

It is July 19, 2006, and I just finished chapter 23. Due to all that is happening in Israel right now regarding the attack of Hezbollah and the connection to Syria and Iran, I wanted to jump ahead to this portion of the book. After the next few chapters, I will go back and pick up with chapter 24.

**Ezek. 36:1 Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:**

**Ezek. 36:2 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession:**

The Lord now instructs Ezekiel to prophesy to the mountains of Israel, the actual land mass of the nation. The enemies of Israel have rejoiced in that the people of Israel have been driven out of their land. The heathen have claimed it as their own. They were especially proud to boast of possessing the places dedicated to idol worship.

(9/06) “ancient high places” - Canaan was a land of idolaters long before Israel was a presence there.

I am going to use many more resources than normal, at least through my study of chapter 39. So much of the scripture that references the “high places” refer to places of idol worship that I immediately read that meaning into the above reference. David Legge ([www.preachtheword.co.uk](http://www.preachtheword.co.uk)) had a different thought that made good sense to me. Maybe the heathen were rejoicing in that they now possessed the places that were considered holy and special to the people of Israel—the temple mount, the Cave of Machpelah (where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are buried), the tomb of David, etc. The Palestinians of today can basically make the same boast.

**Ezek. 36:3 Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made *you* desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and *are* an infamy of the people:**

The Lord now gives reasoning for the prophecy to come. The heathen nations that destroyed Israel and claimed possession of it have done so with a prideful spirit of joy towards Israel’s humiliation and obvious fall from the grace of God. The land of Israel is described as *desolate*, laid to waste. The land has been taken over by those who speak evil and slander against God’s people.

**Ezek. 36:4 Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that *are* round about;**

The prophet again emphasizes that this message is to the land of Israel—the mountains, hills, rivers, valleys, desolate wastes (places of ruin and destruction), and forsaken cities. It was the land that had *fallen prey* (taken as booty and plundered) to its heathen occupiers.

This description also fits what happened to the land after the people were again dispersed among the nations by the Romans in 70 AD. The land fell to ruin; it

became devoid of trees as a result of the taxation system of the Ottoman Turks who levied taxes according to the number of trees on your property. Only since the Jewish people have returned to the land as a nation since 1948 has it again become fruitful and prosperous. I am reminded again of the verse in Ecclesiastes regarding history repeating itself and how it fits in God's plan.

Ecc. 3:14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

Ecc. 3:15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

**Ezek. 36:5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all *their* heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.**

Those whose attitude toward Israel had particularly stirred up God's jealousy were the people of Idumea, or Edom, the cousins of the Israelites as descended through Esau. They had taken a special pleasure at seeing the Israelites lose their possession of the land and fall out of their position of favor before God. It seems that the jealousy of Esau toward his brother Jacob was passed down to his descendants as if it were a dominant genetic trait. They were never content with God's blessings toward their own nation; they coveted Israel's position of blessing.

How often do we see that spirit of jealousy played out among even Christian families, friends, work associates, etc. today. The tendency of the flesh is to want what others have and not appreciate our own blessings. It's another expression of the spirit of pride in that we think we should have what we consider to be best, even at the expense of someone else, and a spirit of dishonor toward the Lord in that we are basically declaring that God hasn't done enough for us or provided adequately for us.

**Ezek. 36:6 Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:**

**Ezek. 36:7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that *are* about you, they shall bear their shame.**

God is furious with the heathen, i.e., Idumea, for the way they have treated His land, the land of Israel. God is declaring through the prophet that they will be judged accordingly.

I think it is important to note again that everything associated with the honor of God's name is extremely important to Him. He doesn't take it lightly when we dishonor His name in any way. When we identify ourselves as "Christian," we are identifying ourselves with the name of God, and we are to protect the honor of His name accordingly. When we dishonor His name, we are inviting His judgment.

**Ezek. 36:8 But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.**

**Ezek. 36:9 For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:**

**Ezek. 36:10 And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:**

**Ezek. 36:11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.**

I know many of the most respected commentaries and bible scholars consider this a reference to past history. I don't see how they can make that connection in light of verse 11. When the people of Judah returned to the land after their dispersion in Babylon, they never prospered in the land "better than at their beginnings." Only in recent history, since being reformed as a nation in 1948, have they become known for export of their produce and flowers—the fruit of the land. The "waste" lands have certainly been turned into prosperous cities. The people associated with all the tribes of Israel are returning to the land in greater and greater numbers. Still they have yet to prosper as at their beginnings. The nation as whole does not yet acknowledge the "LORD"; that day is also yet future.

**Ezek. 36:12 Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, *even* my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them *of men*.**

This verse again shows us that this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. This time of restoration that results in fruitfulness, prosperity, and a strong population of the people of Israel is a permanent one. They will never again be driven out of their land. This cannot be said of the reestablished nation after the Babylonian dispersion; they were again dispersed by Rome in 70 AD.

**Ezek. 36:13 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou *land* devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations;**

**Ezek. 36:14 Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD.**

Ezekiel is still speaking to the land. It is being blamed for the continual death and destruction of the nations that have inhabited it—including the Israelites. JFB made note that it referred back to the words of the spies when they returned from spying out the land and stated: "The land personified is represented as doing that which was done in it."

**Num. 13:32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature.**

Verse 14 again emphasizes that the time about which Ezekiel is prophesying is a time that will establish the nation of Israel permanently. Those that live in it will never again become victims to the nations around it or the people within it.

(12/08) Again, we know that time is yet future. In spite of all the attempts at establishing peace between Israel and the nations, that peace will not be permanent until Jesus is on the throne.

**Ezek. 36:15 Neither will I cause *men* to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.**

As a result of the restoration about which Ezekiel is speaking, the nation will never again be in a position of *shame* (wounded by disgrace or insult) by the *heathen* (the Gentile nations) or *reproach* (blame or charged with fault) by the *people* (those of the tribes of Israel).

“neither shalt thou cause...” – This made me think of how the land itself played a significant role in the health of the nation through agriculture in particular as well as through other natural resources. The land will provide abundantly for the needs of its people.

**Ezek. 36:16 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,**

**Ezek. 36:17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.**

**Ezek. 36:18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it:**

**Ezek. 36:19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.**

The message in this chapter up to this point has been directed to the land. The LORD now turns His attention to the people of Israel. God’s people did not take care of the land when they were in possession of it. They defiled it and polluted it with their idolatrous practices. They had even shed the blood of their own children in worship of these false gods. This was the reason that God had to intervene with judgment and cause the people to be dispersed among the nations. He makes the point that their judgment was directly related to their wicked actions.

**Ezek. 36:20 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These *are* the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.**

Even when they were dispersed among the nations, they continued to profane God’s name. This is a direct reference to the words of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy.

**Deut. 29:24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger?**

**Deut. 29:25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:**

**Deut. 29:26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them:**

Deut. 29:27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

Deut. 29:28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.

God had clearly explained to the people that if they broke covenant with Him, they would experience His curse just as surely as they experienced the blessings associated with keeping covenant.

**Ezek. 36:21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went.**

The Lord makes it clear that it is in honor of His holy name that He will again restore the nation of Israel to their land and bring them into restored fellowship. He is a covenant-keeping God, and He had made a specific covenant with Abraham that was unconditional. The covenant made with the people through Moses was conditional, but it never replaced God's covenant with Abraham—it was in addition to.

To Abraham—No “ifs” used.

Gen. 17:3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

Gen. 17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Gen. 17:5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Gen. 17:6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

Gen. 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations **for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.**

Gen. 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, **for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.**

Through Moses—conditional.

Lev. 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk **contrary unto me;**

Lev. 26:28 **Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury;** and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

Lev. 26:29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Lev. 26:30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

Lev. 26:31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

Lev. 26:32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Lev. 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

The NIV Commentary pointed out how the world of that time would consider God's name profaned through His decision to disperse His people among the nations.

"A nation was uniquely tied to its land in the ancient Near East. If a people were forced off their land, whether by conquest, famine, disease, or any other reason, this was a demonstration that their god was not sufficiently strong to protect and care for them. Therefore, when God scattered Israel among the nations, they perceived that Israel's God was weak; thereby the name of the Lord was profaned among them."

**Ezek. 36:22** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.

**Ezek. 36:23** And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

To honor His promises to Abraham is directly related to protecting the honor of the name of YHWH. No matter how badly His people had profaned His name, the Lord would again ensure that His name was *sanctified* (hallowed, purified, considered sacred, revered) among the heathen nations. Not only are the people of Israel going to be made to acknowledge God as LORD; all the other nations will as well.

**Is. 45:22** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

**Is. 45:23** I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

**Phil. 2:9** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

**Phil. 2:10** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

**Phil. 2:11** And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Of specific note is that this sanctification of God's name is going to come about through the people of Israel ("in you"). To me that means that it will be through His dealings / intervention / provision for the nation of Israel that the nations will be brought to their knees before God. I believe this a direct reference to the coming of the Messiah in response to the call of His people to deliver them from the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel that we call the seven-year tribulation.

**Ezek. 36:24** For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

**Ezek. 36:25** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

**Ezek. 36:26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

**Ezek. 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.**

When Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, comes to reign as King on the throne of David, YHWH will ensure that all the living descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob will be brought back into the land of Israel. At that time the LORD will cleanse the people and give them a new heart and a new spirit. A new heart is a reference to new understanding and desires. No longer will they be hardhearted or struggle with obedience and submission to God as Lord. One who has a stony heart would not have clear understanding or a desire to choose what is right; he would not likely feel the need to repent. Having a heart of flesh implies the ability to be touched with feeling and emotion and understand the need for repentance and remorse for one's actions.

Those who are part of this restored Israel will be indwelt by His Spirit to empower them to live according to God's law, His word. We who are part of the body of Christ today, the "church," are privileged to possess God's Holy Spirit now; we don't have to wait until Messiah comes again as King. The key difference between the church and those who are part of Messiah's Kingdom seems to be that they will victoriously appropriate that power in their day-to-day living. We, on the other hand, still fall to the desires of the flesh and the attack of the enemy in spite of the Spirit's empowerment. Since the Lord will be on the throne and ruling with a rod of iron, I am sure that His people will not be confronted with a constant barrage of different media and cultural morals that appeal to the flesh. Nor will God's people have to experience the attack of the enemy during the Millennial Kingdom since Satan will be bound.

(1/07) As I was reading this section again, I recognized that I was making excuses for believers today. Though the statements are true, I believe, we have no valid excuse for not living victoriously today. God's empowerment through the Holy Spirit is more than sufficient for us to live victoriously. The problem is our own lack of faith and/or heart of submission.

**Ezek. 36:28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**

This is a statement of the future fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

**Ezek. 36:29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.**

**Ezek. 36:30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.**

These verses emphasize the fact that the restored Israel will exist on planet earth and be dependent upon the produce of the land. The key promise here is that famine will be a thing of the past; no longer will God use it in judgment upon His people. These verses state definitively that God has authority over the forces of nature. This truth is affirmed by other scriptures as well.

**Deut. 11:13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,**

Deut. 11:14 That **I will give you the rain of your land** in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

Deut. 11:15 And **I will send grass** in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

Deut. 11:16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

Deut. 11:17 And *then* the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and **he shut up the heaven**, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Psa. 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

Psa. 89:9 **Thou rulest the raging of the sea:** when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

**Ezek. 36:31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.**

In the face of God's wonderful faithfulness, grace and mercy on their behalf, the people of Israel will be ashamed of their own and their nation's history of rebellion and rejection of God. This truth is also expressed by the prophet Zechariah.

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

**Ezek. 36:32 Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.**

God has stated over and over again through the prophets that He is acting in defense of the honor of His name as He deals with Israel. In that regard, He is ensuring that He honors His covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We can also include His covenant with David.

Psa. 89:34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Psa. 89:35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

Psa. 89:36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

The restored nation of Israel will include descendants of David. Though the earthly throne of David is currently empty, the position is still valid before the Lord and will once again be occupied by Jesus the Messiah who is descended from David as documented by Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

In light of God's faithfulness, grace, and mercy the people of Israel will finally be ashamed and confounded (wounded, confused, shame) because of their wicked ways. The Hebrew indicates that they will probably look back at their own

actions and the actions of their fathers with confusion as well as shame as to how they could have rejected the love and provision of Almighty God.

**Ezek. 36:33** Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

**Ezek. 36:34** And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

Since Israel became a nation in 1948, I have most often heard it emphasized how they will never again be dispersed as a nation and that they will once again be the jewel of the nations on earth under the reign of Christ. The sad truth is that Israel will still suffer much as a nation until that time. Much of their land may again be turned to waste and become desolate under the reign of Antichrist during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. This week (7years) is a time of purging and refining among God's people; it is the end of a time of judgment against the nation.

**Dan. 9:24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Only 69 of those 70 weeks have been completed. (See the journal on Daniel 9 for more detail.)

**Ezek. 36:35** And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities *are become fenced, and are inhabited.*

**Ezek. 36:36** Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.*

Although some may try to apply these verses to current day Israel in comparison to what it had become, especially under the Ottoman Turks, I think this is a description of the time under the reign of Messiah. It has always intrigued me that the cities during the reign of Messiah will continue to have fences and gates, but scripture indicates this to be so. Being fenced in is a sign of security and protection. That Messiah alone is sufficient for their protection and security is made clear in that the gates of Zion (Jerusalem) will be left open to accommodate the multitudes that will be bringing gifts to Israel.

**Is. 60:11** Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces [resources, wealth] of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought.

There are many scriptures that affirm the fact that what God says He does.

**Num. 23:19** God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

**Is. 46:11** ... yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.

**Ezek. 24:14** I the LORD have spoken *it*: it shall come to pass, and I will do *it*;

**Ezek. 36:37** Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for this* be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.  
**Ezek. 36:38** As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

I liked the wording of the CJB for these verses:

“*Adonai ELOHIM* says, ‘In addition, I will let the house of Isra’el pray to me to do this for them: to increase their numbers like sheep — like flocks of sheep for sacrifices, like the flocks of sheep in Yerushalayim at its designated times, in this degree will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am *ADONAI*.’”

These verses seem to go hand-in-hand with the words of Jesus.

**Matt. 23:37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

**Matt. 23:38** Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

**Matt. 23:39** For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The time of Israel’s final restoration and blessing are directly related to the coming of Jesus the Messiah as their King; and according to Jesus’ own words, that won’t happen until they turn to Him in faith and repentance.