

9 "Watch me! I'm on your side! I'll be turning in your direction, and you mountains will be plowed and planted.

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

- "...I am for you" - this indicates God's renewed favor toward Israel, in contrast to the "against you" declaration made against Edom (35:3)

- "...I will" - a key phrase in this passage (v8-15); God makes a series of unconditional promises concerning Israel's future

- "...turn to you" - this is God's gracious return to Israel, bringing restoration to both the people and the land

- "...cultivated and sown" - agricultural prosperity will come back to the land as the Jewish people begin to repossess it

10 And I will **multiply people** on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the ruins will be rebuilt.

10 I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt.

10 I'm going to make the entire house of Israel grow—every single member—and their cities will be inhabited with all the ruins rebuilt.

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

- "...multiply people" - a population explosion; part of God's promise to Abraham (I will make your descendants as the sand of the seashore, stars of the sky, dust of the earth)
— "people" - *'adam*, refers to humanity in general; in the context of 34:31 and this passage, it represents all the house of Israel as a unified body. Every Jew will be gathered and brought back into the land.

11 I will multiply on you people and animals, and they will increase and be fruitful; and **I will populate you as you were previously, and treat you better than at the beginning. Then you will know that I am the LORD.**

11 I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.

11 I'll make both the population and the livestock increase throughout your territories. They'll increase and be fruitful. I'll make your territories to be settled like you were in the past, and you will be treated better than you ever were before. At that time you will know that I am the LORD.

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

- While v10 emphasizes the human habitation of the land after the establishment of the millennial kingdom, v11 broadens the vision to include animal life in addition to human life. Both will thrive in the millennial kingdom.

- "...I will populate you as you were previously" - just as the land was densely populated before the Babylonian exile, so it will be again in the millennial kingdom

- "...[I will] treat you better than at the beginning" - Israel's restoration in the millennial kingdom will surpass anything that God had previously done for Israel

- "...Then you will know that I am the LORD" - the ultimate purpose of Israel's restoration; this phrase is used 70x in Ezekiel.

— Israel will know who God is once He does the miracle of bringing Israel back to the same land they last inhabited 2000 years ago, and then when He takes a barren expanse and makes it agricultural prosperous again.

12 Yes, I will have people—**My people Israel—walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance** and never again bereave them of children.'

12 Yes, I will cause men—My people Israel—to walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.'

12 "I'll lead my people, my nation of Israel, across you mountains, and they will take possession of you again, and you'll be their inheritance once more. Never again will you leave them robbed of children.

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

- "...My people Israel" - not only is the land of Israel owned by God (Cf. v5), but the people of Israel, the Jews, are His people, whom He sovereignly elected (chose) to be His vehicle of blessing to the entire world (Deut 7:7-8).

- "...walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance" - ownership of the land is clear and unambiguous: the Jewish people will possess the land, and the land will serve as their inheritance (Cf. 35:15).

— Israel's ownership *and* enjoyment of the land will be fully realized in the millennial kingdom

13 "The Lord GOD says this: 'Since they say to you, "You are a devourer of people and have bereaved your nation of children,"

13 "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because they say to you, "You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children,"

13 "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'Because some have been saying to you, "You mountains have been devouring human beings and leaving people childless,"

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

- This is the accusation of Israel's enemies: they accuse Israel of being a devourer of men and being a bereaver of children.

— Regarding the first accusation, that of being a devourer of people, it is true that throughout history all people who inhabited the land were eventually displaced:

- The Canaanites were initially there but were later driven out (~1150 BC)
- The Philistines also occupied the land, only to be ousted in turn (~1200–539 BC)
- Arabs were present in the past and remain today, but they, too, have been and will again be displaced
- Successive empires—the Babylonians (597–538 BC), Medo-Persians (538–331 BC), Greeks (332–167 BC), and Romans (63 BC–66 AD)—came and went, each eventually losing control of the land.
- More recently, the Turks (1517–1917) and the British (1917–1948) governed the region, but neither remains today.

— Regarding the second accusation, that of the land being a bereaver of the nation, this also is true that the Jewish people have suffered deportation and exile from their land:

- The Assyrians invaded and exiled Israel/Ephraim (722 BC)
- The Babylonians invaded and exiled Judah to Babylon, and destroyed Jerusalem (586 BC)
- The Romans invaded, dispersed the Jewish people, and destroyed Jerusalem (70 AD)

14 for that reason you will no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children,' declares the Lord GOD.

14 therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,' declares the Lord GOD.

14 therefore you will no longer devour human beings or leave their nation childless,' declares the Lord GOD.

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

- Prior to Israel's "rebirth" into the land, the nation was "childless" in the sense that there was no Jewish population living in the land

— God is saying that this problem is about to change; He goes on later in the chapter to talk about the population explosion that will happen once His people are back in the land

— What their enemies accused them of will no longer be true ever again once the millennial kingdom begins

15 I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you suffer disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you make your nation stumble any longer," declares the Lord GOD."

15 "I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer," declares the Lord GOD."

15 'I won't let you hear other people mock you, and no nation will ever make you childless again,' declares the Lord GOD."

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

- God now lists three things that Israel will never have to endure again:

— First, He will never let his people hear insults from the nations again. God takes these "whispering campaigns" against Israel as personal insults.

— Second, the land and people will no longer carry the false reputation that it developed over time.

— Third, the Jewish people will no longer face displacement from their land.

The big idea of 36:1-15 is that Israel, in her land, will prosper again. So what is holding this prosperity back from happening? Israel's sin (v16-21).

God is not interested in recycling His people into the land in unbelief, so they can continue on with the same sins that led them into the dispersion in the first place. God is interested in a two-fold regathering: (1) get them into the land, and (2) bring about the circumstances that, by the end of the Tribulation, every living Jew will be a believer in Messiah. Verses 16-21 are what God wants to get rid of so He can bring about the blessings of v1-15.

(B) Israel's past sins (36:16-21)

16 Then **the word of the LORD came to me**, saying,

16 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

16 This message came to me from the LORD:

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

- "...the word of the LORD came to me" - indicates a new prophecy (Cf. v1,22)

17 "Son of man, **when the house of Israel was living on their own land**, they **defiled** it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the **uncleanness of a woman in her impurity**.

17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity.

17 "Son of Man, when the house of Israel was living on their own land, they defiled it with their lifestyles and behavior; they were as disqualified to be with me as a menstruating woman is to you.

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

- In addressing Israel's restoration to the land (v16-38), the first point highlighted is why the dispersion was necessary in the first place and what transpired during the dispersion that now requires restoration.

— Earlier, Ezekiel outlined Israel's pagan beginnings (16:1-5) and the nation's moral downfall (16:15-34). Verses 16-21 here reflect on this history, showing that God's judgment on His exiled people was justified.

— Because of this truth, the nation's future restoration will be entirely due to His sovereign grace

- "...when the house of Israel was living on their own land" - Israel occupied their land for 800 years (Joshua to the Babylonian captivity)

— God still recognized it as "their land" even when they were in open rebellion against Him

- "...defiled" - *tame*, means "to be or become unclean." This word, 2x in this verse and again in v18 and v29, is associated with sin that defiles or pollutes by contact.
- One Jewish commentary described the nation as "a splendid house that had heaps of filth in many corners"
- "...uncleanness of a woman in her impurity" - a figure for idolatry (Cf. 7:19; 18:6; Lev 15:19ff)

18 **Therefore I poured out My wrath** on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols.

18 Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols.

18 So I poured out my anger on them because of all the bloodshed throughout the land and because they had defiled it with their idolatry.

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

- "Therefore" - here is God's reaction to Israel's 800 years of open rebellion. It was Israel's defilement (v17) that provoked God to wrath

- "...I poured out My wrath" - God poured out His wrath on His own people

— "wrath" - the cycles of judgments poured out on Israel during the 800 years, outlined in Deut 28:15-68

— The two reasons given for God pouring out His wrath on them was for murder ("the blood which they had shed") and idolatry.

Six Aspects of a Suzerain-Vassal Treaty (Outline of Deuteronomy)

1. Preamble (1:1-5)
2. Prologue (1:6—4:40)
3. Covenant obligations (5:1—26:19)
4. Storage and reading instructions (27:2-3; 31:9,24,26)
5. Witnesses (32:1)
6. Blessings & curses (28:1-68)

19 I also scattered them **among the nations**, and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to **their ways** and **their deeds** I judged them.

19 Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.

19 Then I scattered them among the nations, dispersing them to other lands, just as their lifestyles and behavior deserved. That's how I judged them.

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

- The punishment: God fulfilled His promise in Deut 28:49-50 by removing the Jewish people from their land

- "...among the nations" - this isn't talking about the Babylonian captivity...it's talking about the worldwide dispersion of Jews (which lasted almost 2000 years) at the Roman *diaspora* in 70 AD

— This prophecy of Ezekiel has been fulfilled...the Jews were scattered worldwide in 70 AD and that went on for 2000 years. If what Ezekiel says out the scattering came true, we should trust that what he says about the regathering to be true as well.

- "...their ways" - their internal corruption

- "...their deeds" - their external sinful actions

Israel's Judgments

1. Division of the kingdom - 931 BC (1 Kings 12)
2. Assyrian judgment - 722 BC (2 Kings 17)
3. Babylonian captivity - 586 BC (2 Kings 25)
4. **Roman *diaspora* - 70 AD (Luke 19:41-44)**

*These prophecies, especially those in v12-15, could not have been fulfilled in the return from Babylon...Thus many take the primary reference to the return from Babylon. But the predictions will not be completely fulfilled until the future restoration, of which the return from Babylon was a foreshadowing. [Charles L. Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord*, Paperback ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1969; reprint, Chicago: Moody, 1984), 207]*

20 When they came to the nations where they went, **they profaned My holy name**, because it was said of them, '**These are the people of the LORD, yet they have left His land.**'

20 When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.'

20 Nevertheless, when they arrived in those nations, they continued to profane my holy name. It was said about them, 'These are the LORD's people, even though they've left his land.'

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

- After explaining the reasons for Israel dispersion, Ezekiel now begins to reveal the necessity of the nation's restoration:
- "...they profaned My holy name" - Israel was called to be a light to the nations, but when God pushed them into these other nations, they continued their detestable practices, trashing God's name throughout the world.
- Exactly the opposite of what God had for Israel, Israel is now experiencing...they were supposed to be a light to the nations (Is 42:6; 49:6), but because of her sin, God's name is profaned.
- "...These are the people of the LORD, yet they have left His land" - this is what the pagans are saying in the nations where the Jews were dispersed.
- The Gentiles recognized that the Jews were God's people and that the land they had left was "His land". Thus, by being in exile, Israel gave the appearance that God was powerless to protect His own people.
- By provoking God's wrath through their sins, Israel's actions indirectly led to the profaning of God's name among the Gentiles, who falsely perceived Israel's exile as evidence of God's inability to safeguard His people (Cf. Num 14:16; Jer 33:24).

2 Sam 12:14: However, since by this deed you have shown utter disrespect for the LORD, the child himself who is born to you shall certainly die."

Rom 2:24: For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

21 I've been concerned about my holy reputation, which the house of Israel has been defiling throughout all of the nations where they've gone."

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

- God's primary concern is for His own name...

— He could only tolerate the Gentiles' misunderstanding of His name and power for a limited time. In order to defend His name, He had to intervene. The details of His intervention are described in v22-31.

— God is going to bring about end times events just as He has stated in Scripture in order to vindicate His name (Cf. v22,32)

In summary, this initial passage (v16-21) on Israel's restoration to the land addresses two key necessities: first, the necessity of Israel's dispersion, which was caused by the defilement of the land through murder and idolatry; and second, the necessity of Israel's restoration, driven by the Gentiles' misinterpretation of the *Diaspora* as a sign of God's weakness, thus tarnishing His reputation.

God's purpose in human history is not to save souls...it's to glorify Himself. Reformed Theology teaches that God's purpose in history is salvation, but it is not. God's purposes in history are to glorify Himself. When a lost sinner gets saved, God gets the glory. So even the soteriological purposes of God are subsumed under the doxological purpose of God, which is to glorify Himself.

Restoration of Israel

See (2) **The Re-Establishment of Israel** in [Pre-Tribulational Events](#)

(C) Israel to be restored physically and spiritually (36:22-38)

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, '**This is what the Lord GOD says: "It is not for your sake**, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but **for My holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

22 "Therefore tell the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "I'm not about to act for your sake, you house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy reputation, which you have been defiling throughout all of the nations where you've gone.

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

- "Therefore" - based on v20-21, God will act in order to vindicate His name among the Gentiles

- "...This is what the Lord GOD says" - indicates a new prophecy (Cf. v1,15,33,37)

- First, God will establish a divine basis for Israel's redemption: God's holy name. Before the restoration of Israel can be fulfilled, the issue of the profaning of God's name must first be resolved.

- "...It is not for your sake"- the redemption of Israel will not occur because the chosen people deserve it, but rather for the sake of God's holy name, which their actions have profaned.

— It is solely because of God's regard for His holy name, His reputation, that He will bring about Israel's redemption.

- "...for My holy name" - the reason God will fulfill His promises to Israel is to vindicate His holy name. He will not fulfill His gracious promises to them because He feels sorry for them, because they deserve it, or because of His love for them (all of which are true).

— It is vital to understand that such action on God's part on behalf of Israel does not reveal in any sense a partiality toward Israel. It is rather a vindication of God's glory and will, for He has condescended to link His purposes on earth with the people of Israel. [Feinberg]

23 And I will **vindicate** the holiness of My great name which has been **profaned among the nations**, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I show Myself holy among you in their sight.

23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

23 I'm going to affirm my great reputation that has been defiled among the nations (that is, that you have defiled in their midst), and those people will learn that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I affirm my holiness in front of their very eyes.

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

- "...vindicate" - or "sanctify" meaning "to set apart"; He will "clear His name" by what He is about to do. The ultimate purpose of Israel's restoration is to vindicate the sanctity of His name.

- "...profaned among the nations" - due to the Gentiles' misinterpretation of Israel's judgments/exiles/dispersions.

— This is an indirect accusation by God that Israel is responsible for the actions that have brought dishonor to God's name. Once God has been "vindicated" in the eyes of the nations, they will recognize who He truly is.

- We need to understand that God's purposes in history are doxological, meaning that God works in human history to glorify Himself.

— Many churches/denominations believe that God's purposes in history are soteriological, that God works in human history to save souls, which He does. But you have to understand that when someone is saved, God gets the glory. So even the saving purposes of God are subsumed under His doxological purpose.

— So the overarching purpose of God in human history is doxological, not soteriological. This isn't to say that God doesn't care about saving people, because He does, but His saving purpose is subsumed (included) in His doxological purpose.

— If you believe that God's primary purpose is soteriological, then you have no basis for understanding His plan for the angels...the good angels who didn't fall when Satan rebelled, and the evil one-third who did fall. How do you explain God's dealing with the angels when the plan of salvation is not open to them?

— God is dealing with the angels in a particular way, but it can't be soteriological because the plan of salvation is not open to the fallen angels

— If we have too narrow of an understanding of God's purposes, if it's all about salvation, then you have no basis for understanding God's plan for the angels because salvation is not open to them.

Is 42:8: "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to idols.

Dispensationalism

Traditional-normative dispensational theology is a system that embodies three essential, fundamental concepts called the *sine qua non* ("without which is not"):

1. The **consistent** use of a plain, normal, literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation
 - Basically, when these words were given, how would the author's audience have understood them
 - You interpret the Bible as normal language except when obvious figures of speech are in use (metaphor, simile, personification, etc.)
 - The same literal grammatical-historical method was used by the Reformers to rescue the Church soteriologically from the Dark Ages...when you use this method of interpretation, you get...
2. The Church is distinct from Israel
3. God's overall purpose is to bring glory to Himself (Eph 1:6,12,14)
 - The "Doxological Purpose" of God
 - This is included in the Westminster Confession

Doxological Purpose of God

1. God's ultimate purpose for the ages is to glorify Himself. Scripture is not human-centered, as though salvation were the principal point, but God-centered, because His glory is at the center.
2. The glory of God is the primary principle that unifies all dispensations, the program of salvation being just one of the means by which God glorifies Himself. Each successive revelation of God's plan for the ages, as well as His dealing with the elect, non-elect, angels and nations all manifest His glory.

The ultimate force behind everything God does is His glory. Our self-serving motives keep us from fully understanding why God's pursuit of His glory differs from the selfish way we operate. Is God self-serving in desiring the glory He deserves? Not at all! The expression of God's glory represents the best ways possible and benefits us greatly.



Five Key Stages of Israel's Restoration

1. Regathering in unbelief (v24), began in 1948
2. Purification (v25)
3. Spiritual rebirth/regeneration (v26)
4. Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (v27)
5. Regathering in faith and permanent residence in the Promised Land (v28)

24 For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the lands; and I will bring you **into your own land**.

24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

24 I'm going to remove you from the nations, gather you from all of the territories, and bring you all back to your own land.

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

- "...into your own land" - not into someone else's land, but to the land that God gave to Israel 3500 years ago. This is the "regathering of Israel" (Is 43:9).
- God assured Israel that He will bring them out of other lands back to the Promised Land. The very same Land from which He scattered them (v20). The same Land He gave their fathers (v28). A Land distinct from the other nations (v36). And a Land whose cities would be inhabited by those who return (v33,36,38).

Reliability of the "Divine Regathering" Predictions			
	RETURN	PREDICTED	FULFILLED
1 st	From Egypt to Canaan	Gen. 15:13-14	Joshua 1-12
2 nd	From Babylon to Israel	Jer. 25:11; 29:10	Ezra & Nehemiah
3 rd	From the Diaspora to Israel's restoration	Ezekiel 36:24-28	Millennial Kingdom

25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

25 I'll sprinkle pure water on you all, and you'll be cleansed from your impurity and from all of your idols."

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

- "Then" - indicates chronology; once Israel is regathered back into the land, *then* God will begin His work of restoration and redemption. So this is a two-fold prophecy: first, they are regathered (in unbelief), then they are redeemed (Cf. 37:9-10).

— This is illustrated in Ezek 37 (Valley of Dry Bones)...the bones come together, but there is no breath (*rûah*, the Holy Spirit) in the body. The *rûah* (Holy Spirit) comes into the body only after the bones are "regathered" together.

— This is also illustrated by Christ in His meeting with Nicodemus...He said "Unless you are born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Water (physical birth)

and Spirit (spiritual birth) are both required to enter the kingdom. Jesus is referring to the process outlined in Ezek 36.

- "...I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean" - after the present regathering (in unbelief), God will begin the process of purification.

— Throughout Scripture, water is frequently used as a symbol of purification (Cf. Ex 30:17-21; Lev 14:5-7; Num 19:17-19; Heb 9:13,19). Specifically, water represents purification from sin (Cf. Ps 51:7; Heb 10:22).

— Water is also used symbolically in the context of the purification of Israel as a nation (Is 4:3-4; Zech 13:1).

— Water also symbolizes the Holy Spirit, and through the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel in the last days, purification will occur (Joel 2:28-32; Zech 12:10-14; Rom 11:25-27).

ISRAEL'S TWO REGATHERINGS	
THE PRESENT (FIRST) REGATHERING	THE PERMANENT (SECOND) REGATHERING
Return to part of the land	Return to all the land
Return in unbelief	Return in faith
Restored to the land only	Restored to the land and the Lord
Sets the stage for Tribulation (discipline)	Sets the stage for Millennium (blessing)
Adapted from: Price, <i>Jerusalem In Prophecy</i> , 219	

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

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

26 ""I'm going to give you a new heart, and I'm going to give you a new spirit within all of your deepest parts. I'll remove that rock-hard heart of yours and replace it with one that's sensitive to me.

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

- Verses 26-27 provide two means by which this purification will occur:
- "...I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" - regeneration, the impartation of divine life. This refers to Israel's internal transformation.
- "...I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" - renewal of their spirit, which includes human desires. Israel's spirit is dead, but God promises to revive it.
- This idea represents the idea of being "born again" in the OT. Israel will undergo a spiritual rebirth, encompassing both heart and spirit, affecting their mind, emotions, will, and desires.

27 And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances.

27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

27 I'll place my spirit within you, empowering you to live according to my regulations and to keep my just decrees.

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

- "...I will put My Spirit within you" - the Holy Spirit will indwell the people of Israel, just as He does the church today. The Spirit will indwell both the individual and the nation as a whole.

— As a result of this Spirit indwelling, the people will be empowered to follow God's righteous standards. They will be able to "walk in His statutes" and "follow His ordinances".

[Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29]

The Prophecy of Joel

This is what Joel meant in his prophecy—there is a day coming when God will pour out His Spirit on *all* flesh, not just *some* (Joel 2:28-29). The Spirit was poured out upon very few on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). All Peter said on that day was, "Don't ridicule us and say we are drunk. This is *like* what Joel said is going to happen in the last days." The Spirit has come upon a few, and today God is calling out a people for His name.

The results of Israel's regeneration will be:

- Her permanent occupation of the Land (v28a)
- A covenant relationship with God (v28b)
- Protection against relapse into idolatry (v29a)
- The abundant supply of every want (v29b-30)
- Self-humiliation and repentance on account of past sin (v31-32)

28 And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

28 You'll live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, you'll be my people, and I will be your God.

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

- Only after the regeneration described in v25-27 can the Jewish people permanently reside in the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants (Gen 13:15; 17:8; 48:4; Joshua 14:9; 1 Chr 28:8; Ps 37:28-29; Is 34:16-17; 60:21; Jer 7:7; 25:5).

— This regeneration will occur during the final three days of the Tribulation (Cf. Hosea 6:1-3)—not in Israel but in Bozrah (Petra), where the Jewish people will be hiding from the Antichrist. Once the nation is saved, the Messiah will return and defeat the armies of the Antichrist, bringing the Tribulation to an end with His victory. After the earth undergoes a 75-day period of renovation (Dan 12:11-12), the Jewish people, now a saved nation, will be gathered into the Promised Land for the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom.

— Verse 24 described the initial regathering before regeneration, which was a regathering in unbelief that will eventually lead to another dispersion in the middle of the Tribulation. But after Israel's regeneration, purification, and indwelling by the Holy Spirit at the very end of the Tribulation, there will be a second regathering, this time in faith. According to v28, it is at that point that the Jewish people will live permanently in the land of their fathers, with the result that they will be God's people and He will be their God.

The Heresy of Calvinism's Doctrine of Irresistible Grace

Calvinism uses this passage to argue that God must regenerate us before we can believe...that regeneration precedes faith. They teach that faith is a gift of God, which is given to "the elect" so that they can believe. Due to their doctrine of Total Depravity, they believe that a human being, even under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, cannot believe. So God has to first regenerate a person so that they are able to believe. God has to give them the gift of faith.

So Calvinists foam at the mouth quoting Ezek 36 because they think it teaches that God does the regenerating, whether you want to be regenerated or not. And in Calvinism, those who get the gift of faith are only "the elect." If you are lucky enough to be one of the few that God has chosen to be saved, then you get regenerated so that you can believe.

Everyone else, it's for God's glory that they all go to hell.

How do you compare this against the long-suffering of God, the patience of God, or the love of God?

If you only had Ezek 36 to construct a doctrine of salvation, then you could easily come to believe that the Calvinists are correct...that God has to regenerate you before you can be saved. However, you don't construct a doctrine based off one passage...you have to construct it from the whole counsel of God.

Matt 23:37: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and **you were unwilling.**

- Israel wasn't unable, they (1st century Israel) made a choice. They were "unwilling" out of their own volition/free will

Matt 23:39: **For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"**

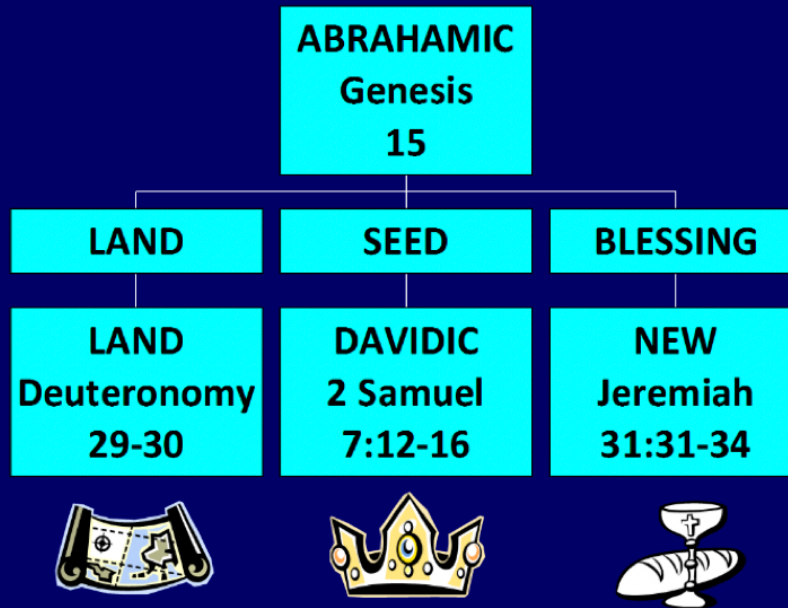
- Israel must first make a decision to trust in Christ as their Messiah; "until" they do, the Lord will not return

So when you factor in Matt 23:37-39 with Ezek 36, which Calvinism does not do, you can see clearly that the Bible does not teach that regeneration precedes faith. It does not teach that faith is a gift. What it teaches is that what is holding up Israel's regeneration is a decision that the nation needs to make of their own volition. Our free will/volition is something that God uses to carry out His program. So if you're going to only refer to Ezek 36 to build your doctrine of Irresistible Grace in Calvinism, and argue that regeneration precedes faith, you have an unbalanced doctrine.

In addition, what Calvinists don't understand is that this passage refers to people who are already regenerated/saved. At the time God is referring to in this passage, Israel will already be saved/regenerated. This passage documents what God will do for them *after* their regeneration (Matt 23:39).

What is going on in Ezek 36 is the fulfillment of the New Covenant. God, through Abram, promised three things in the Abrahamic Covenant. The blessing is further outlined in the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34).

Abrahamic Covenant



Unconditional covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26)

Jer 31:31-34:

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

- God gave Israel the 10 Commandments, but they broke every one of them
 - The problem was not with the commandments, but the fact that they were "external" or "outside" of the people of Israel.

33 "For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD: "I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

- God's New Covenant will be "internal"...He will write His law on their hearts through regeneration
 - Israel will have an internal compulsion to obey God. This is what the work of regeneration does, that the system of religion cannot do. Religion can only get the flesh to try harder

34 They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of

them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember."

- Ezekiel is prophesying about Israel's national regeneration at the end of the Tribulation period. At that time, every living Jew will be saved. There will not be one single unsaved Jew living on planet earth at that time.

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

Lev 26:43: For the land will be abandoned by them, and will restore its Sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their wrongdoing, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul loathed My statutes.

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

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

29 In addition, I'll deliver you from everything that makes you unclean. I'll call out to the grain you plant, ordering it to produce abundant yields, and I will never bring famine in your direction.

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

- Verses 29-31 highlight three key aspects of Israel's condition in the land during the millennial kingdom

- "...I will save you from all your uncleanness" - first, purification; a continuous cleansing of Israel's sins.

— While this passage focuses on the initial purification that follows their national regeneration, it also emphasizes ongoing cleansing throughout the millennial kingdom as new generations of Jews are born and come to faith.

— This consistent purification is consistent with the promises of the New Covenant (Jer 31:34), which states that there will not be a single Israelite/Jew who lacks faith during the millennial kingdom.

- "...I will call for the grain and multiply it" - second, there will be tremendous agricultural prosperity for Israel during the millennial kingdom, prophesied in v8 and in the blessings for obedience (Deut 28:1-14).

30 Instead, I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that **you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.**

30 I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

30 I'll increase the yields of your fruit trees and crops so that you'll never again experience the disgrace of famine that occurs in other nations.

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

- "...you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations" - third, the Gentile nations will no longer witness Israel suffering from food shortages or famine and mistakenly conclude that the Jews are under eternal judgment from God.

31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will **loathe** yourselves in your own sight for your wrongdoings and your abominations.

31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

31 Then you'll remember your lifestyles and practices that were not good. You'll hate yourselves as you look at your own iniquities and loathsome practices.

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

- The reproach of Israel will be removed, yet they will still remember their past sins. Consequently, they will "loathe themselves" for their internal corruption ("wrongdoings") and their external corruption ("abominations").

- "...loathe" - *quwt*, "grieved"; the Jewish people will experience deep remorse for their sins.

— There will be a clear recognition of past sins and a turning away in repentance. However, this remorse will not carry a sense of eternal judgment or lingering sorrow throughout the millennial kingdom. Instead, the kingdom period will be characterized by gladness, and this remorse will not overshadow the joy of Israel's restored relationship with God.

32 I am not doing *this* for your sake," declares the Lord GOD; **"let *that* be known to you.** Be ashamed and humiliated for your ways, house of Israel!"

32 I am not doing *this* for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

32 I won't be doing any of this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "so keep that in mind. Be ashamed and frustrated because of your behavior, you house of Israel!"

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

- When the final regathering and regeneration takes place, and all is said and done, God will get the glory. Their regeneration, regathering to the land, and restoration will be solely the work of God's grace.
- Notice that God respects man's free will; if He didn't, He would be disrespecting how He created us as image bearers of God
- "...let *that* be known to you" - this phrase strongly reinforces the point that God did not regather, regenerate and restore Israel based on any goodness on their part because they do not deserve this type of treatment.
- God is basically reiterating: "Know this and know it well, so you will never forget it!" Israel's restoration is not for the people's sake. It is not because they deserve it; in fact, they deserve *never* to be restored. The house of Israel should be forever ashamed and confounded for its ways. However, God's intention is to restore the Jewish people in order to vindicate His holy name, not as a reward for their repentance.

Effect of Israel's Prosperity on the Nations

33 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your **wrongdoings**, I will populate the cities, and the places of ruins will be rebuilt.

33 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.

33 "This is what the Lord GOD says: 'At the same time that I cleanse you from all of your guilt, I'll make your cities become inhabited again and the desolate wastelands will be rebuilt.

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

- "This is what the Lord GOD says" - a literary marker indicating a new oracle/prophecy, focusing on the blessings of the land.

- "...On the day" - the timing for the rebuilding of the land is explicitly linked to Israel's national regeneration

- "...I cleanse you from all your wrongdoings" - God has more in mind than just a physical regathering of His people to the land; He wants to spiritual cleanse them.

- The same prophecy of populating the cities and rebuilding waste places was given in v10

34 The desolated land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.

34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.

34 The desolate fields will be cultivated, replacing the former wasteland that everyone who passed by in times past had noticed.

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

- The prerequisite for the rebuilding mentioned in v33 is the removal of desolation. The land, which had laid fallow for a long period of time, will be cultivated again. Land that suffered from neglect, erosion, and overgrowth will once again be cultivated.

- When Israel does not occupy the land, the land becomes desolate; when Israel occupies the land, it is fruitful and productive (Cf. Lev 26:43)

- A similar prophecy is given in Ezek 38:8: After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years **you will come into the land** that is restored from the sword, *whose inhabitants* have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel **which had been a continual place of ruins**; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them.

35 And **they will say**, 'This desolated land has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste, desolated and ruined cities are fortified *and* inhabited.'

35 They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified *and* inhabited.'

35 They will say, "This wasteland has become like the garden of Eden, and what used to be desolate ruins are now fortified and inhabited."

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

- "...they will say" - Ezekiel earlier promised that God would remove the reproach of the Gentiles concerning the land, and now, when they witness the land's productivity, they will acknowledge its renewal.

- This is an amazing prophecy that once Israel is restored to the land, the land would become so flourishing that people would compare it to the Garden of Eden.

- This verse predicts a time period when the affects of the Fall become dramatically curtailed. The only time in history this fits is during the millennial kingdom (Cf. Is 65:20f).

36 Then the nations around you that are left will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted that which was desolated; **I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it."**

36 Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it."

36 Then the surviving people that live around you will learn that I, the LORD, have rebuilt these ruins and have cultivated these pastures that used to be desolate wastelands. I, the LORD, have spoken this, and I'm going to bring it about!'

36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.
- Once all is said and done, God will vindicate His Name. Only God could've predicted this restoration, then pull it off.
- When the Gentiles see these once-ruined places rebuilt and the land thriving again, their previous misinterpretation of Israel's dispersion (as described in v20) will be permanently corrected. No longer will the Gentiles misunderstand the reason for the *Diaspora*.
- "...I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it" - the guarantee that all of this will come to pass is clear. Since God's word is infallible, what He has declared will indeed be fulfilled.

37 'This is what the Lord GOD says: "This too I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: **I will increase their people like a flock.**"

37 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock.

37 "This is what the Lord GOD has to say: 'I'm going to allow the house of Israel to ask anything they want from me, including this: I'm going to increase their population as a shepherd increases his flock.

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

- In response to the blessings, promises, and their fulfillment described in the preceding verses, Israel will turn to the Lord, seeking Him to bring these promises to fruition for them. And YHWH will fulfill these promises for Israel, not because they deserve it, but in accordance with His covenant promises.

- "...people like a flock" - *kazzon 'adam*, literally means "like sheep-man"; it portrays Israel as God's sheep (Cf. 34:31)

38 Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'""

38 Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'""

38 The desolate cities will be filled with flocks of human beings, just like Jerusalem used to be filled with flocks of sheep during the times of the appointed festivals. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

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

- Ezekiel gives an analogy here that the population explosion in Israel's cities will be like the feast days (Cf. Deut 16:16)

— Josephus and others stated that there were upwards of 1M people in Jerusalem during the feast days during Jesus' ministry. There were a corresponding huge number of sheep to be used for sacrifices during these times.

In these verses, God promised the following:

- To regather His scattered people and return them to their land (36:24,33b,37-38)
- To cleanse them from idolatry and impurity (36:25,29a,33a)
- To remove their stony hearts and give them hearts of flesh (36:26; also seen in Jer 31:31-35)
- To put His Spirit within them and move them to obey Him (36:27)
- To move them back to the land of their ancestors and be their God (36:28)
- To make their land fruitful and productive (36:29b-30,34-35)
- To vindicate His reputation before the nations (36:36)