

Ezekiel 36 Commentary

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CHRONOLOGY OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES

PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT <i>The LORD is not there</i>		PROPHECY OF RESTORATION The LORD is There		
FATE OF JUDAH Before the Siege	FOES OF JUDAH During the Siege	FUTURE OF JUDAH After the Siege		
593-588 BC	587-586	586-571		
7 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HORROR & NO HOPE		15 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HOPE		
Ezekiel 1:1-3:27 Ezekiel Sees the Glory & Receives the Call	Ezekiel 4:1-24:27 Judgments Against Judah	Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 Judgments Against the Gloating Nations	Ezekiel 33:1-39:29 Restoration of Israel to the LORD	Ezekiel 40:1-48:35 Visions of the Temple Jehovah Shammah

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

DEAR READER, AS BACKGROUND PLEASE NOTE THAT THE HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE UTILIZED TO INTERPRET THE PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS...

If the plain sense of the Scripture makes good sense in **context**, then I will not seek some other sense lest the final interpretation turn out to be nonsense and totally unrelated to God's intended meaning (all Scripture has only one interpretation, but many applications).

It follows that every word in Ezekiel 36-39 will be taken in its primary, ordinary, usual, literal sense, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and self-evident and fundamental truths, indicate otherwise. There will be no attempt to spiritualize or allegorize the passages. God addresses these prophetic promises to Israel or Judah and there is no justification to spiritualize the promises as given to the church, an entity which is not even mentioned in the Old Testament! When one replaces *Israel* with the *NT Church* in the interpretation of OT prophetic writings, the prophecies become very difficult to interpret and indeed cannot be interpreted accurately! I should add that while I have been accused of being a "dispensationalist", I would respond by saying that I am not a "dispensationalist" but a "literalist!"

"The most serious charge that can be leveled against non-literal interpretation is that of perverting the promises of God. God's promises, both in the OT and NT, were given to specific recipients using words which they understood in the context in which they lived and in which the

promises were given. When a nonliteral view of these passages is adopted, this robs the original recipients of the promises as God gave them:

Adopting a **nonliteral view** of the Old Testament kingdom prophecies raises some disturbing questions: What did those prophecies mean to those to whom they were addressed? If prophecies seemingly addressed to Israel really apply to the church (which did not exist at that time), did God give revelation that failed to reveal? And if those prophecies were meant to apply symbolically to the church, why were they addressed to Israel? What meaning could such prophecies have in their historical settings? Ironically, many who spiritualize Old Testament prophecies reject the futurist interpretation of Revelation because it allegedly robs the book of its meaning for those to whom it was written. Yet they do the very same thing with the Old Testament kingdom prophecies. ([Revelation 12-22. Moody](#))

"God's promises involve both ends of the communication channel: the things God said and what those who received His promises understood them to mean in the original context. It is not permissible, after the fact, to make what God said mean something different which would have been entirely foreign to those who originally received His word. Allegorization and spiritualization do just that." ([Tony Garland on The Art and Science of Interpretation](#))

John MacArthur - This chapter (Ezekiel 36) presents the prerequisite regeneration which Israel must experience before they can nationally enter into the promised blessings. This chapter must be understood to speak of a **literal** Israel, a **literal** land, and a **literal** regeneration, leading to a **literal** kingdom under Messiah. (MacArthur Study Bible)

John Walvoord agrees noting that "This entire chapter requires a future millennial kingdom after the second coming of Christ for its complete and **literal fulfillment** (Jer 23:5-8). Just as the prophecies of judgment were **literally fulfilled** in connection with Israel and the nations, so her future restoration will be **literally fulfilled** and she will experience the marvelous grace of God. (The prophecy knowledge handbook).

For additional background, you may want to read **Tony Garland's** excellent discussion on [Interpreting Symbols](#) (From preface of his commentary on Revelation, one of the best commentaries from a literalistic perspective I have ever read = [A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#) - highly recommended). You might also want to read Bob Smith's succinct summary on [Figures of Speech](#).

Some attack the principle of **literal interpretation of Scripture** by stating that this method denies the Bible's use of figurative language (including types, symbols, figures of speech, etc). **Dr Charles Ryrie** counters such specious reasoning noting specifically that **literalism**

does not preclude or exclude correct understanding of types, illustrations, apocalypses, and other genres within the basic framework of literal interpretation... (Literal interpretation) might also be called *plain interpretation* so that no one receives the mistaken notion that the literal principle rules out figures of speech.

E R Craven adds that "The **Literalist** (so called) is not one who denies that **figurative** language, that **symbols** are used in prophecy, nor does he deny the great **spiritual** truths are set forth therein; his position is, simply, that the prophecies are to be **normally** interpreted (i.e., according to received laws of language) as any other utterances are interpreted-that which is **manifestly literal** being regarded as **literal**, that which is **manifestly figurative** being so regarded. ([From a Note appended to the bottom of the page - See Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moore, E., Craven, E. R., & Woods, J. H. A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures : Revelation, 1872](#))

Irving Jensen writes that "Apocalyptic writing prophesies of things to come by means of much **symbol** and **imagery**. Daniel and Revelation are the two books of the Bible usually classified as apocalyptic. Ezekiel contains many **apocalyptic passages**." (Jensen's Survey of the OT)

For a historical **context** note that Babylon attacked Jerusalem on three separate occasions

- (1) 605BC - Daniel was taken captive
- (2) 597BC - Ezekiel and 10,000 taken captive,
- (3) 586BC-Judah and Jerusalem defeated.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM:

THE MAJOR TURNING POINT IN EZEKIEL

Ezekiel records the siege of the city of Jerusalem...

Son of man, write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day....¹⁴ "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I shall act. I shall not relent, and I shall not pity, and I shall not be sorry; according to your ways and according to your deeds I shall judge you," declares the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 24:2, 14)

Comment: Even though Babylon was 880 miles away from Ezekiel (in Babylon), God revealed to his prophet the beginning of the siege in Jerusalem on the very day it began. This final siege began in January, 588BC (precisely dated in Ezek 24:1 corresponding to 2Ki 25:1, cp Jer 39:1, 52:4) and lasted approximately 2 years. The Lord had the prophet memorialize this horrible event and then describe it in a parable of a cooking pot (Ezekiel 24:3-14) to picture God's imminent judgment against the "bloody city" (Ezek 24:6). And then God gave Ezekiel the personally painful sign of the death of his beloved wife, and forbade the prophet to mourn her death as a heartbreaking sign to the people of God's wrath upon the wayward nation (Ezekiel 24:15-24).

Now it came about in the twelfth year of our exile, on the fifth of the tenth month, that the refugees from Jerusalem came to me, saying, "**The city has been taken.**" (Ezekiel 33:21)

Comment: A fugitive who escaped from Jerusalem brings word of the holy city's fall to Nebuchadnezzar. The city had actually fallen some 6 months earlier (July, 586BC).

The destruction of the city of Jerusalem marks the **major turning point** and a division of the book of Ezekiel into two sections (see table below). Prior to this time, Ezekiel's message had been judgment is coming, but after **Ezekiel 33:21** God changes the prophet's message to hope and restoration of Jerusalem and the nation. Irving Jensen writes...

It is at Ezekiel 24 that the prophet learns that when Jerusalem falls, his tongue will be loosed to speak a new message of hope; and people, sobered by the reality of Jerusalem's destruction, will begin to give him a hearing. (Read Ezekiel 24:25-27.) (Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament)

PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT Ezekiel 1-32 <i>Jehovah Departs</i> <i>The LORD is not there</i>			PROPHECY OF RESTORATION Ezekiel 33-48 <i>Jehovah Shammah – The LORD is There</i>	
FATE OF JUDAH Before the Siege		FOES OF JUDAH During the Siege	FUTURE OF JUDAH After the Siege	
593-588 BC		587-586	586-571	
7 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HORROR & NO HOPE			15 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HOPE	
Ezekiel 1-3 Ezekiel Sees Glory & Receives Call	Ezekiel 4-24 Judgments Against Disobedient Judah	Ezekiel 25-32 Judgment Against Gloating Nations	Ezekiel 33-39 Restoration of Israel by Jehovah	Ezekiel 40-48 Glory Returns to the Temple

Joel Rosenberg writes that Ezekiel 36, 37

set the stage for the "**War of Gog and Magog**" by describing that Israel will be reborn as a country in the last days, the Jewish people will come back to the Holy Land from exile all over the world, the Jewish people will rebuild the ancient ruins and make the deserts bloom again (**Ed**: I have been to Israel and this is a beautiful reality today!). These things have all happened, and this suggests we are getting closer to the fulfillment of the next set of prophecies.

EZEKIEL 36:1-7

PROPHECY AGAINST NATIONS THAT WERE AGAINST ISRAEL

Keep the context in mind - In Ezekiel 35:1-15 God had prophesied judgment against Edom and Ezekiel 36:1-15 continues the prophecy against Edom. While this section is somewhat complex, the basic thrust of Ezekiel 36:1-15 can be subdivided into two parts (1) Ezekiel 36:1-7 is an oracle of divine judgment against Edom and the nations for appropriating Judah's land and (2) Ezekiel 36:8-15 comprise an oracle of divine blessing of restoration and salvation for Judah and Israel.

I must admit that Ezekiel 36 has proven to be a huge challenge to interpret, but I felt better after reading **Block's** introductory note...

If Chapter 35 seems disjointed, Ezekiel 36:1-15 is even more so. Numerous repetitive and disruptive prophetic formulae appear to chop it up into little fragments. Indeed, it is difficult to determine when Yahweh is addressing his messenger and when he is addressing the mountains. The result looks like a patchwork quilt, except that quilts usually reflect more deliberate design. Wevers describes this as "a hodge-podge" of materials. ([The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48 New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#)).

A C Gaebelein puts Ezekiel 36 into proper perspective reminding us that...

With this chapter the great prophetic utterances of Ezekiel begin concerning the future restoration and blessing of Israel. From here on to the end of the book, all is still unfulfilled, nor can it be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again and is enthroned as King.

Prophecy to the mountains of Israel - This was not the first time Ezekiel had prophesied to the mountains of Israel (See Ezekiel 6:2,3). In the previous chapter, Ezekiel had set his face against Mount Seir (representative of the land Edom, Ezek 35:1ff), but now the prophet addressed his comments to **the mountains of Israel** as the symbol or representative of the land of Israel.

F F Bruce points out that...

In Ezekiel 6:1-3 the mountains of Israel were apostrophized (**apostrophe** = In rhetoric, turning away from the audience [In Greek *apostrophe* = "turning away"] to address someone or something that cannot respond) in terms of denunciation because of the idolatry practised on them. Now they are apostrophized in tones of consolation: although they are at present occupied by alien invaders, because their rightful inhabitants are in exile, yet the invaders will soon be expelled and the rightful inhabitants restored to cultivate them and reap fruitful harvests from them (cp Ezek 36:8-11). (Bruce, F. F. *New International Bible Commentary*. Page 837. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1979).

Matthew Henry adds that...

(In Ezekiel 6:1-3) God was coming forth to contend with His people; but now that God is returning in mercy to them He must speak good words and comfortable words to these mountains, Ezek 36:1 and again Ezek 36:4....The people were gone, some one way and some another; nothing remained there to be spoken to but the places, the mountains and valleys; these the Chaldeans (Babylonians) could not carry away with them!

John MacArthur adds that...

Ezekiel addresses Israel's mountains, as symbolic of the whole nation. He promises: (**1**) to give these mountains again to dispersed Israel (Ezek 36:12); (**2**) to cause fruit to grow on them (Ezek 36:8); (**3**) to rebuild cities and to multiply people there (Ezek 36:10); and (**4**) to bless in a greater way than in the past (Ezek 36:11). This promise can only be fulfilled in future **millennial blessing** to Israel that she has not yet experienced, because it includes the salvation of the **New Covenant** (Ezek 36:25-27, 29, 31, 33).

John Walvoord entitles Ezekiel 36 "**The Future Restoration of Israel to Her Land**."

Warren Wiersbe writes that...

One of the purposes of the **millennial kingdom** is that God might fulfill His promises to His people, promises He couldn't fulfill because of their rebellion and unbelief. In His grace and mercy, God gave Israel a wonderful land, a perfect law, and a glorious Lord. They defiled (His) land by their terrible crimes; they disobeyed (His) Law by adopting pagan practices; and they defied their Lord and tempted Him by resisting His calls to repentance. But during the **millennial kingdom**, Israel will trust the Lord, obey His Word, worship in His temple as they should, and bring delight to the Lord who will rule from David's throne. But there's a further fulfillment, for the Kingdom Age will "wrap up" all the previous ages in God's revelation of Himself and His purposes. The land will be like the Garden of Eden (Ezek 36:35), complete with a river of life and trees of life. The promises made to Abraham will be fulfilled and his descendants will possess and enjoy their land. The Law of Moses will be obeyed from the heart, and the Lord will be worshiped and glorified. The Messiah that Israel rejected at His first coming will be received and honored and will reign over them (Ezek 43:6-7). God will fulfill every kingdom promise found in the pages of the prophets!

The mountains of Israel - This exact phrase occurs only in Ezekiel where it is found 16x in 15v - Ezek 6:2,3; 19:9; 33:28; 34:13, 14; 35:12; 36:1, 4, 8; 37:22; 38:8; 39:2, 4, 17.

Excursus on The Mountains of Israel - As an aside, one might well ask why address the prophecy to the mountains? What was on the mountains of Israel? On most of the mountains at this time there were "**high places**" (see Ezek 6:3, cp 1Ki 14:23 = "high places" a phrase that occurs 80x in OT), altars to the pagan (so-called) gods, especially Baal (cp Jer 3:6-9, 2:20 Isa 57:7). Judah's idol worship was one of the main reasons God took them from the land and brought them into exile in Babylon (ironically, a land filled with idols). They had failed to obey God's clear instruction (and warning) to destroy the idols in the land of Canaan (Dt 7:5). **Beloved, do you have any idols, anything that comes between you and God, anything you love more than you love Jesus? If you do, you must (emphasize "must") destroy the idol or idols.** If the "idol" is another person obviously you don't "destroy" them, but you must not let them take the highest place on the "throne of your heart." Your love for them must not be greater than your love for Jesus (Mt 10:37, Lk 14:26 where "hate" is relative - in other words our love for Jesus makes our love for others is like "hatred". One's devotion to family must take second place to one's devotion to Christ.). Idolatry is detestable to God and will surely bring His hand of discipline to those who fail to heed His command to rid themselves of their idols!

O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD - In other words as noted above, **Jehovah** is addressing the nation of Israel.

Ezekiel 36:2 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because the enemy has spoken against you, 'Aha!' and, 'The everlasting heights have become our possession':

Because - This is a **term of explanation**. For the reason that. For the cause which is explained in the next proposition. For the reason next explained. The conjunction **because** introduces a series of 5 "therefores" in the next five verses. The basic "complaint" that the LORD has is with the enemies of Israel, for He knew their insults and their aggression toward Israel during the time of the Babylonian invasions and final defeat of Jerusalem. Israel's enemies would be punished for their "anti-Semitism." (cp this same principle in Ge 12:3) This is good principle for all God's children to keep in mind for as Paul wrote...

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Romans 12:17-19)

Comment: And so in this first section of Ezekiel 36, God explains that He will avenge the injustices committed against Israel.

The enemy has spoken against you - In context enemy refers especially to the Edomites but also includes the rest of the nations (Ezek 36:5).

The enemies had in essence "**cursed**" Israel which invoked God's immutable promise to Abraham...

And I will bless those who bless you, and **the one who curses you I will curse**. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Ge 12:3)

Aha (Job 39:25; Ps 35:21, 25; 40:15; 70:3; Isa 44:16; Ezek 25:3; 26:2; 36:2) - An interjection or cry that imitates or expresses joy or satisfaction (Isa 44:16). In the present **context aha** is used in the sense of Israel's enemies gloating over Judah's defeat (Ezek 25:3, cp Ps 40:16). In Job 39:25 **aha** is used figuratively to express the satisfied neighing and anticipation of a warhorse anticipating a battle. The English word **aha** is used to express surprise, triumph, or derision.

The everlasting heights ("the high places" [sites of idol worship]) **have become our possession** - Ezekiel is quoting what Judah's enemies were saying. They were boasting that the high places for the worship of false gods had become their possession, similar to their revilings in Ezekiel 35:12 where they said "They are laid desolate; they are given to us for food."

Regarding the fact that the enemy considered Israel "our possession" contrast God's opinion about who the land really belongs to in Ezekiel 36:5! In Leviticus God said..

The land (the promised land), moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for **the land is Mine**; for you (addressing Israel) are but aliens and sojourners with Me. (Lev 25:23, cp **My land** in Ezekiel 36:5)

Ezekiel 36:3 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."':

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

Therefore - This is a **term of conclusion**. This conjunction introduces the next 5 passages.

Wiersbe explains that "the Lord knew what the enemy was saying and doing, and He determined that there would be serious consequences because of their decisions. That's why you find the word "**therefore**" six times in this section (Ezek 36:3-7, 14)."

The ESV Study Bible explains the repetition of **therefore** this way...

In Ezek 36:1-7 there are a series of nested "because" and "therefore" statements whose relationships are difficult to disentangle, as apparent outcomes simply introduce further grounds. Three factors are intertwined: the encroachment of Israel's enemies, the desolation of the land, and the wrath of God.

You have been taken up in the talk and the whispering of the people - This is addressed to the mountains of Israel as representative of the entire nation. "They talked publicly and privately about her fate." (Constable)

Whispering (dibbah) means slander, a bad report with intent to defame. The picture is of whispering which spreads slander against someone (Ps 31:13, Jer 20:10). In the present context the **whispering** is strictly speaking not slander for the people are speaking truth about Israel but in a derogatory sense.

God had clearly warned (it was actually a prophetic promise) this would happen to Israel when she refused to obey Him...

You shall become a **horror**, a **proverb**, and a **taunt** among all the people where the Lord drives you. (Dt 28:37, cp Jer 24:9).

Ezekiel 36:4 '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:

Therefore (term of conclusion) - Because of what Israel's enemies were saying and whispering about Judah's ignominious defeat.

O mountains of Israel - Remember that God is using this phrase as a metaphor. Ezekiel is actually speaking to Israel in exile and defeat. By all human estimates, they were in a hopeless state and must have surely wondered whether God would avenge them and restore the nation of Israel.

Prey (baz) means booty or spoil. It speaks of plunder which means the taking of good by force (as when the enemies of Israel plundered the land.)

In other words, in the present context, the land of Israel had been plundered by Babylon, by Edom and by other surrounding nations. And what God is preparing to tell His exiled, dejected, despondent, defeated people in the following verses is in essence "*What goes around, comes around.*"

Baz = 27 verses in the OT (Note that almost 1/2 are in Ezekiel) - Num 14:3, 31; 31:32; Deut 1:39; 2 Kgs 21:14; 2Chr 28:14; Isa 8:1; 10:6; 33:23; 42:22; Jer 2:14; 15:13; Jer 17:3; 30:16; Jer 49:32; Ezek 7:21; 23:46; 25:7; 26:5; 29:19; 34:8, 22, 28; Ezek 36:4-5; 38:12-13

Derision (la'ag) describes mocking or scoffing at someone. Scoffing is a show of contempt by mocking words or deeds which are meant to stress one's disrespect for the party who scoffed. In English mockery describes insulting or contemptuous action or speech, making the mocked one the subject of laughter, derision or sport.

La'ag - 7v in OT - Job 34:7; Ps 44:13; 79:4; 123:4; Ezek 23:32; 36:4; Hos 7:16

To the rest of the nations - The point is that Babylon's defeat of Israel was the cause for many other nations to scorn and mock God's people or to "*kick 'em while they were down*" to use a modern slang saying. The "**rest of the nations**" would be repaid by God for mocking Israel.

Ezekiel 36:5 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.":

Therefore - always pause to ponder this strategic **term of conclusion**.

Ezekiel 34 helps us understand what makes God **jealous**...

Watch (command) yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, (**Why is obedience to this command so important?**) lest it become a snare (Hebrew = lure or bait placed on a hunter's trap - **Beloved, are their any snares you are aware of in your own life?**) in your midst. But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down (**Read the verbs again!**) their Asherim for (term of explanation) you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD (**Jehovah**), Whose name is **Jealous**, is a **jealous** God-- lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice (See also Relationship of idolatry with Immorality) (Exodus 34:12-15)

Comment: Keep the context of the preceding passages in mind -- Moses had delayed returning from the mountain and the people convinced Aaron to make a "god who (would) go before" them (Ex 32:1-14, see especially Ex 32:12 - what would that have to do with profaning God's name?)

In the fire of My jealousy (Literally "in the fire of My zeal") - Moses warned Israel that God was a **consuming fire**...

So **watch** (command) yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you (Referring to the Mosaic Covenant, Covenant of Law), and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you (Ex

20:3,4,5), for (term of explanation) **Jehovah** your God is a **consuming** (same verb translated devour in Ezek 36:14) **fire**, a **jealous** (zealous) God." (Dt 4:23, 24)

Comment: The adjective **jealous** (Hebrew = qanna' from the verb qana' = to be zealous) is only used to describe Jehovah as the God who is zealous to protect what belongs to Him. Thus the worship of false gods always arouses His jealousy and anger in judgment against the idol worshipers. He will not tolerate another to have the honor that is due to Him alone (cf. Is 42:8; 48:11). In the following verse God says His jealousy and wrath are because the land (symbolic of Israel) had suffered insults from the idolatrous nations.

Jealousy (07068)(**qinah** or see **here**) means ardor, jealousy. The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflinching pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. The **Lxx** translated **qinah** with the word **thumos** which describes a tumultuous welling up of the whole spirit; a mighty emotion which seizes and moves the whole inner person. With men this can often be a sinful, flesh driven emotion, but with God it is of course a holy, fully justified response.

Constable - Israel's enemies had dealt with her in their anger and envy (Ezek 35:11), but now Yahweh would deal with them in His fierce jealousy over Israel's welfare.

F F Bruce explains that "When Yahweh's land and people were objects of derision, His own reputation was dragged in the mire; the 'zeal' with which He vindicates His people against the enemy is His concern for His own name and character and pledged word (cf. Ezek 36:7, 20-23). (Ibid).

I have spoken against the rest of the nations - As noted above, Israel's scoffing, mocking, deriding, scorning, insulting enemies (is singled out) would be repaid for their evil.

And against all Edom - Judgment on **Edom** had been prophesied in Ezekiel 25 and Ezekiel 35:1-15, and here God again singles out for punishment!

Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt, and avenged themselves upon them," (NLT paraphrases it "*The people of Edom have sinned greatly by avenging themselves against the people of Judah.*") 13 therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom and cut off man and beast from it. And I will lay it waste; from Teman even to Dedan they will fall by the sword. 14 "And I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom **according to My anger and according to My wrath** (cp to "fire of My jealousy" in Ezek 36:5) thus they will know My vengeance," declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 25:12-14)

(Again God explains why Edom is singled out) Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end."... (Ezek 35:5, Also because of Edom's anger, envy, hatred toward Israel and arrogance against God described in Ezek 35:10, 11, 12, 13)

Smith's Bible Dictionary gives us a clue as to the reason for God's focus on Edom...

In the reign of Jehoshaphat (BC 914) the Edomites attempted to invade Israel, but failed. (2Chronicles 20:22, cp 2Chr 28:17) They joined Nebuchadnezzar when that king besieged Jerusalem. For their cruelty at this time they were fearfully denounced by the later prophets. (Isaiah 34:5-8; 63:1-4; Jeremiah 49:17)...They were idolaters. (2Chronicles 25:14,15,20)

My land (cp **His land** Ezek 36:20) - God is very possessive of the land. He is also possessive of the people calling them **My people** in Ezekiel 36:12. The **land** of Israel is God's **land** and the **people** are God's **people**. While God promised the land to Abraham and his descendants, ultimately the land is His and always will be. (See also Ge 12:1, 7; 15:7; 18; Ex 19:5-6; Lev 25:23; Deut 32:43; Ps 78:54; Jer 2:7.)

Constable notes that...

The Promised Land was the Lord's land in the same sense that the Sabbath was His day and the tithe was His possession. These parts were not just segments of their wholes over which God claimed ownership, but they represented and illustrated His ownership of all lands, all days, and all possessions.

Ezekiel 36:6 '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.'':

Behold - (**hen** probably a short form of **hinneh**) calls attention to the text and directs the reader to give special attention. It is given to heighten the reader's or hearer's awareness that what follows is truth that must be heard and/or heeded. The idea is "Listen up! Pay attention!"

Ezekiel 36:7 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'I have sworn that surely the nations which are around you will themselves endure their insults.:

Today's English Version (paraphrase) - I, the Sovereign LORD, solemnly promise that the surrounding nations will be humiliated.

I have sworn (Literally "I have lifted up My hand") - God gives an oath that He will vindicate the insults.

The nations...will...endure their insults - Yes, God allowed the nations to punish Israel but they would in turn be punished because of their evil deeds. The Avenger would avenge the enemy nations' evil words and deeds directed at Israel. As Bruce says "The scorn heaped on Israel by the aliens will recoil on themselves

Bruce, F. F. (1979). *New International Bible commentary*. "Formerly titled *New international Bible commentary and The international Bible commentary*"--T.p. verso. (837). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Ezekiel 36:8 '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.:

EZEKIEL 36:8-38 JEHOVAH'S RESTORATION OF THE LAND & PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

- 1) God Will Restore the fruitfulness of the land of Israel - Ezekiel 36:8-9
- 2) God will Restore & Repopulate the cities of the land of Israel - Ezekiel 36:10-12, 33-37
- 3) God will Regather Jews to the land of Israel - Ezekiel 36:24
- 4) God will Cleanse them from their impurities - Ezekiel 36:25, 33
- 5) God will Regenerate Israel Spiritually - Ezekiel 36:26, 29
- 6) God will give His Spirit to move them to walk in His laws - Ezekiel 36:27
- 7) God will be their God & they will live in the land He gave their forefathers - Ezekiel 36:28
- 8) God will make the land of Israel abundantly productive - Ezekiel 36:29-30
- 9) Israel will remember former evil ways and will loathe themselves - Ezekiel 36:31
- 10) God will do all of these things for the sake of reputation, His Name - Ezekiel 36:22, 32

But you - Here we see a striking **contrast** with the preceding dismal picture. Remember that a contrast always signifies a change of direction, and in this case signals a gracious transition. A ray of sun breaks through the clouds.

R H Alexander observes that...

Blessing normally follows judgment in God's scheme. So, having pronounced judgment on the scornful nations (following the principle of *lex talionis* [Ed: An eye for an eye]), the Lord turned to encourage Israel by describing his preparation of her land for her return in the end time. He stresses that this would be his work. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

You will put forth your branches - The desolate, ruined land of Israel will become fertile again. Why? To prepare the land for Israel's return (cp Ezek 36:34). How would the revitalization of the land occur? Ezekiel goes on to explain how in the next verse.

Ezekiel 36:9 'For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown:

JEHOVAH'S "I WILLS"

I will - This is clearly a "key phrase" in Ezekiel 36 occurring some 21 times in 15 verses! (Ezek 36:9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 37)

Gaebelein refers to "I will" as God's "**word of sovereign grace**." Twenty one times **Jehovah** says what He will do. They are the "I wills" of Israel's Hope and coming Glory." Some say God said and I believe it so that settles it. Even better is God said it, that settles it, whether I believe it or not!

Behold - (**hen** probably a short form of **hinneh**) calls attention to the text and directs the reader to give special attention. It is given to heighten the reader's or hearer's awareness that what follows is truth that must be heard and/or heeded. The idea is "Listen up! Pay attention!"

I am for you - This explains how ruined land can again be made so that it will be cultivated and sown.

Ezekiel 36:10 '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.:

All the house of Israel, all of it - Since this says "all the house of Israel" the complete fulfillment of this promise refers to the Millennial Kingdoms and includes all 12 tribes. Notice it says "cities" plural and not the New Jerusalem which further indicates this is not referring to heaven but to the Millennium.

The waste places - The Hebrew word **chorbah** refers to desolate places, ruins, desert, dry country and especially the rubble of cities in the wake of total destruction. The first use is a promise by God that when His chosen people disobey, he will destroy their cities - 'I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas." (Lev 26:31) This verse describes a supernatural reversal of Israel's fortunes.

Ezekiel 36:11 '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.:

Multiply...increase...be fruitful - These verbs reflect Jehovah's supernatural multiplication tables!

I...will treat you better than at the first - When God restores Israel to the land in the last days will be better than

You will know that I am the LORD - Why will God allow such a miracle? He wants His people to know Him.

Ezekiel 36:12 '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.:'

On you - Jehovah continues the personification of the land of Israel.

I will cause men--My people Israel--to walk on you (the land) and possess you - In God's covenant with Abraham, He had promised him "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" (Ge 12:7. 24:7, passed on to **Isaac**

= Gen 26:3) Israel has never fully possessed **the land** promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, but here in Ezekiel God assures Israel that they will possess the land.

You (the land) **will become their** (Israel's) **inheritance** - The land of Israel will belong to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (See Exodus 33:1) Notice it does not say My people Israel will possess you because they are so good, so kind, so righteous! No, it is because Jehovah in His manifold grace wills it to be so, ultimately a reflection of His steadfast faithfulness to His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Anything good we in the New Covenant "possess" is based on the same foundation - Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant promises in Christ Jesus. This truth should cause us to continually experience a healthy humility!

Bereave them of children - Jehovah reassures the land and the exiles that when God regathers His people to the "promised land," the land would **never again** be deprived of its children as in Ezekiel 5:17. In other words, Israel would never again be defeated by enemies. The land would never again be devastated and made desolate. The fulfillment of this promise awaits the future Messianic Age.

Ezekiel 36:13 "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because they say to you, "You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children,":

You (the land) **are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children** - This is paraphrased by the ICB as "You eat people and take children from your nation."

F F Bruce comments that you are a devourer of men...

as though the mother country were a cruel stepmother; cf. the spies' evil report of the promised land in Nu 13:32. (Ibid).

Ezekiel 36:14 therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,' declares the Lord GOD.:

You (the land) **will no longer devour men** - To devour (He) means to eat or consume. Earlier Ezekiel described that "famine and the plague will also **consume** those in the city" (Ezek 7:15), "the fire will **consume** them (complete destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC)" (Ezek 15:7)

In Ezekiel 34 God promised Israel...

And they (Israel) will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not **devour** them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. (Ezekiel 34:28)

Comment: This prophetic promise clearly describes the peaceful time of Messiah's Millennial Kingdom. This promise is given specifically to Israel, not the church.

Through the prophet **Amos** God promised

I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them, says the Lord your God. (Amos 9:15)

Ezekiel 36:15 "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.":

I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore - When will this be fulfilled? It can only be when Messiah rules the nations with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9, Rev 19:15-[note](#)). Then and only then will there be no more "**insults from the nations**". Look at our day (these notes are written February/March, 2012). Israel is constantly caused **to hear insults from the nations** of the world and this anti-Semitism will crescendo until it reaches a fever pitch in **the time of Jacob's trouble** or distress (Jer 30:7-[commentary](#) - read what follows this time - Jer

30:8, 9-note = The Messiah's Millennial Reign), which is synonymous with the last 3.5 years of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**, the horrible time that Jesus called "**The Great Tribulation**."

Nor will you (the mountains) **cause your nation to stumble any longer- Why not? How did the mountains cause the nation to stumble?** The "**high places**" were built on the mountains and were the site of Israel's abominable, detestable practices associated with idol worship. The reason the mountains will no longer cause Israel to stumble in the future is because God will sprinkle clean water on them and make them clean (Ezek 36:25) in addition to giving them a new heart (Ezek 36:26) and His Spirit Who would empower them to walk in His statutes (including His prohibition of idol worship which had been practiced on the mountains) (Ezek 36:27).

Ezekiel 36:16 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,;

EZEKIEL 36:16-21
ISRAEL'S SCATTERING:
REASON FOR = IDOLATRY
RESULT OF = PROFANED GOD'S NAME

In Ezekiel 36:17-20 **Jehovah** reviews Israel's disobedience and punishment in preparation for describing the restoration, a restoration that God had promised earlier in Ezekiel 11...

Therefore (term of conclusion) say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone." 17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." 18 "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. 21 "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord God. (Eze 11:16-21-notes).

Ezekiel 36:17 "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.:

They defiled it by their ways and their deeds - Earlier the prophet painted an unbelievable picture of the depth of depravity to which Israel had fallen. He described how worship of idols who are no gods had entered in the Temple of the Living God and how Judah's religious leaders had even bowed down to the sun rather than to the Son! (Read Ezekiel 8:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) And they went to the tragic extreme of even sacrificing their sons to their so called blood thirsty gods! And the blood of these sacrifices, far from satisfying or propitiating God, enraged His holy anger. Take a moment to read Jeremiah 7:31-34, 8:1-5.

Defiled Song 2:2 Like a (made unclean) ([02930](#))(Song 2:2 Like a **tamemiaino** Song 2:2 Like a (aorist active indicative, 3rd person plural) which described cultic or ceremonial impurity as well as moral impurity (Heb 12:15).

Ezekiel 36:18 "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.:

Therefore - A **term of conclusion**. Israel sowed the seeds of defiling deeds and moral uncleanness (Gal 6:8- note), and reaped the rotten fruit of moral corruption which resulted in the righteous wrath of God.

Song 2:2 Like a Song 2:2 Like a **Poured** ([08210](#))(Song 2:2 Like a **shaphak**Song 2:2 Like a) means to cause to flow. Interestingly **shaphak** is often used to describe pouring out of a man's lifeblood = shedding of blood. The

Septuagint (Lxx) ekcheo Song 2:2 Like a which means literally to flow out, to gush forth or to pour out . The inherent idea is to cause something to be emitted in quantity. The Holy Spirit is poured out - Acts 2:17-18, 2:33, Acts 10:45; love of God is poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:6.

Because they had defiled it with their idols - What had Israel failed to do when they entered the land? See the passages in the first chapter of Judges which give Israel's root problem which became her snare (Jdg 1:19, 21, 27-36, 2:3, 11-13, 17, 19) and compare God's commands (Ex 20:3,4 23:32,33 34:12-16 Nu 33:52,53 Dt 7:2, 3, 4,16,25,26, 12:2,3, 20:16-18) Lest we think this was just a spiritual snare in the OT, read Paul's warnings to the saints at Corinth, living in a city overflowing with idols!" (2Cor 6:14, 15, 16, 17, Then read 2Corinthians 7:1 - What "promises" had Paul just described?)

The effect of idols is to defile, pollute and contaminate. One reason this is so is because of the repeated association in Scripture of **Idolatry and Immorality** (the relationship and the antidote) (E.g., read Jer 3:1, 2 and note God's response - Jer 3:3). (See related study - Idolatry - Brief Excursus on Idolatry; [Idolatry - Dictionary Articles](#))

In **Leviticus** God gives Israel a strong warning describing what happens when **the land is defiled** by immorality (America, are you listening?)...

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things (see the horrible litany of sexual perversions that defiled the land - Lev 18:6-23); for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has **spewed out** its inhabitants. (Lev 18:24, 25, cp Lev 18:26, 27, 28)

Blood which they had shed on the land - In Numbers we read

So you shall not **pollute the land** in which you are; for **blood pollutes the land** and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. (Nu 35:33, cp Ps 106:38)

Ezekiel 36:19 "Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.:"

In **Leviticus** God had promised that He would scatter Israel for her failure to keep the Sabbaths...

You, however, **I will scatter among the nations** and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. 34 'Then (When? When they are dispersed, exiled from the land, then) the land will enjoy its Sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your Sabbaths, while you were living on it. (Lev 26:33-35, cp 2Chr 36:20, 21)

Comment: How long was Judah exiled? Seventy years. One year for each Sabbath year of rest Israel failed to keep. But what is the total number of years that she was in disobedience? If a Sabbath year came every seventh year, then Israel was disobedient for 490 years (7 x 70). What is fascinating is that in Daniel 9:24-27 God gave a prophecy of seven times seventy or 490 years, a period commonly known as "Daniel's Seventy Weeks". Sixty-nine of Daniel's "weeks" (seven year periods) have been fulfilled. One "week", the Seventieth Week of Daniel has yet to be fulfilled and when compared with other Scriptures describes the Seven Year period that some refer to as the "Tribulation." It is the period which is abruptly terminated by the Second Coming of Messiah, at which time the believing remnant of Israel (the "one third" of Zechariah 13:8, 9 and the "all Israel" of Romans 11:26) will be saved by grace through faith and will enter into the covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and amplified below in Ezekiel 36:26-27. This regenerated, reborn remnant of Jews will enter into and will "people" the Millennial Kingdom.

In **Deuteronomy** we read an incredible prophecy of divine removal from the land followed by divine compassion to the people...

And the LORD will **scatter** you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where the LORD shall drive you. 28 "And there you will serve gods, the work of man's

hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29 "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. 30 "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, **in the latter days**, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. 31 "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. (Deut 4:27-31)

Comment: Even commentators in the 1800's interpreted this as a reference to the times of the Messiah, Jamieson for example writing in 1863 that " in the age of Messiah, which is commonly called "**the latter days**"...when the scattered tribes of Israel shall be converted to the Gospel of Christ (**Ed:** Specifically the **believing remnant**). The occurrence of this auspicious event will be the most illustrious proof of the truth of the promise made in Dt 4:31"

Note that God will show compassion to a believing remnant of Israel in the latter days, not because they deserve it, but because God is a covenant keeping God and He made a promise to Abraham which He will never break.

Ezekiel 36:20 "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.'"

They profaned My holy name - How did they profane God's holy name? The pagan nations knew that the land of Israel was "His land." They associated His people with His name and the fact that Babylon (and her so-called gods) had defeated Judah, was tantamount to defeating Judah's God in the eyes of the "religious" pagans and thus cast aspersions on His name, making it "common" or profane. As Cooper says Israel was a "reproach and profanation of God's holy name because they made it appear that he had not been able to keep them safe." (Ibid)

Beloved, sadly we as believers today can do the same thing as Israel did (profaning His holy Name)! When others know that we claim Jesus as our Lord and yet live like the world (and in some cases even like the devil is our lord), God's holy Name is profaned. I have had occasion to converse with several foreigners in my home who were visiting the United States for the first time and have been absolutely amazed at their response as shared Christ and Christianity with them. Invariably, they would make the statement "All of the U.S. is Christian!" In other words they (and most of the world) sees America as a "Christian nation"! Woe! Is America "profaning" the Name of God? You be the judge. And if America is profaning the Name of God, what is this doing to God's jealousy and how might He respond? Let all God's people humbly beseech His throne of grace using the patter of 2Chronicles 7:13, 14. (Observe the expression of time in verse 14!)

Profaned - The Septuagint translates with the verb **bebeloo** (cf word study on **bebelos**) (Also used in Ezek 36:21, 22, 23, 39:7) meaning to cause something which is highly revered to become identified with that which is common or commonplace.

Profane ([02490](#))(**chalal**)

Profane in English means to treat (something sacred) with abuse, irreverence, or contempt or to debase by a wrong, unworthy, or vulgar use.

My holy name - This phrase occurs 13x in 12v most often in Ezekiel - Lev 20:3; 22:2, 32; Ezek 20:39; 36:20, 21, 22; 39:7 (2x), Ezek 39:25; 43:7, 8; Amos 2:7

Related Resource - Name of the LORD

In **Isaiah God** says...

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. (Isaiah 48:11)

Comment: The **NLT paraphrase** helps understand this passage = "I will rescue you (Israel) for my sake--yes, for my own sake! That way, the pagan nations will not be able to claim that their gods have conquered me. I will not let them have my glory!"

Here in Ezekiel 36, God is presenting His "rescue plan" for exiled Israel! God is able

to rescue and restore Israel and thereby vindicate His holy Name among the nations!

Ezekiel 36:21 "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.:"

But - Remember that a **contrast** signifies a change of direction, in this case from Israel's disobedience and punishment described in Ezekiel 36:17-20.

I had concern for My holy name - This is the basis for God's acting to restore His "chosen people" to the land - for the sake of His reputation.

Cooper makes the point that...

The revelation of God's name or character was a major aspect of God's dealing with Israel from the beginning (cf. Ex 5:2; 9:16; Lev 18:21; 20:3; 22:31-33), and it would continue to be God's concern (Ezek 39:7-8, 25; 43:7-9). Moses effectively used the appeal to God's name and character to stay the judgment of annihilation upon Israel after the incident of the golden calf in Ex 32:11-18. He gave the same appeal when the people chose not to enter the land of promise in Num 14:13-19. (Ibid)

The house of Israel had profaned among the nations - Israel was associated with the name of their God. Their defeat and humiliation caused the nations to see the God of Israel as impotent and profane (common).

Ezekiel 36:22 "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.:"

REASON FOR ISRAEL'S RESTORATION: THE GLORY OF THE LORD

Not for your sake (Repeated thought in Ezek 36:32, cp Ezekiel 20:44) - The Lord God would not restore the house of Israel because she deserved it but because of His desire to show her His holiness, especially His holy name.

God's act of restoration is a clear manifestation of His **grace** to an undeserving, idolatrous people. Does this sound familiar? Who of us can say we merited His grace?

Ezekiel 36:23 "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.:"

I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations - He will do it by restoring Israel. Is God's name profaned today? Even profaned because of Israel? I think it is indeed as Israel in continually accused of unfairly treating the Palestinians.

Then - When? At the end of this age, God will gather the Jews from all the nations (Ezek 36:24) and **then the nations will know that** He alone is the omniscient (predicted before it transpired) and omnipotent (power to fulfill His prediction) God.

In **Warren Wiersbe's** final comments on the book of Ezekiel he observes that...

If the Book of Ezekiel teaches us anything, it teaches us that we must honor God's name and magnify His glory. The **glory of God** departed from Israel because they defiled the temple. The **glory of God** returned to the new temple because it was holy and a place where God could dwell (**Ed: See related resource: *Jehovah Shammah -The LORD is There***). **"They shall**

know that I am the Lord" is a statement found at least sixty times in Ezekiel's book. While God's glory doesn't dwell in our church buildings, God can be glorified or disgraced by what we do in those buildings we have dedicated to Him. As His people, we must be reverent and honor His name.

Ezekiel 36:24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.:"

For - Term of explanation. God explains how He will prove Himself holy and cause the nations to know that He is **Jehovah**.

I will...gather you - While there has been an increasing number of Jews returning to Israel, this verse has clearly not yet been fulfilled. God's regathering of Israel is a repeated emphasis in this last section dealing with restoration of the land and salvation of Israel. See Ezek 34:13, 37:21, 39:27-28.

From all the lands - All refers to all the nations they had been scattered which is important in the interpretation of this verse. L E Cooper explains that

the breadth of the reference, especially with the addition of "**all**," suggests an eschatological setting. The return to the land in 535BC after the exile in Babylon involved a return from one nation, Babylon, allowed by another nation, the Medo-Persians. Technically three nations were involved in the return of the exiles, Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia.... The reference in Ezekiel to a gathering from "**all countries**" seems to imply a wider scope for the return that looked beyond the first return from the Assyro-Babylonian captivity. This prophecy reflected the hope of a regathering after the 70AD dispersion among all nations of the world (cf. Ezek 11:16-17; Isa 11:12; Jer 16:15). (Ezekiel ; The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

God made a virtually identical promise in the "judgment section" of Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 11:17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."'

A C Gaebelein comments that...

Only a superficial expositor can speak of a fulfillment when they returned from Babylon. But even if this were so, though it is not, the verses which follow have never been fulfilled in the past.

Ezekiel 36:25 "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.:"

Then - An **expression of time**. Remember that the "**then's**" are especially helpful in guiding one to an accurate interpretation in the prophetic writings (e.g., Matthew 24 uses then 9x in 8v - Mt 24:9, 13, 16, 21, 23,, 30, 40, 45 - see especially the "then" of Mt 24:21! Check the **context** and **interrogate with the 5W/H'S**). **The crucial question is when?** He does not state specifically. But in the context God is speaking about **Israel** and does say **Israel** will be **clean** and **idol** free. The only time that this occurs in Scripture is when the Messiah returns and one-third of Israel is saved by grace through faith (cp Zech 12:10, 13:8,9). Messiah will return at the end of the

Great Tribulation as Israel's Deliverer at which time "all (all that believe - all of the one-third) Israel will be saved." (Ro 11:26-note) If one does not accept the doctrine of the Millennium, then one would have to say that this "cleansing" (associated in context with receipt of a new heart and the Holy Spirit, i.e., individual spiritual rebirth) occurs in the time of the church age. Is Israel "clean" today from all her moral filthiness? Have you ever visited Israel? I have and was shocked to discover that most of the people I wanted to talk with about the Messiah were not interested in spiritual issues. They were more interested in their idols, money and the good life, not the new life in Christ, the only life that could make them truly clean inside and out. And so if one is Amillennial, they are forced to transfer this promise and all the promises to Israel for that matter to the Church. If one does so, they have broken

the basic rule for accurate interpretation -- read the text literally if the context allows and it certainly does in the context of the book of Ezekiel, a book written by a Jewish prophet to Jewish men and women in exile and without hope of ever again having a nation, a holy city and a holy temple. Beloved, you may not agree with the literal approach to the interpretation of Scripture, but it is difficult to dispute the fact that the book of Ezekiel is as "Jewish" and as "Israel-centric" (if you will) as any book in the Bible!

I will sprinkle clean water on you - He is speaking figuratively. The best commentary on this passage by the writer of Hebrews who exhorts his believing Jewish audience...

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled clean** from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22, see following passage)

For (term of explanation - examine Heb 9:12 to see what is being explained!) if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer **sprinkling** those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:13-14).

In that day (When you see an **expression of time**, always pause to **interrogate with the 5W/H'S** - read Zechariah 12-14 for the **16 uses of "in that day"** - then you will know the who, what, where, when, why, how answers to that great and glorious day!) a fountain (Ask - is this literal or figurative? Let the **context** guide your answer) will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. (Zechariah 13:1).

F F Bruce writes that the picture of **sprinkling clean water** is

reminiscent of the 'water of cleansing' prescribed in Nu 19:9, but that removed external and ceremonial pollution: this is symbolical water and effects inward cleansing (cf. Heb. 9:13, 14). This thought is taken up in the fountain image of Zech. 13:1 (Ibid).

Gaebelein writes that the promise **you will be clean** typifies

typifying the precious blood of Christ in its cleansing power (Heb 9:13-14, 10:22). Thus, when the people of Israel believe on Him and look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10), they will be cleansed. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1)

Cooper adds that...

Cleansing and forgiveness were symbolized by sprinkling with clean water to wash away their impurities (cf. Ps 51:7). While the reference was to ceremonial cleansing that was necessary to reestablish worship (Nu 19:13, 20), it is important to remember that ceremonial cleansing was an external rite, but it was a ritual that also called for internal repentance. (Ibid)

Sprinkle clean water reminds of the beautiful old hymn sung by Red Mountain Music...

[There is a Fountain Filled With Blood](#)
[\(Another version beautifully sung by Selah\)](#)

**There is a fountain fill'd with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.**

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That **fountain** in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God

Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the **stream**
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord I believe Thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And form'd by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but Thine.

Dr John Walvoord makes a very interesting comment regarding the "Kingdom of God" in the Gospel of John...

The **Gospel of John** has relatively few references to the **kingdom of God**. This is because John's Gospel is concerned primarily with the deity of Christ and salvation through Him. The book's prophetic sections deal with the present inter-Advent age.

In John 3:3-5 Christ's words about entering "**the kingdom of God**" had in mind both the present spiritual form of the kingdom and His future earthly reign. In both cases it is impossible to enter the **kingdom of God** without the **new birth**.

Of importance is the fact that Christ rebuked Nicodemus for not knowing this concept, for the Old Testament clearly stated that unless a person had new life he could not enter the kingdom. As brought out in Ezekiel 36:25-31, salvation in the Old Testament clearly involved a new birth, receiving a new heart, and being delivered from the power of sin. Other references to this in the Old Testament include Isaiah 44:2-4; 60:21 ; and Jeremiah 24:7.

The only other reference to the kingdom in the Gospel of John is found in John 18:36 where Christ indicated that His kingdom did not receive its power from the world which relies on physical force for its endurance. Whether referring to the present spiritual form of the kingdom or the future millennial kingdom, Christ's statement would be true in either case.

While Christ clearly offered a present form of the kingdom which believers can enter now by new birth, He also reaffirmed the hope of the Jews that there would be a future kingdom in which the Son of David will reign over the house of Israel. ([Interpreting Prophecy Today – Part 4 The Kingdom of God in the New Testament](#))

Comment: Clearly Jesus' apostles believed in a literal restoration of Israel. In Acts they ask the resurrected Jesus "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6, cp Acts 3:21) And notice that Jesus did not correct them. He simply stated that the timing was not for them to know but was fixed by the Father's own authority.

Henry Morris agrees writing: That the Lord will, at some future time, restore the kingdom to Israel is clear from the fact that He did not correct this idea (often taught in the Old Testament Scriptures) in the disciples' understanding. Note, for example, the further confirmation of this teaching in Acts 15:13-18. He did, however, indicate they were not to be concerned about the time of this future kingdom. They had other more immediate responsibilities.

It is also worth noting that Ezekiel 36:25,26 is part of the **haftarah** (prescribed reading from the Prophets) for **Shabbat Para** ("heifer"), when Numbers 19 (ceremony of a red heifer...sprinkling) is the Torah reading. The

Mishnah "missed" the true meaning of this profound verse: E.g. Rabbi Aqiba said "Happy are you, O Israel. Before whom are you made clean, and who makes you clean? It is your Father Who is in heaven, "as it says, "And I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean." (Ezekiel 36:25). The rabbi did not understand that this was an Old Testament reference to the new birth.

F F Bruce writes that...

The **water** of v. 25 and the new **spirit** of v. 26 are conjoined in the description of the **new birth** in Jn 3:5. (Ibid).

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols- God will cleanse them especially from their idolatry, which had defiled the land (Ezek 36:17-18).

Ezekiel 36:26 "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.:"

JEHOVAH'S PROMISE OF THE NEW COVENANT

Although the actual words "**New Covenant**" are not in Ezekiel 36, the truths in this chapter clearly describe the New Covenant that God promises to Israel. A new heart and new spirit speak of spiritual regeneration by the Holy Spirit. God is saying He will cause Israel to be born again.

I will give you a new heart - God's Spirit will circumcise their unbelieving hearts and give them a heart that **loves God, desires** to obey Him and has the **power** to obey Him. This is clearly a description of the New Covenant which is promised in Jeremiah (See also **New Covenant in the Old Testament**). We need a **new heart** because we inherited a sinful heart from Adam (Ro 5:12-note, cp Jer 17:9). While God commanded Abraham to carry out physical circumcision, ultimately His desire for all mankind (women included) is spiritual circumcision. In Deuteronomy Moses speaking metaphorically instructed Israel to "**Circumcise** the foreskin of your heart." (Deut 10:16KJV) **How is this humanly possible?** It's not! Moses gives us the answer (addressing Israel but applicable to all mankind) declaring that "Jehovah your God **will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live (spiritually, cp all mankind needs a "divine heart transplant" = Eph 2:1-note). Remember that Scripture is always the best commentary on Scripture (**Compare Scripture with Scripture**), and so we go to Colossians where Paul teaches us that "in Him (Christ) **you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands** (Paul is addressing those who have already become believers or saints by grace through faith, see "the Gospel" in Col 1:4-5-note Col 1:6-note), in the removal of the body of the flesh by the **circumcision of Christ**. (Personal faith or belief in His death, burial and resurrection gives us spiritual life via the New Covenant in His blood) having been buried with Him in baptism (identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection), in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were (spiritually) dead in your transgressions and **the uncircumcision of your flesh**, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col 2:11, 12, 13-note)

Jeremiah declared God's promise to Israel..

Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans. For **I will** set My eyes on them for good, and **I will** bring them again to this land; and **I will** build them up and not overthrow them, and **I will** plant them and not pluck them up. And **I will** give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and **I will** be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart. (Jeremiah 24:5-7)

In **Jeremiah 31** God gives Israel the greatest promise in the Old Testament...

Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **NEW COVENANT** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (Which covenant?), My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the

LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days (See Millennium Part 2)," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Cp "I will put my Spirit within them" - so they have **both** the Law and the power to obey the law! Are you trying to "keep the law" in your own strength dear believer? Give it up! Quit trying and start "dying" to self, surrendering to the Spirit! Then and ONLY THEN, you will be empowered to keep the law!). 34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for **I will forgive their iniquity** (This was always pictured for them in the Day of Atonement, but now because Jesus was the "Scapegoat" who bore our sins into the desert so to speak, the Father is propitiated or satisfied and can fully forgive the believing remnant's sins [and ours dear Gentile believer who has entered the New Covenant originally promised to the house of Israel and the house of Judah] as far as the east is from the west!), and their sin I will remember no more." (This is part of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ) 35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts (**Jehovah Sabaoth**) is His name: 36 "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever." (May the Spirit open the eyes of your heart to understand what He inspired as a literal promise to literal Israel. The church is not mentioned in this passage and to insert that meaning is to jettison the truth of the simple, normal reading of the text. Praise Jehovah that His promises to Israel are absolutely as sure as the sun rising, the seas billowing and the seasons coming! Hallelujah!) 37 Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done," declares the LORD. (Beloved, in our technologically advanced age have the heavens been measured?) 38 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the city (Jerusalem) shall be rebuilt for the LORD (in preparation for the returning Messiah's rule and reign of the entire earth!) from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. (Jeremiah 31:34-38)

Later **Jeremiah** emphatically repeats His promises to Israel...

(Jehovah is speaking - count the "I wills"! Do you have any doubt that the omnipotent God will do exactly as He says!) Behold, **I will** gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath, and in great indignation; and **I will** bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. 38 "And they shall be My people, and **I will** be their God; 39 and **I will** give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them. 40 "And **I will** make an everlasting covenant with them that **I will** not turn away from them, to do them good; and **I will** put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41 "And **I will** rejoice over them to do them good, and **I will** faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. 42 "For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, **so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.** (Jeremiah 32:37-42)

Finally **Jeremiah** writes...

"In those days and at that time (Whenever you see an **expression of time** stop and **interrogate with the 5W/H'S** ! See **Millennium Part 2** events leading up to the **Millennium Part 3**)," declares Jehovah, "the sons of Israel will come, both they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek (Cp Ro 3:11b - How or why would they seek Jehovah? See Ro 11:36). They will ask for the way to Zion, turning their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the LORD in an **everlasting covenant** (Heb 13:20-note. This is the New Covenant in His blood [Lk 22:20, 1Cor 11:25], the Covenant of Grace [entered by grace through faith and lived out the same way as we are enabled by the Spirit! Gal 3:1, 2, 3, 5:1, 7, Gal 5:16-note] - that will not be forgotten." (Jeremiah 50:4-5)

Even in the "**Blessing and Cursing**" chapters of Deuteronomy (Deut 28-30), God had given **Israel** (not the church) a prophetic promise of **restoration to the land** and **salvation** of those regathered...

So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, (**Ed**: Notice that God is not saying this might happen but that it will happen!) 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 "And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. (Deut 30:1-6)

Comment: The circumcision of their heart is another way of describing their salvation by grace through faith and entrance into the New Covenant, which includes the promise of the Holy Spirit (see next verse - Ezek 36:27) (**See related discussion** - Excursus on **Circumcision on the Heart**)

I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh - This heart change will be made possible by the New Covenant. God was seeking not for a legal relationship, but a loving relationship, not a legal contract on stone, but a loving heart that is motivated to please Him. The law would be in their heart and their obedience would now be motivated by love not law, by Spirit enabled desire, not fleshly force. All believers have experienced this **softening of our heart** toward God and most likely have witnessed this profound transformation by the Spirit in the lives of others who have come to know Christ by grace through faith.

Cooper commenting on Jehovah's similar promise in Ezekiel 11:19 adds that...

A **hard heart** is stubborn and unresponsive to God (Ex 4:21, etc.). In 2Chr 34:27 the Lord blessed King Josiah because unlike his predecessors, his "heart was 'soft' ["responsive"] and [he] humbled [himself] before God." After his encounter with David, Nabal's heart is said to have "failed him, and he became like a stone." Ten days later he died (1Sa 25:37-38). He seems to have been stricken with paralysis, perhaps due to a stroke. H. W. Wolff applies the sense to Ezek 11:19-20; 36:26-27: "The heart of stone is the dead heart...which is unreceptive and makes all the limbs incapable of action. The heart of flesh is the living heart, full of insight, which is at the same time ready for new action. The new rūah (spirit/Spirit) brings to the perception and will of the heart the new vital power to hold on steadfastly in willing obedience." (Ibid)

Ezekiel 36:27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.:"

POURING OUT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I consider this passage one of the most wonderful promises in the entire Bible. So before you read further, take a moment to **meditate** on this passage, asking your Teacher, the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9- note, Jn 14:26, 1John 2:20, 27, 1Cor 2:13), to open your "minds to understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24:45) and rest assured that He will affirmatively answer your humble, sincere, honest, believing request (According to God's Word in 1John 5:14, 15). **Then** you can read the notes below as a good Berean "to see whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11- note)

Cooper makes an excellent point addressed to New Testament believers, especially Gentile believers writing that...

The temptation to find the fulfillment of the "**new heart**" and "**new spirit**" of Ezekiel 36:25-27 **exclusively in Christian conversion in this age** should be resisted. New Testament conversion is only a preview of the massive spiritual revival God has in store for all of true Israel and Gentiles who believe. The New Testament concept of redemption came out of the theology of the Old Testament. The similarities exist because what God wants to do for Israel is what he wants to do for everyone. The point of Israel's election to nationhood in Ex 19:1-8 was that they be

mediators of the message of God's salvation by fulfilling their missionary role as a "kingdom of priests." When Israel did not fulfill its role, God used the New Testament church as a means of presenting the message of redemption. So the church will be used ultimately to reach Israel as well (Ro 10:1; Ro 11:25-33). (Ibid)

I will put My Spirit within you - This was initially but only partially fulfilled at Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-4) when the Jewish believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. This promise awaits full fulfillment at the return of the Messiah when "**all** Israel will be saved" (Ro 11:26-note, **all** who believe - compare Zech 12:10, 13:8, 9, see also **the remnant**) at which time **all** of Israel who have entered the New Covenant by grace through faith will receive the indwelling Spirit, Who will be with them forever.

And - Don't miss this important copulative (connecting) conjunction! This great passage "works" but it only works as a "unit!" The truths of the first clause are integrally related to and necessary for the fulfillment of the second clause! Is this mysterious? It is to me, but I believe it is true even though I cannot fully comprehend how it works. So read on...

And cause you to walk in My statutes - Beloved, how could they (and any believer) every hope to obey the Law? We simply cannot in our own intrinsic strength! Attempts to keep the law, lead to legalism which blunts the flow of transforming, empowering grace which we desperately need to obey the law. How quickly we all forget that "while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." (Romans 7:5-note) Pause for a moment and note the effect or "power" of the Law on our sinful nature. **Do you see it in Romans 7:5?** The moment we make our little list of do's and don'ts, we arouse the flesh! God is saying in Ezekiel 36:27 that His **Spirit** will **cause** us to obey the Law. His Spirit will give us the desire (the "want to" we need because our fallen flesh cries "I don't want to"...to forgive, to be patient with my spouse, to love my wife like Christ loved the church, to live at peace with all men, etc, etc) and the power or ability to follow through (discussed more below).

Puritan Thomas Watson said that...

The Lord doth not only fit work for us, but fits us for our work; with His command He gives power.

Cooper writes that...

the Spirit of God will "move" them to follow ("walk in") his laws (Ezek 36:27). Inability to keep the law was a primary concern presented by the apostle Paul. He lamented his struggle and failure to keep the law in his own strength (Ro 7:13-25) and followed that lament with the solution in Ro 8:1-39. The solution to his dilemma was living in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:16-26). (Ibid)

THE NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL OF EZEKIEL 36:27

Paul's command to the saints at Philippi is a virtual "mirror image" of the great truth in Ezekiel 36:27...

Work out (katargazomai in the present imperative = command to continually make the effort to bring this to completion. As discussed below the effort is not self-effort but Spirit enabled-effort) your salvation (Note: Not work for our salvation, but work out - this refers not to our one time salvation by grace through faith [justification] but our daily on-going salvation also by grace through faith, so called "present tense salvation" or progressive sanctification - see the Three Tenses of Salvation) with fear and trembling (**What should be our attitude? A shaking fear?** No, but a holy, reverential awe and fear of walking in a manner other than pleasing to and glorifying of our Father, see 1Peter 1:17-note, 2Cor 7:1-note, 2Cor 5:9-note, 2Cor 5:10-note) for (term of explanation) it is God Who is at **work** (energeo in present tense = continually energizing) in you (**Who is this beloved?** Is this not the Spirit of Christ, Ro 8:9, 1Cor 3:16, 1Cor 6:19), both to **will** (We don't "*want to*" but God gives us the "*want to*") and to **work** (energeo in present tense = continually energizing. We don't have the power to do this by ourselves and continually must choose to jettison "*self-reliance*" and surrender to and depend on "*Spirit reliance!*") for His good pleasure. (Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note)

Comment: Succinctly stated, saints are to **work out** what the Spirit **works in!**

**THE DESIRE
THE POWER**

The **New Living Translation** (nice paraphrase but should not be primary Bible for serious **inductive Bible study** - see **Bible Versions**) poetically paraphrases verse 13 writing that "God is working in you, giving you *the desire* to obey Him and *the power* to do what pleases Him."

As mentioned above how the two clauses in Ezekiel 36:27 and Php 2:12, 13 integrally work together to enable believers to truly experience the abundant supernatural, Spirit filled life is mysterious to me. The following digression deals with this mysterious interaction which I call "Sacred Synergism", a term not intended to be sacrilegious!

A SACRED SYNERGISM: OUR RESPONSIBILITY GOD'S SOVEREIGN PROVISION

I am not an advocate of the popular phrase "*let go and let God*" (perhaps more Scripturally we could say "*Let's go and let God!*"), the latter part of the slogan is vital to comprehend because when we as believers are left to ourselves, we can never obey God's statutes in our own strength. Why? The reason is because every believer still has the indwelling residual, rebellious nature often termed the **flesh**. The Spirit of God Who indwells the believer is the only power Who can overcome the ungodly, anti-God inertia of the **flesh** (Read Galatians 5:16 carefully and then study the **notes**). As we learn to surrender and yield and be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit (cp Eph 5:18-note), He gives us not only the *desire* to obey God's commands, but also the *power* to accomplish the obedience, all in a manner that is pleasing to God (Php 2:13-note). And yet it is not all "*let go and let God*", for every believer has the responsibility to work out their salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12b-note). **Is this a bit mysterious?** Does it sound like "spiritual double-talk?" As believers we are to work out our salvation and that is **100% our responsibility** and yet it is **100% God's enabling ability!** This is a picture of *synergism* which is defined as the interaction of discrete agents (in this case believers on one hand indwelt by the divine Agent, the Holy Spirit, on the other hand) such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects.

QUALIFIED SYNERGISM

Jerry Bridges terms this mysterious partnership the Holy Spirit's **synergistic work** explaining that it...

refers to occasions that combine **our effort** with **His enabling power**.

But this isn't a pure synergism, as if we and the Spirit each contributed equal power to the task. Rather, we work as He enables us to work, so we use the expression *qualified synergism*.

We're 100 percent dependent on His power in order to participate in the work, as the psalmist illustrated:

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain (Psalm 127:1-[See Spurgeon's note](#)).

Two activities are mentioned: **building** a house and **watching** over a city. The Lord's involvement isn't one of helping but of building the house and watching over the city. At the same time, the builder builds and the watchman watches. The verse's message is that the Lord doesn't merely help the builder and the watchman; He's totally involved with them in this **qualified synergism**. He supplies all the enabling power, and they do all the tangible work. There are many such examples in the New Testament. We're to "*put to death the deeds of the body*" (**Ed**: Our part) —the sin that remains in us—yet we do so "*by the Spirit*" (**Ed**: His power) (Romans 8:13-note). We're to use the spiritual gifts we've received to serve God and other people, yet we do so "*by the strength that God supplies*" (1Peter 4:10,11-note). (Bolding and italics added for emphasis). ([The Bookends of the Christian Life - Jerry Bridges, Bob Bevington](#)-highly recommended - excellent discussion of the "Second Bookend," entitled "The Power of the Holy Spirit." To motivate you to read this book, check out a few [Customer Reviews](#)).

In Ezekiel 37 God again promises...

I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it," declares the Lord.' (Ezek 37:14).

God's gift of the Holy Spirit to Israel is mentioned several times by the Old Testament prophets...

Isaiah 32:15 Until the Spirit is **poured out** upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fertile field And the fertile field is considered as a forest.

Isaiah 44:3 (cp Isa 45:17) 'For I will **pour out** water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, And My blessing on your descendants;

Ezekiel 39:29 "And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have **poured out** My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

Henry Morris comments: This long-promised regeneration of the nation of Israel by the Holy Spirit will take place only when the nation accepts Jesus as her Messiah, repenting and mourning over their twenty-century rejection of Him (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1).

Zechariah 12:10: I will **pour out** on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

Comment: In the context of the unit of Zechariah 12-14 (these separate chapters should be read as a unit), this clearly refers to the Second Coming of Christ.

Ryrie writes: At the second coming of Christ, Israel will recognize Jesus as her Messiah, acknowledging with deep contrition that He was the One whom their forefathers pierced (John 19:37).

Joel 2:28, 29: And it will come about **after this** (See Joel 2:27 which will be fulfilled at the Second Coming) that I will **pour out** My Spirit on all mankind (**Ed:** Everyone who enters the Messiah's Millennial Kingdom initially will be born again); and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. "And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days." ()

John MacArthur comments: The abundance of material blessings would be followed by the outpouring of spiritual blessings. When coupled with the other temporal phrases within the passage ("in those days" [Joel 2:29] and "before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes" [Joel 2:31]), the term points to a Second Advent fulfillment time frame. all mankind. Since the context is "your sons and daughters," "all mankind" best refers to the house of Israel only. The nations are the recipients of God's wrath, not the effusion of His Spirit (cf. Joel 3:2, 9ff.).

ESV Study Bible Note on Joel 2:28-32: Some past Jewish interpreters understood this passage to be referring to the messianic age. The early church followed this line of thinking, as Peter quoted this passage on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21).

Bible Knowledge Commentary: The Lord announced that His "day" (Joel 2:31) would be accompanied by an outpouring of His Spirit on all people (lit., "all flesh"). The following context indicates that "all people" refers more specifically to all inhabitants of Judah (cf. the threefold use of **your** in Joel 2:28, as well as the parallel passages in Ezek. 39:29; Zech. 12:10).

Jewish believer David Levy comments: In the Hebrew Bible, Joel 2:28-32 comprise a separate chapter (Joel 3) which describes three great spiritual experiences to be enjoyed by Israel: the coming of the Lord; salvation to the nation; and the permanent indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. (Joel, the day of the Lord: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry)

D A Garret comments: The Bible several times associates the Holy Spirit with water or describes Him metaphorically as something that can be poured out (Isa 44:3; Ezek 39:29; Zech 12:10; Ro 5:5). Joel easily turned this imagery to his advantage and created a parallel between the gift of rain and the pouring out of the Spirit...In short, the coming age would be an age marked by the presence of the Spirit (contrast 1Sa 3:1). (Volume 19A: Hosea, Joel The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

Walvoord summarizes these OT passages promising the gift of the Spirit to Israel..

The millennial period for both Israel and the Gentiles will also be a time of **special ministry of the Holy Spirit**. In this period, according to Isaiah 32:15, the Spirit will be poured out from on

high. A similar prophecy is found in Isaiah 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Ezekiel predicts: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). In Ezekiel 39:29 a further similar statement is found: "Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord **Jehovah**." The presence of Christ, the evident power of the Holy Spirit, and the context of the knowledge of the Lord and peace, righteousness, and joy will provide a basis for spiritual life in the millennium far more favorable than any preceding (time in Israel's history). ([Israel in Prophecy](#))

In **Titus** Paul records an allusion to "**sprinkling**" to make one clean in association with the bestowal of the presence and power of the **Holy Spirit**...

He saved us (**Who? When? What/Who appeared?** See Titus 3:4-note), not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness ("Works", "Keeping of the law"), but (**contrast** = glorious "change of direction!") according to (not "out of" but proportionate to the infinite riches of) His mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out** upon us richly through Jesus Christ our **Savior** that being justified by His **grace** we might be made heirs according to the **hope** of eternal life. (Titus 3:5-note, Titus 3:6-7-note)

Bob Deffinbaugh has a well done summary of [The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament](#) and in his subsection on the **Holy Spirit and the Nation of Israel** he writes...

The prophets made it clear that the coming kingdom which God had promised and for which they looked by faith (cf. Hebrews 11) was one that would be inaugurated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isaiah 32:12-20; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Ezekiel 36:22-32; 37:11-14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-32, etc.). Among the ministries which the Holy Spirit would perform were the following (I will put them in the order in which I understand them to have been fulfilled, or in which they will be fulfilled, although the Old Testament saints were not aware of this order at the time):

First, the Holy Spirit would deal with Israel's rebellion and sin. The first aspect of the Spirit's ministry had to do with judgment, not salvation. Thus, Joel (chapter 2) and Zechariah (12:10-13:9) speak of the Spirit's ministry of bringing Israel to repentance by causing them to understand that they had rejected and crucified God's Messiah. It is because of this that, "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (Zechariah 12:10).

Second, Israel will be cleansed of her sin. This is closely related to the first aspect of the Spirit's ministry. Before cleansing can be achieved, repentance is necessary, which is the first step. The prophets spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit in close proximity with the cleansing of Israel. Ezekiel 36:25 and Zechariah 13:1 speak very clearly of this cleansing of Israel, although no one knew exactly how this would be accomplished.

Third, the Holy Spirit would renew Israel by giving them a new spirit, a new heart. Ezekiel is the prophet who spoke most of this matter of a "new heart" (cf. Ezekiel 11:18-21; 18:30-32; 36:22-32). The problem with Israel was not the law which they had been given, but their hearts. God promised, through His Spirit, to give His people a new heart, a heart which would dispose His people to love and to keep His laws, and thus to pave the way for the pouring out of His blessings on His people (cf. especially Ezekiel 36:26-32). The new covenant of which God spoke did not set aside the standards of the old, but rather granted men forgiveness of sins, and the enablement to live in accordance with God's standards, not to earn their salvation but to live it out in a way that honored God. ([The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament](#)) (See also [Dr John Walvoord's related article The Person of the Holy Spirit Part 11 - The Eschatology of the Holy Spirit](#))

Ezekiel 36:28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.:"

PROMISE OF THE LAND FULFILLED TO LITERAL ISRAEL

You will live in the land - You is Israel. The church is not in view in this context. God is serious about this promise and repeats it many times in Ezekiel's prophecy = Ezek 11:17, 28:25, 34:13, 36:10, 39:27.

The land - This phrase in the OT most often refers to the [Promised Land](#) of Canaan (but always examine the context), the land promised by **Jehovah** to Abraham in an unconditional, immutable, unbreakable covenant. Some today teach that God is "finished with Israel", but Ezekiel argues strongly against this viewpoint. The miraculous creation of the nation of Israel in May, 1948 after almost 2000 years of having no homeland should be strong evidence to every skeptic that **God is clearly not finished with Israel!**

Warren Wiersbe observes that "God gave **the land of Israel** to the Jews as a part of the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:7-21). That settled their **ownership** of the land, but their **possession** and enjoyment of the land depended on their **faith** and **obedience** (Lev. 26). The Christian life is similar. We **enter** God's family by trusting Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9), but we **enjoy** God's family by believing His promises and **obeying** His will (2 Cor. 6:18-7:1). Disobedient children have to be chastened (Hebrews 12:5-11), and God often had to chasten the people of Israel because of their rebellion and disobedience (**Ed comment:** Not all of Israel in the OT were God's true children in the sense that He was their Father [cp Jn 1:11, 12, 13]. Only a **remnant** of all of Israel were genuine believers in the Messiah.)

The land is the land of Palestine promised to **their forefathers**, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which is reiterated again and again in the OT (the following is but a sampling of passages in which the land is promised to Jacob or Israel)....

Genesis 12:7 "And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Comment - This promise to Abraham was repeated in Ge 13:15. The verb "give" appears >1000x in the OT, with greatest frequency in relation to God's giving the land of Palestine to Israel, a truth here announced for the first time but repeated in approximately 150 OT passages from the days of the patriarchs to the return from the exile (Neh 9:35,36) and even incorporated in the Decalogue (Ex 20:12).

Genesis 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "**To your descendants I have given this land,** From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

Comment - "The boundaries of the Promised Land are now given for the first time. This promise has not yet been fulfilled but will be when Christ returns." (Ryrie)

Genesis 17:8 (cp Ge 12:7) God promised Abraham "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, **all the land of Canaan**, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Ps 105:9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. 10 Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, 11 Saying, "To you I will give **the land** of Canaan As the portion of your inheritance,"

Ge 28:4 (Isaac passes the land blessing to Jacob) "May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you; that you may possess **the land** of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."

Ge 28:13 (Jehovah speaking to Jacob) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; **the land** on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

Ge 35:12 "And **the land** which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you."

Amos 9:14 "Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 "I will also plant them on **their land**, And they will not again be rooted out from

their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

Comment - Notice that this promise applies, not to the return from Babylon, but to the final restoration in the last days (Amos 9:13 = Messianic age, cp Jer 30:3), when they will never again "be pulled up out of their land."

COVENANT ONENESS

You will be My people, and I will be your God - When all Israel is saved (Ro 11:26) by grace through faith in their Messiah (cp Zech 12:10), they will enter into the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34, Ezek 36:26-27) and into the new relationship of covenant with Jehovah - they are His and He is theirs. This is covenant language and speak of oneness and identity.

Related study - The Oneness of Covenant

I will be your God - This promise was first given in the Abrahamic Covenant in Ge 17:8 = "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and **I will be their God.**"

This promise is repeated in Jer 24:7 = "I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and **they will be My people, and I will be their God,** for they will return to Me with their whole heart."

This promise was repeated in the promise of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31) = "But 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 on their heart I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**" (Jer 31:33)

And again in Jer 32:38 = "And they shall be My people, and I will be their God"

Again in Ezekiel 37:23, 27 = "And they will be My people, and I will be their God....."My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."

Again in Zech 8:8 = "And I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be My people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness."

NET Note adds that "This was their highest **privilege** (cf. Ex 6:7, Lev 26:12; Jer 24:7) but also their greatest **responsibility** (cf. Jer 7:3; 11:4). It is a formula referring to a covenant relationship in which God pledges to protect, provide, and be present with His people and they in turn promise to be loyal and obedient to him (see Dt 26:17-18; 29:10-13)."

Ezekiel 36:29 "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.:"

I will - Three I will's in one verse! Remember that **I will** is a key phrase in this chapter where it is found 21x in 15 verses. Ezek 36:9, 10, 1, 12, 15, 23-30, 33, 37. These prophesies will come to pass because of the faithfulness of the One who repeatedly declares "I will!"

I will save you - Save is Hebrew **yasha'** meaning to deliver, to help, to defend. The main idea is bring one to a place of safety or broad pasture as opposed to a narrow strait (distress, danger). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the great Greek verb **sozo [word study]** which means to rescue from peril, danger, loss or suffering, to heal, to make whole, to protect, to keep alive and to preserve physical and/or spiritual life.

Saved (delivered) ([03467](#))(**yasha'**) (See also **yeshua** from which we get our word "Jesus") is a verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of **yasha'** as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger."

Yasha' - Occurs 198x in the OT and 3x in Ezekiel - Ezek 34:22; 36:29; 37:23

TWOT adds that the concept of **wide** "connotes freedom from distress and the ability to pursue one's own objectives. To move from distress to safety requires deliverance. Generally the deliverance must come from somewhere outside the party oppressed. In the OT the kinds of distress, both national and individual, include

enemies, natural catastrophies, such as plague or famine, and sickness. The one who brings deliverance is known as the "savior." ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press.](#))

Uncleanness 02932)(**tumah**Tum'ah is translated by the **Septuagint (Lxx)** with the word **akatharsia** is a broad term referring to moral defilement or uncleanness in thought, word, and deed and often describes sexual sin (Ro 1:24-note). Strictly speaking **akatharsia** refers worthless material, waste, filth or refuse. Sin defiles and produces corruption and degradation of the soul of the sinner. A sinner is never a winner!

Ezekiel 36:30 "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.:

So that - term of purpose or result - The result of the multiplication (~clear evidence of national prosperity and blessing) is that Israel will not be suffer need and be disgraced again among the nations (the Gentiles).

You will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations - The nations thought their pagan gods bestowed fertility (e.g., **Ba'al** was the supreme male god among the Canaanites and Phoenicians, worshiped as a fertility god and also known as a storm god). Famine in Israel was a viewed as a disgrace to their God.

Ezekiel 36:31 "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.:

- **you will:** Eze 6:9 16:61-63 20:43 Lev 26:39 Ezr 9:6-15 Ne 9:26-35 Jer 31:18-20 Da 9:4-20
- **loathe:** Job 42:6 Isa 6:5 64:6 Zec 12:10,11 Lu 18:13 Ro 6:21 2 Co 7:10,11)

Then - a strategic **expression of time** - Always be alert to this "time sensitive" conjunction, especially in prophetic passages as it marks a clear succession of events. To what time does Ezekiel refer? In context this refers to the end times when all Israel (more accurately the **remnant** because only 1/3 of Jews will believe - cp Zech 13:8) will be saved (Ro 11:26-27-note).

F F Bruce writes that "divine grace produces an awareness of past ingratitude." (Ibid). Beloved, is this not a principle that applies to our life. I sin presumptively. I come to my senses and confess and repent. God forgives me completely. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for His mercies and grace!

Loathe themselves - Cooper notes that "This terminology was used in Ezek 6:9 to describe Israel's repentance in exile. Here and in Ezekiel 20:43 (**Ed:** In context [Ezek 20:41, 42, 44] this will occur in the Age of the Messiah) it describes their feeling of revulsion after the return when they would recall their former life-style. " (Ibid)

Ezekiel 36:32 "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!":

I am not doing this for your sake - Israel did not merit such beneficent treatment (as do none of us beloved!) It is all grace upon grace, amazing grace in and through **Yeshua** (cp Jn 1:14-note, Jn 1:16-note). Jehovah repeats His statement in Ezek 36:22 "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name."

Be ashamed (command)([0954](#)) (**bosh**) is from a root meaning "to become pale" or "to blush." When failure or sin occurs, there is a disconcerting feeling, a flushing of the face. It conveys the idea of shame of utter defeat which pervades one's mood. (Ezra 9:6; Isa 1:29; 30:5; Jer 2:36; 9:19).

Confounded (command) (kalam) means to be disgraced, humiliated or put to shame. **Lxx** uses **entrepo** which means literally to turn back or about and figuratively means to cause one to turn away because of shame (Keep in mind that the Middle East is a [shame-honor culture](#)) We all know this feeling!

Ezekiel 36:33 '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.:'

On the day - This specific **expression of time** should prompt you to pause and **interrogate with the 5W/H'S**.

Jeremiah gives us the answer...

And I (God) will bring Israel back to his pasture and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead. **'In those days and at that time,'** declares the LORD, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant. (Jeremiah 50:19-20)

Comment: This time will be the day "all Israel is saved" (Ro 11:26- note).

I will cleanse ([02891](#))(**taher**) commonly refers to ritual purity or cleanness in the OT. In fact except for Job 37:21 and Mal 3:3, **taher** almost exclusively of ritual or moral purity. To be clean, be pure, innocent, righteous. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **taher** in this verse with the verb **katharizo** which describes cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity (Acts 10:15). Katharizo was used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al)

Iniquities (guilt) ([05771](#))('avonavah which has an interesting basic meaning of to bend, twist or distort. In simple terms 'avon is a twisting of God's standard or deviation from it.

The waste places will be rebuilt - This repeats the promise of Ezekiel 36:10.

Amos repeats the promise...

Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 "I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God. (Amos 9:14-15)

Zechariah also reiterates God's promise ...

Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; 8 and I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be My people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.' (Zechariah 8:7,8)

Ezekiel 36:34 "The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.:'

The desolate land - Ezekiel 6:14 explains why God made the land of Israel desolate.

Song 2:2 Like a **Desolation** 08077)(Song 2:2 Like a

Always take a moment to ponder what is being explained. Song 2:2 Like a derives from a root which means desolation caused by some great disaster, usually a result of divine judgment. This Hebrew word stresses horror, consternation, astonishment caused by desolation of judgment.

Ezekiel 36:35 "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.:'

Like the garden of Eden - This is a wonderful description (**see terms of comparison simile metaphor**) of the utopian, idyllic conditions that will prevail in the coming age, during the one thousand year righteous reign of Israel's Messiah (**Millennium**).

Ezekiel 36:36 "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.":

Then - a strategic **expression of time** - Always be alert to this "time sensitive" conjunction, especially in prophetic passages because as discussed above "**then**" marks a clear succession of events. To what time does Ezekiel refer? The miraculous restoration of Israel will be so obvious that even the Gentiles recognize the good hand of Jehovah is responsible! God receives His proper due. He will be glorified in that day!

The nations...will know - This is a testimony to the nations that God has restored Israel.

Moses records that the **nations** understood why God had brought such desolation and in the future will understand the same God will bring restoration.

All the **nations** will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?' 25 "**Then men will say**, 'Because they **forsook the covenant of the LORD**, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt (**The Mosaic Covenant**). 26 'They went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they have not known and whom He had not allotted to them (**Idolatry**). 27 'Therefore, (**term of conclusion**) the anger of the LORD burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book (Deuteronomy 28-20) 28 and Jehovah uprooted them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.' (Dt 29:24-28)

Ezekiel 36:37 '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.:'

Matthew Henry - When God designs to bless his people, he sets them a-praying for the blessing which he desires to give them

Ezekiel 36:38 "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":

Then (expression of time) they will know that I am the LORD - Throughout Ezekiel this phrase is repeated. Israel was God's chosen people and her sin and subsequent judgment brought disgrace to the Name of God. Their restoration by Jehovah will result in God receiving the glory and praise and honor that He alone desires (compare this with the purpose of believers today = Mt 5:16-note).

Ezekiel 37