



Lesson 4 September 23rd, 2017

Spirit Filled Heart

Study Scripture – Ezekiel 36:22-32

Background Scripture – Ezekiel 36

Key Verse:

“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.”

Ezekiel 36:26

INTRODUCTION

Our Lesson Study looks intently at the wonder of divine love. This is a mystery. How could God ever have made some creatures and declared His creation good, and as Charles Spurgeon tells us has decided in eternity:

“Should they lapse from the condition in which he has created them, he suffers them, as a rule, to endure the penalty of their transgressions, and to abide in the place into which they are fallen.

But here he makes an exception man, fallen man, created by his Maker, pure and holy, hath willfully and wickedly rebelled against the Most High, and lost his first estate, but behold, he is to be the subject of a new creation through the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

What is man compared to an angel? Is he not little and insignificant?

“And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day”. God hath no mercy upon them he made them pure and holy, and they ought to have remained his, but inasmuch as they willfully rebelled, he cast them down from their shining seats for ever and without a single promise of mercy, he hath bound them fast in the fetters of destiny, to abide in eternal torment.

But wonder, ye heavens, the God who destroyed the angels stoop from his highest throne in glory, and speaks to his creature man, and thus saith unto him. “Now, thou hast fallen from me even as the angels did; thou hast grossly erred, and gone astray from my ways—not for thy sake do I this, but for mine own name’s sake—behold I will undo the mischief which thine own hand hath done; I will take away that heart which has rebelled against me. Having made thee once, thou hast unmade thyself—I will make thee over again. I will put my hand a second time to the work; once more shall thou revolve upon the pottery wheel, and I will make thee a vessel of honor, fit for my gracious use. I will take away thy stony heart, and give thee a heart of flesh a new heart will I give thee; a new spirit will I put within thee”.

Is this not a wonder of divine sovereignty and of infinite grace, that mighty angels should be cast into the fire forever, and yet God hath made a covenant with man that he will renew and restore him?

The Lesson therefore which this writer had so eloquently introduced faces us with how God will so forgive and restore His people to Himself on a permanent basis, given the long and vicious cycle of rebellion, apostasy, murmuring and mercy and restoration that has occurred in the history of Israel and in our own lives.

God clearly has to act on people who are unwilling to heed His pleas to return to Him and be obedient, proving that they are unable to break the grip of sin on their hearts and minds.

Note therefore that God Himself has to will not to improve the nature of His people or to mend or to repair their rotten, unsound, worm eaten heart, but to

1. Cleanse
2. Transform, and to
3. Possess.

There will be a supernatural change and a reverse exile. God will have to do this not because He loves His people for their sake, but because of *"concern for My holy name"*.

This Lesson therefore speaks of an act of sovereign grace. Neither Israel nor modern man deserves anything good. But God's reputation is at stake because of the behaviour of His people, ancient and modern, He gives great promises to vindicate His name, and to show the nations how He can save, redeem, restore, and create anew a holy people to Himself.

Our lesson examines the prophet Ezekiel's continuing look at the future of God's ancient people, the people of Israel, and he tells us what God says this future is going to be like.

It is remarkable that the questions on this matter that were being asked in the time of Ezekiel are remarkably similar to the questions people are asking today about the future of Israel. The answer the prophet Ezekiel gave to his people and the nations surrounding Israel then are the same answers that we will give today.

In the chapter previous to this the prophet repeated the fact that God would judge the Gentile nations, including the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, who were called the Edomites.

Just like the nations of the world today these Gentile nations and the Edomites, hated Israel and were a thorn in Israel's flesh. The Edomites though blood relatives to Israel, in particular had a virulent, and perpetual hatred for the Jewish people, for they thought that they should have inherited the blessing from God, and so were jealous and envious, doing everything to destroy the nation of Israel.

They continually opposed the Israelites. They tried to restrict the passage of Israel when they came out of Egypt, rejoiced when the Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem taken into captivity.



One of them tried to wipe out every Jew during the time of Queen Esther, and when their descendent Herod the Great thought that the Jewish Messiah and Saviour had come as Jesus of Nazareth he tried to destroy Him.

But the Lord God has told us important facts about the claims of the enemies of Israel in chapter 36. He stated that though they at that time claimed the Promised land and boasted that they wanted and in fact possessed the Jewish sacred sites for themselves, they were dead wrong.

In addition, God told the Gentile nations and the Edomites that they would all disappear from history and they all did. They felt the wrath of God.

It is to be noted that when Ezekiel gave these prophecies about the future of Israel, these people of God were under divine discipline. They had been taken captive into Babylon and resided beside the River Chebar where Ezekiel was prophesying at the time. Israel had sinned greatly, had followed the ways of idolatry, seeking after other gods, intermarrying with pagan nations, and had made political, religious, and economic pacts with these nations. So for that they were disciplined. They were sent into exile. The Shekinah glory of God had departed from the Temple. The Temple was destroyed and the hope for the nation seemed to have disappeared forever.

But the nations who saw the destruction of the nation and the Temple, misread what was happening, and thus had made a grave mistake. They thought that because Israel was being disciplined, this strong disciplining meant that they had been rejected by their God. The Gentiles were wrong.

But we should never make that mistake, for the minor Prophets, the major prophets, the Apostle Paul in Romans 11 and in other writings, the Apostle John in Revelation 20, and Jesus Himself had prophesied that God had decreed a great future for the Jewish people. That was a promise that would never be broken.

It was clear therefore that it is wrong for the enemies of Israel as well as for ourselves to think God had cast away His people, and therefore they could do whatever they wanted to Israel.

We should always remember that God is not finished with His ancient people. These people are never pictured as saints or even as people who do not do many wrong things, make mistakes and do evil. But He tells us through the prophet Ezekiel and others that He has a plan for them and He will bless them.

It is to be noted that there are some who teach that they have replaced Israel as the people of God and that the covenant will not be enforced for this nation had reviled their Saviour and Messiah. In Romans 3 the Apostle Paul acknowledged that many would like to think that because Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ their promises are cancelled. But after stating clearly that



“a Jew is one who is a Jew inwardly, and circumcision is true circumcision if it is not simply in the flesh but in the inward man.

The Apostle argued against cancellation of the covenant promises. One writer states Paul’s inspired position:

“He says now without any vacillation whatsoever, with this nation of Jewish people in the spiritual shamble of rebellion, with Christian churches springing up everywhere over that world, as the believers have been forced out to spread the word, that they still have an advantage. He says, *“Much every way”* in answer to that question. *“What advantage then has the Jew?”* Why he has an advantage that is much in every way”.

So we can say that the nation of Israel has a most favoured nation status with the Lord God, who had also stated that they were especially likely to be judged by the Lord God. One writer points out

“For example, the prophet Amos said concerning Israel, speaking for the Lord God,” *You only have I known of all the families of the earth”.*

Well, now it is clear that the Lord knows about all the families of the earth, but he said, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth”.*

What is meant by that? Well, he means that in a special sense he knows the Nation Israel, that is, he has chosen them among all the families of the earth. But then the next words are often forgotten. They are, *“Therefore I will punish for all your iniquities”.*

So there is a peril in unconditional election.

So let us heed the clear warning. Those called by the Spirit and elected must look carefully at the belief and behaviour of ancient Israel, who though they had the Scriptures, did not believe the Messianic promises and believed in Messiah. Belief in Messiah carried tremendous implications with it. It is not a casual lifestyle, which Scripture called the life of the flesh.

The life of those in God must reflect the new life, the new spirit, the new heart, which can only be granted by the work of the Holy Spirit. This in the New covenant that Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ brings.

What is more is that God has not only promised blessing for His people, but He has told us in chapter 36 that the nations that have tried to take away the land from Israel, destroy the land, scorn His people, disrespect them, abuse them, laugh at them, show them no mercy, will be punished for their dastardly behaviour.

God would make Edom a laughingstock in the world, and make them desolate, because they had rejoiced when Israel had become desolate. The other nations that had despoiled Israel would be destroyed. This has happened and only Egypt has survived though vastly reduced in power. That nation also awaits future punishment as well as some future blessing.



We therefore in chapter 36 see what God would do for Israel and how He would prepare the Promised Land for the restored nation. The curses that God had warned them about would be reversed and they would receive the opposite to the terrible punishment of Edom.

We are accordingly now looking at a chapter which begins to give a detailed plan of redemption for Israel and what God's plan of salvation entailed. It is parallel to the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and speaks of what Jeremiah spoke about, namely,

1. The restoration to the land- Jeremiah 31:27-29.
2. The forgiving of the sins of the nation- Jeremiah 31:34,
3. The resumption of the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit- Jeremiah 31:33.

One writer tells us:

“The future of Israel (in chapters 36 and 37) can be summarized in four words: restoration, regeneration, resurrection, and reunion.”

In the first section of chapter 36 therefore Ezekiel proclaimed that God was angry at the insulting and perverse things that the nations have done to His people, and was now speaking in His jealousy and wrath.

One writer tells us that in verses 8 through 15 of this chapter God gave four promises as follows:

“First, the land would become productive because the Israelites would soon come back into the land. Yahweh assured the land that He was for it. He would bless it, and it would become cultivated again instead of desolate and inhabited.

Second, the Lord promised to fill all the land with Israelites, to enable them to live in their cities and rebuild the places that had become ruins... The mountains of Israel could again become populated with people and animals that would become fruitful and multiply. The Lord would bless them more greatly than ever before. Then His people to know that He is God.

Third, the Lord would cause the people of Israel to take possession of these mountains as their inheritance and never leave them again....

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

It is interesting to note that God promised to handle the enemies of Israel in the way that they had handled Israel. They had maltreated and humiliated His people, and so He would humiliate



them. They have not blessed His people so now He would bless His people and give them the very things that the nations wanted to deprive His people of.

At this stage it should also be noted that God has promised His people, including the Gentiles that come to Him, these great blessings. They are guaranteed success and ultimate victory over their enemies just as Israel is guaranteed success and victory over their enemies. According to 1 Corinthians 2:9 God has great abundance in store for us as well as for Israel, and the abundance promised to Israel on the mountains of Israel is a symbol of this promised future blessing. We are told that we cannot even imagine the immense bounty that God has prepared for us. So great will our future be. This of course is a source of comfort for the people of God.

Before we look at our Text we should remind ourselves that God gave Israel the reasons for the scattering of Israel.

He reminded them that they had defiled the land by living in ways that were contrary to the Covenant. They had made a good and a holy land most unclean because of their wickedness. They had had no excuse to make the land unclean. Their bloodshed and idolatry had brought on them the inevitable wrath and judgment of God and so they were scattered.

Their behavior and judgment had made God look bad. His glory and honor had been damaged, for the heathens thought that God did not have the ability to keep them safe in their own land and therefore the pagan gods had triumphed and taken Israel out of their land into exile.

It is to be noted, and we should be warned therefore, that the eyes of God are on His land and on His people at all times. When His people do the abominable things that God hates He cannot continue to look upon it. So the righteous God who cannot bear to look on evil sends judgment. The letters to the churches in the Book of Revelation also tells us all of this plainly.

Pay special attention to the fact that when God disciplines His people after they have made Him look bad before the pagans, this brings reproach and contempt upon Him, and the pagans continually blaspheme the name of God. One writer comments:

“When they entered into the land of the heathen God had no glory by them there; but, on the contrary, his holy name was profaned.

It was profaned by the sins of Israel; they were no credit to their profession wherever they went, but on the contrary, a reproach to it. The name of God and his holy religion was blasphemed through them. Romans 2:24.

When those that pretended to be in relation to God, in covenant and communion with him, were found corrupt in their morals, slaves to their appetites and passions, dishonest in their dealings, and false to their words and the trust reposed in them, the enemies of the Lord had thereby great occasion given to them to blaspheme, especially when they quarreled with their God for correcting them, than which nothing could be more scandalous....

These are the people that came out of Jehovah's land, they are the very scum of the nations.



Are these those that had statutes so righteous whose lives are so unrighteous? Is this the nation that is so much celebrated for a *wise and understanding people*, and that is said to have *God so nigh unto them*? Do these belong to that brave, that holy nation, who appear here so vile, so abject?

So God sold his people and did not increase *his wealth by their price*. Psalm 44:12. The reproach they were under reflected upon him”.

THE TEXT

Vs22 Even with the promises to the forefathers of Israel as it stands now, the people had let themselves move into a state where God Almighty would not let them into the land which was promised to them, and also would not let them out of captivity.

At this stage, they had no desire to even turn to God for anything. But because God is so loving, and in addition is so concerned for His own reputation and to vindicate His reputation as though fully God, that He decided within Himself to extend mercy and kindness to them, not for their sakes, but to show them, and other nations what kind of a God He is.

It is clear because God tells His prophet to utter these words to the children of Israel, that He has found no merit in them that would lead Him to act in what they considered to be their best interests.

This act from God is meant as a stern lesson to the people to let them know that God will act when He so desires, and that all good acts are of God.

Man has by his actions excluded himself from all dignity and means to deserve anything according to the statement here. It is similar in a sense to the statement made by God, that because He could not swear by anything else he swears by Himself (Heb. 6:16-18). God had to act in His own interests, which in every case is perfect and right. He could not act in what the people considered to be ‘their interest’ because the people had forgotten who they were, and the covenant they had with Him. They were supposed to be serving Him but instead were in a state of constant sin (verse 21). As mentioned, God had no choice but to act as He did. God’s intention was to sanctify His great name. That should have been the intention and the desire of the people of God but unfortunately it was not.

We who profess the name of God today should examine ourselves to see what we are doing and to ensure that our behaviour always glorifies the name of God. Sadly, that is not what is being done for the behaviour of some believers give good reasons for pagans and heathens to continue to blaspheme the name of God.

It cannot be challenged or refuted successfully that Christians are as dishonest, materialistic, vicious with the use of the tongue, envious, jealous, competitive, and abusive as those who do not know God. For those who do not know it, much has been chronicled and written about under the title of a publication called ‘The Christian Hall of Shame’. The history of fighting and



destruction wreaked on Christian by others who call themselves Christians is replete with wickedness.

Vs. 23 God's purpose for removing the children of Israel from the rest of the people was to sanctify His own name.

“God's holy name is His great name. His holiness is His greatness; so He reckons it himself. Nor does anything make a man truly great but being truly good, and partaking of God's holiness. God will magnify His name as a holy name”, says one writer.

He saw that captivity was only serving to reinforce bad practices in His people, and to cleanse them of such practices and heresies, and to make them again a representative people for Him, He acted thus displaying His grace, mercy and holiness.

God's holy name is a great name as mentioned previously. This name which He had given the children of Israel which they could call God, was undoubtedly something personal but reverent. By God's own admission, His name is a great name. This testifies that not only is the name of God great, but God's holiness is great as is every aspect God is great.

The greatness in His name results from His holiness. Thus He wishes to sanctify and clear it from all charges and imputations. This way He will be seen by the world in His state of being glorious in holiness. Due to the sins of Israel and His connection to them, He must separate Himself from them to have the pagan world contemplate His standard again.

Even in reclaiming the glory that should be associated with His name, He puts in His plan a provision where the children of Israel can have the opportunity to be reconciled back to the Almighty God, and find themselves back on track to worship Him and claim the promises of Abraham.

Parts of this verse seem to repeat itself to stress how serious and influential sin is, to show the heinousness of sin and what concerns it gave Him in regards to how other nations saw Him and how it affected His people.

The Lord's intention is to fulfill His promises, and deliver His people. In God proving His own holy name, His saints would praise His name, and then He is sanctified in them. The process by which this will be done, as yet is not clear but Scriptures tells us that the remnant of the nation will be in penitence nationally when Messiah returns, for they will look on Him whom they pierced and would mourn for Him in the deepest possible fashion. However, the end result will be that through sanctification of His name, it will contribute to the propagating of the knowledge of God.

As a result of God's mercy, and acting for His own name's sake, God will be glorified as He redeems His people. Because of the sinfulness of man, God is giving yet another opportunity to



prove to the heathen and His children that His way is the holy and glorious way to proceed in life.

Vs. 24 In order to restore His honour make it sparkle among the nations, and sanctify His name, He must remove His people from the heathens that surround them. He would not have them remain in pagan corruption.

Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty sought to sanctify Himself in His people's eyes. Despite their many sins, He did not forsake His people. To ensure that all look at and exalt His name above all other gods, God would not forget His people, regardless of the state of sin that they were in. By including them in this sanctification process He prefigures the complete restoration of Israel. One writer notes:

There is not a more eloquent passage in the bible stressing the fact that, in the last analysis, salvation was undeserved by ancient Israel, even as it is also undeserved in the New Israel. There is no such thing as a salvation from God being merited, deserved, or earned by the ones saved. The best Christian on earth are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10), even as were the citizens of ancient Israel. The reason for ancient Israel's return from captivity was not their merit, but the glory of God as required by his eternal purpose.... The reestablishment of Israel in Canaan was a giant step indeed toward the redemption of the reputation of Jehovah as the God of all nations. What a shame it was that Israel's response was so inadequate, yet sufficient for God's purpose"

Vs. 25 God is clear that first, even in their state of sin, God will bring them out from the other sinful people that they are around. After He has done that, He will then begin the process of purification.

This is great news for sinners. This verse in the chapter gives us great hope, because all those who say that they have to clean up their lives before committing it to God, can now rejoice, because here it indicates that you should just come to God period, and after you have made that decision, then God himself will be the one to start the purification process.

By sprinkling Israel with water, God intends to purify Israel! A similar act is seen in the laws of Israel when they are preparing to purify an individual from defilement from the dead by sprinkling with water prepared from the ashes of a red heifer. The cleansing from sins corresponds to justification, and is not to be confounded with sanctification.

This act is more related with the regenerating grace of the Spirit. It is best to think of it as a shielding covering both ways. If one thinks of the sprinkled water as the blood of Christ, then the blood of sprinkling, and of justification from sin, and the pardon of it thereof is the goal of such actions. The blood of Christ is meant to cleanse all sin. By it men are justified from all things, and are made perfectly pure and spotless in the sight of God. All this leads to the children of God being able to live a life in the covenant that God will establish in the New Jerusalem, where we will have a new heart, and new spirit.



Vss.26 & 27 So when we claim that we have an inability to do our duty, God will cause Israel, and us, to walk in His statutes by His will and in His own strength.

His language here indicates that our hearts and very spirit are in need of a transplant. Note that “the heart” represents the entire person, on in through the mind, the will, and the emotions.

This work will be done by God, so that with the replacement of our “stony heart”, we will be able to be profitable in acting out the will of God. This “stony heart” is hardened by sin, and confirmed in it. With it we are destitute of spiritual life and motion, senseless, stupid, stubborn, and inflexible. The corrupted heart or the stony flesh, are in such a state, that no impressions from God are made, it remains hard and impenitent. This is the state of men, of the children of Israel and the heathens around them, they are carnal and in enmity against God.

It is only God who is sovereign, who is omnipotent, who can remove this kind of heart. This pointedly leads us back to the grace of God, the crucified Christ, and the blood of Christ. The new heart will point us to the true fear of God. This is in contrast to the stony heart we once possessed, in which it was unfit for receiving the good seed to yield any fruit.

The spirit describes the motivations that drive thoughts and conduct. Therefore there has to be a replacement done with respect to the “old spirit”; we will get a new one, so that the precepts of God will be written in our souls, and we will be able to seek out the Lord God, and move to do His statutes. His Spirit that He will put in us will act as a guide, teacher and sanctifier.

God will always keep His part of the covenant with us. What He asks of us is for us to keep the judgments that He sets. But that is not all that there is to it. He will also be there to provide us the strength and whatever skills we need in order to do that. He is our help along the way.

Thus, the promise of God’s grace will enable the people of Israel to do their duty and would engage and quicken their constant care and endeavour to do their duty. Israel would now be able to obey the Commandments of God carefully.

We too by the cleansing and regeneration of the Spirit will be constrained by the love of God, influenced by the grace of Christ, and strengthened by the blessed Holy Spirit to observe and do the will of God, cheerfully and willingly from the love that God gives to us.

God’s promises must and should drive us to His precepts as our general rule of conduct, and then His precepts must send us back to His promises for strength, for without His grace we must recognize that we can do nothing.

Verse 28. God here promises Israel that they will be in permanent, intimate, covenant relationship with Him. God does not make it dependent on them and say that ‘if they are going to be His people He will be their God’. But instead He says that He shall make them His people, a word which points them very powerfully to only His doing.

“*Ye shall be my people*”, God states after telling them that



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

One writer tells us in reference to this act of God, and we agree with what he says

“And this is the foundation and top-stone of a believer’s happiness; it is heaven itself.”

This verse typifies who God is to Israel and to us. Even more so, first it should be stressed that God first loved us. Despite the state of sin we were in, despite the fact that we did not seek Him out, and many other sins or actions that we did that did not include God in our lives, God still loved us first.

To this end He took out a people out of the world to call His own. To this people He has said, *“You will be my people, I will be your God”*.

He has chosen us, loved us, and still cared for us, even though at times we turned away from Him, He has always remained faithful and true to His remnant. God has offered to us the boon, which condition is of grace through a promise, as well as a reward, and not of merit, and not of works. God says from the previous verse that He will put within us His Spirit; this way we are more into a state of being His people.

Further to that, He offers to put Israel into a land that was promised to the Fathers, lost presently, but still kept as an inheritance when God return. When are we once again His people what happens? In this land there is great safety and plenty, more than enough of a great blessing to enjoy because this land is the gift of God. With His Spirit, and in His land, herein lies the foundation of a believer’s happiness.

The Jews, now and forever will appear to be the people of God by their effectual calling and conversion. God will then show Himself to be their God, by His presence with them, His protection of them, and that communion with Himself He will admit them to.

God saved, regenerated and then He worked. He brought Israel back into the land that He had promised to their fathers.

Note that this is totally a gracious work of a most merciful and faithful God. He said He would do something, and He did it and will do in the present time and do so in future. He mercifully saves from sin and then restores His own to great comfort and blessing.

Note carefully that cleansing and renewal are only done as part of the New Covenant.

Verse 29. Note that after saving and regenerating God guarantees permanent intimate relationship. This means that He has to keep Israel away from their uncleanness.



So remember that after He saves you it is He that keeps you, and prevents you from reverting into wickedness. Never forget that you are prone to wonder, no matter how holy you feel you are. It is a pity that we have to give God so much work to do.

Along with purifying the children of Israel so that they may move into position to serve God the way He wishes, He reminds them they are His people; He will move them away from the lusts of pride, envy, malice, covetousness, whoredom, blasphemy, and infidelity.

The exercise of God's power and dominion works through the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, and by the blood of Christ sprinkled on them, meaning all of true Israel, not just a tiny remnant.

God will also provide the people of Israel with an abundance of food for His people so that they may continue to grow strong, both spiritually and physically. To execute this, all the Bible says is that God calls it into being and it is done. This is consistent with everything that God does in the past. He speaks a word, and His word does not return unto Him void.

Famine was one of the judgments which they, the children of Israel had laboured under, and it had been as much a reproach to them, that they would be in a position that they would be starving in a land where it was famed for its fruitfulness. God, choosing to sanctify His name, and taking His people out from among the heathen in order to accomplish this is prepared to remove this burden from them. God was God, exercising His mercy through an action to restore His name throughout the land.

So here we have God looking at the devastated land of Israel and telling them that He would remove the reproach of famine, and increase the crops and the amount of people so that there will never be a famine in His nation again.

God obviously delights in His people and in His grace He will turn the land from a desolate one into a delightful land. He will gather the desperate and the dispersed, the defiled and the disgraced into a unified people, cleansed, now full of grace, placed together in their own land, to bring great glory to them and to His name.

Verse 30. As the previous verse also mentioned, God will with His word, cause the land to produce bountifully for the Israel. Physically, they will not have a concern to their temporal needs, as God will prepare the land to sustain them, to whatever degree needed.

But the greater part is that, the nations around Israel have knowledge that it is God who put His people into captivity. This was His judgment. As part of that judgment, it was also said that famine would be part of the burden that He was going to put to them.

But now, as God prepares to sanctify His name, and as part of that bringing the people of Israel together again, and out from the heathens around them, He will also purify them, provide them with land once again, and nourish them. In doing this, God has commuted the judgment that He placed on Israel and restored them.



God's blessings to the people of Israel will clearly extend to anyone, man or beast within the midst of the people. God is producing the periphery items so that the fruits of righteousness may begin to develop with the saints. With the physical or temporal needs met and exceeded, then God is looking to endue Israel with an increase of gifts and grace to His people. The Heathens will no longer look at them as a reproach, because God has taken them back and it is clear to all by the restoration to them, and the land they inhabit.

Verse 31. For His people, God wishes them to remember to remember the evil that they did. He wants Israel to remember the life that they chose for themselves, that they delighted in walking in, opposite to the ways of God and to contrast that life with what they would now have and see if it their choices and the suffering it brought were was worth it.

God wanted them to go into a time of self-reflection and ask themselves what they had gained by open violation of the law of God, by neglecting His worship, participating in idolatry, and many other sins before the captivity. They had looked somewhere else for salvation and protection and not to the Messiah. God draws them to remember what they had and what happy effects of this blessed change will have for their lives.

Sin is an abomination, a loathsome thing to God. In moving Israel to a place of repentance, God's first step is to bring them to remembrance of what it is they have done, what sin they have done in their lives. If repentance is taking place in their spirit and heart, then they shall begin to loath themselves, not in such a way that results in a unhealthy self-hate, but something that will save; that they will begin to deny themselves, and understand that they were God's creations, and as such should look to serve God with body, spirit and mind!

The idea is that we will come to the realization how loathsome we have made ourselves in God's sight. The goodness of God is capable of overcoming badness and lead us to repentance.

Verse 32. God tells His people that He is not doing all these things for them. He is doing these things for Himself. All the benefits that were coming their way, the remission or commuting of their sins, God has done that so that His name will be sanctified once again in the sight of His people, and in the sight of all the heathen that exists around His people.

God expressed this to His people, in an emphatic manner, and He does this, because He knows that we have tendencies to entertain a high conceit of our own merits and have difficulty to be persuaded to disclaim a confidence in them.

But we will be all the better if we do, as God will become our priority and our strength. The mercies we receive of God are not due to any merit, or are merited to any degree period but God has deemed to preserve His remnant, those who He calls His people, because it is an honour to Him. He says to them be ashamed of their actions and be confounded, so that they will realize that they need to rely on the Almighty God.



CONCLUSION

We know from history that there was a partial fulfillment of these promises by God. We also know that there would be a final fulfillment under Messiah and a complete restoration of the Land and the People. The subsequent chapters in Ezekiel make all understand that the present situation of Israel is not the final fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecies.

So when we go home and watch the news, disturbing as it is, let us remember the prophecies.

Let us rest in our God who creates, saves His people, and easily call for the showers of blessing and the multiplication of the fruits of the field, thus removing our reproach.

Just remember that when you sin you automatically bring yourself under the judgment of God. All that is required is that you repent, give up your evil ways, and please your trust into the merciful and gracious God.

He will make good things happen to you. He will prepare the land and take you out of the place of desolation. He guarantees it. Therefore remember as one writer states:

The normal life for every believer is the “Spirit filled life” It is not the result of some erratic second blessing as some would suppose, but rather the result of meeting the conditions of faith and obedience in the plain simple teaching of the Word of God.

The possibility of the Spirit filled life for every believer began at the Day of Pentecost when believers were historically baptized by the Spirit into the “one body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:13) and at the same time indwelt and filled with His presence. Ever since then each believer enters into that baptism of the Spirit by the new birth and is placed into that “one body”, and it is the privilege of his “birthright” to be filled with Him.

So acknowledge His presence by Faith

Stop sinning against Him.

Present your Body a Clean, Yielded, Empty Vessel to Him as a Living Sacrifice.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Obey Him.

Pray in the Spirit” .

