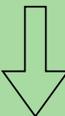


Ezekiel 35-36

- Last week I mentioned that the restoration chapters of Ezekiel roughly parallel the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - Israel's sins under the Old Covenant had brought about their banishment and loss of peace and prosperity
 - But it was God's faithfulness under the Abrahamic Covenant that would provide for Israel's restoration
 - And that restoration would address the same three areas of blessing that were lost in the Old Covenant
 - First, the restoration starts with a new shepherd who would lead God's people properly under a new peace covenant
 - We studied that last time in Chapter 34
 - Secondly, Israel will return to their land in peace and dwell there securely
 - Thirdly, the people would see their city restored and enjoy unparalleled prosperity in the land
 - Collectively, these blessings fulfill God's promises to His people
 - Last week I also promised an overview of the upcoming chapters, and here it is:

Ezekiel 33	Commanding prophet and people to obey God	
Ezekiel 34	Promising Israel a Good Shepherd	
Ezekiel 35	Ending competing claims for Israel's land	
Ezekiel 36	Delivering Israel's promised land inheritance	
Ezekiel 37	Resurrecting a united, peaceful, obedient Israel	
Ezekiel 38	Defending Israel's peace from her enemies	
Ezekiel 39	Making God's glory known among the nations	
Ezekiel 40	 God's glory dwelling among Israel	
Ezekiel 48		

- These chapters have a pairing to help us see how the Lord is progressively restoring what the people have lost
 - The first two chapters (33-34) describe restoring leadership according to the Davidic Covenant
 - The next two chapters (35-36) deal with the land promise
 - Then chapters 37-38 show God establishing the people in peace in their land
 - Chapter 39 shows how the Lord makes His glory known among the nations
 - And Chapters 40 and beyond describe how God's glory dwells in Israel
- This week we're looking at the the land restoration, beginning with the Lord ending any competing claim to the land in Chapter 35
 - Now at first glance this chapter will sound a lot like a continuation of the judgments against Israel's enemies
 - And it is a judgment against one particular enemy, Edom
 - But the reason the Lord has this prophecy appearing here in the narrative is because it directly relates to the issue of the land

Ezek. 35:1 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

Ezek. 35:2 "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it

Ezek. 35:3 and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,

"Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir,
And I will stretch out My hand against you
And make you a desolation and a waste.

Ezek. 35:4 "I will lay waste your cities

And you will become a desolation.

Then you will know that I am the LORD.

Ezek. 35:5 "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. 35:6 therefore as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you.

- In this chapter the Lord is denying any competing claims to the land of Israel in the days of the Kingdom
 - Historically, Israel has been in conflict with all its neighbors for its land
 - But in the Kingdom, Israel will have no enemies and the land will be theirs exclusively
 - And to illustrate that coming blessing, the Lord first judges the nation with the longest history of conflict over Israel's birthright
 - Edom was the nation occupying present-day Southern Jordan
 - The people of Edom descended from Esau, who was Jacob's twin brother
 - Esau was the older son, being born first, and as such he had the initial birthright claim in Isaac's family
 - Earlier, the Lord had given Abraham and Isaac a promise of a great inheritance in the land of Canaan
 - That promise wouldn't be fulfilled in Abraham's day or even Isaac's day
 - It would be fulfilled in a future day after the resurrection
 - So in the meantime, the promise itself was passed down as a birthright, and those holding the birthright received the promise
 - As you probably know, Esau being first born to Isaac initially held that birthright
 - But in the course of time, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew
 - That birthright included the promise that Esau and his descendants would receive the land of Canaan as an inheritance
- So why would Esau sell something so valuable for so little?
 - The only reasonable answer is Esau didn't understand its value
 - Genesis tells us this:

[Gen. 25:31](#) But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.”

[Gen. 25:32](#) Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?”

[Gen. 25:33](#) And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

[Gen. 25:34](#) Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

- Jacob suggests that Esau sell his birthright for the stew
 - Esau readily agrees to the ridiculous exchange
 - He says, what use is a birthright to a dying man
- Those statements tell us everything about why he was willing to sell
 - First, he says he was about to die from lack of lunch – which was hyperbole
 - Esau was being flippant and cavalier about an unmatched, solemn, eternal blessing from God
- Even more telling, Esau suggested selling the birthright was reasonable because he couldn’t benefit from his birthright if he died of hunger
 - He’s exactly wrong...the birthright of Abraham & Isaac could *only* be fulfilled in a future day following death and resurrection
 - So in reality, death didn’t put an end to God’s birthright...Esau had to die to experience his birthright
- Therefore, by his own words we know Esau didn’t have faith in the promises of God contained in that birthright
 - He only saw it in earthly terms, as like any other inheritance
 - So Jacob used his ignorance against him and obtained the birthright through a legitimate, if one-sided, agreement

[Heb. 12:15](#) See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

[Heb. 12:16](#) that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

[Heb. 12:17](#) For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

- Esau later realized that there was real value to this birthright, but by then the die was cast and he couldn't change the deal
 - So he could not inherit the blessing at Isaac's death since it had been bought by his brother
 - Yet ever since, Esau has resented Jacob and viewed his loss of a birthright as a trick or fraud
 - Esau and his descendants have forever claimed that they have right to that land, not Jacob
- So in Chapter 35, the Lord says He will put those competing claims to rest once and for all
 - In v.2 the Lord tells Ezekiel to set his face against Mt Seir
 - Mt Seir was the range of mountains in Edom
 - So this is an oracle against Edom
 - But earlier in this book we saw another oracle for Edom
 - Notice this time it's against a feature of the land, not the nation, per se
 - That's because this time the emphasis is on land
 - In other words, because Edom didn't respect God's grant of land to Israel, they will forfeit their own land too
 - In v.3 the Lord says He will make the land desolate
 - And in v.4, He says He will devastate the cities so they might know He is the Lord
 - All this is coming to Edom because they have had an everlasting enmity against Israel
 - Esau's hatred for Jacob lasted their entire lifetime, pausing only for the time they came together to bury Isaac
 - And that hatred continued into later generations even until the time of the Babylonian captivity

- The people of Edom assisted Babylon in attacking Israel and rounding up the refugees
- In short, they didn't hate bloodshed of their closest relatives, so the Lord says they will know bloodshed

[Ezek. 35:7](#) "I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation and I will cut off from it the one who passes through and returns.

[Ezek. 35:8](#) "I will fill its mountains with its slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain by the sword will fall.

[Ezek. 35:9](#) "I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

[Ezek. 35:10](#) "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two lands will be mine, and we will possess them,' although the LORD was there,

[Ezek. 35:11](#) therefore as I live," declares the Lord GOD, "I will deal with you according to your anger and according to your envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; so I will make Myself known among them when I judge you.

[Ezek. 35:12](#) "Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all your revilings which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel saying, 'They are laid desolate; they are given to us for food.'

[Ezek. 35:13](#) "And you have spoken arrogantly against Me and have multiplied your words against Me; I have heard it."

[Ezek. 35:14](#) 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "As all the earth rejoices, I will make you a desolation.

[Ezek. 35:15](#) "As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

- As we've seen in the prior oracle, the land of Edom would lay desolate for the time of the Kingdom
 - Ironically, Esau was crying over the loss of Israel's land when he should have been worried about his own family's land
 - The land would be an eternal desolation
 - And this situation comes to pass because they sought to have both their own land and Israel's land
 - Edom's attitude toward Israel wasn't unique, but they were the first tracing back to Esau

- And in that way Edom becomes the poster child for Israel's lack of security in their land
- Enemies like Edom constantly sought to take the land away though Israel had received it from God
- This continues today, of course, as Israel's Arab neighbors still seek to displace Israel and take her land
- So Edom's envy and anger becomes opportunity for the Lord to judge the nation and demonstrate that His decrees cannot be challenged
 - Receiving this prophecy in Ezekiel's day would have sounded particularly encouraging if a bit hard to believe
 - Because at this moment the nation of Edom was saying that the land of Israel was desolate, so now they could take it
 - So in v.12 the nation was saying that Israel was theirs for the taking as spoil
- But they were arrogant and they have multiplied their words against God, and He hears them
 - To multiply their words means that all that previous generations had said and done against Israel were not being compounded
 - This generation was taking advantage of Israel when they were down at God's hand
 - And therefore the Lord would deal with them according to their own words
- The Lord sums it up in v.15, saying they rejoiced over seeing Israel's inheritance made desolate
 - So the Lord will do the same to them
 - Notice the Lord uses the term inheritance in that verse just to emphasize that this land belonged to Israel
 - Regardless of whether Israel was in her land or outside the land, it was Israel's inheritance
 - So Chapter 35 makes clear that the land belongs to Israel, not her enemies

- And that ownership doesn't change regardless of whether Israel is occupying it in a given day
- In Ezekiel's day, Israel was outside her land, and yet Israel's prophet was declaring that the land was Israel's inheritance
- Later we see Israel scattered following other invasions, yet this statement of the Lord still stands
 - The people of Israel have an inheritance in the land regardless of whether the people of God are living there or not
 - But of course, the promises of God indicate that eventually the people of God will have that land
 - Which leads us to Chapter 36...

Ezek. 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.

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

Ezek. 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.'""

Ezek. 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,

Ezek. 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."

- Once again, the Lord speaks to the land itself, which indicates that the land is the point in this chapter
 - And the Lord opens by explaining to Israel's land why it would be left desolate and vulnerable to Israel's enemies
 - The Lord acknowledges what the enemies of Israel have been thinking, that the land was not available to them

- But the Lord tells Ezekiel to explain that the land was left desolate for good reason
- The reason was Israel's disobedience, of course, but the point was it wasn't a sign that Israel neighbors should rejoice or expect to receive the land
 - Despite the Lord's actions against His people, they were still going to receive that land in a day to come
 - In vs.4-5 the Lord says in jealousy He took offense to their gleeful possession of His Land which He has reserved for Israel
- This would have been a source of great encouragement to Israel
 - Hearing the Lord declare that the land was His and that He had given it to Israel
 - Sitting in exile they could be sure that nothing had changed in the big picture
 - The land would not be lost forever...only for a time

Ezek. 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.'

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

Ezek. 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.

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

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.'

[Ezek. 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,"

[Ezek. 36:14](#) therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,' declares the Lord GOD.

[Ezek. 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."

- To the land the Lord declares that He will avenge the insults of the nations against Israel
 - In effect, every time a nation has spoken an insult against Israel or made a claim on the land, it's only reinforced the Lord's determination
 - The Lord will defeat those lies and presumptuous claims by making Israel's claim to the land that much more sure
 - In v.7 He says that He swore that the nations around will endure their own insults
 - What Israel's enemies wished upon God's people the Lord will use against them so that they suffer the same
 - Not only will Edom and other enemies be judged, but God's faithfulness to His promises will come to pass all the more certainly
 - In v.9 the Lord says the land will be cultivated and sown, meaning it will once again blossom to provide for the people of God
 - And it will need to blossom, because the land will be filled again with all the house of Israel
 - In v.11 the Lord says He will multiply the people and they will increase in the land so that the land will be inhabited as before
 - But this time the land will treat Israel better than before, which is a clear reference to the Kingdom life
 - Life in the Kingdom, while in the land, will be entirely different for Israel than it was when Israel occupied it originally
 - In a sense, we can say that Israel occupied the Promised Land in the same way Abraham did in his day

- It was a temporary and partial fulfillment of the promises God gave
- Only in the Kingdom will the fullness of the land be delivered to Israel
- Notice in v.12 the Lord says the people of Israel – God’s people – will walk on and possess the land
 - It will be a complete possession and it will be their inheritance
 - And never again will the land be bereaved of its children
 - The reference to children here isn’t a reference to human children
 - It’s spoken metaphorically where the Land is the parent and the people of Israel are the children
 - You can see that clearly in v.13 as the Lord repeats what Israel has been saying about the land
 - The people say the land of Israel devours its children
 - Israel’s enemies saw Israel’s history of attack and defeat, experiencing displacements and calamities of various kinds
 - Of course, those events are the direct result of their sin against the Lord
 - Nevertheless, the Lord says the land will no longer devour its people
 - Moreover, the people won’t hear the insults of neighbors or suffer disgrace any longer
 - And the land will no longer cause the people to stumble
 - Again, another reference to the amazing difference of life in the Kingdom
- Let’s take a look at some of those changes written elsewhere

[Is. 65:17](#) “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;

And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

[Is. 65:18](#) “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;

For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing

And her people for gladness.

[Is. 65:19](#) "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people;

And there will no longer be heard in her
The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

[Is. 65:20](#) "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days,

Or an old man who does not live out his days;
For the youth will die at the age of one hundred
And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred
Will be thought accursed.

[Is. 65:21](#) "They will build houses and inhabit them;

They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

[Is. 65:22](#) "They will not build and another inhabit,

They will not plant and another eat;
For as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people,
And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands.

[Is. 65:23](#) "They will not labor in vain,

Or bear children for calamity;
For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD,
And their descendants with them.

[Is. 65:24](#) "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

[Is. 65:25](#) "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

- Isaiah speaks of a "new heavens and earth" which at first draws our mind to Revelation 21 where John uses a similar phrase
 - But the details and context of Revelation 21 vs. Isaiah 65 are very different
 - Which tells us that they were talking about different times
 - John was describing what happens after the 1,000 Kingdom comes to an end
 - While Isaiah was describing life for Israel during that 1,000 period
 - So why does Isaiah use the phrase new heavens and earth?

- Because it will be new in several ways
- First, the heavens and earth were greatly damaged by the events of the Tribulation
- Stars fell, sun and moon were changed, all the land and seas of the earth were destroyed
- So these things (heaven and earth) must be made new
- But they are still the same universe we see now, whereas John describes an entirely different kind of world to follow this one
- Secondly, even though the Kingdom is on this earth, it's still a very new, different experience
 - And we can see some of those differences here
 - Note in v.17 that Isaiah says that the former things will not be remembered
 - He means that the pattern of life for Israel will have changed completely
 - What Israel knew before will no longer be their reality
 - Just as Ezekiel said that the land would no longer treat Israel as it once did
- In v.18, we hear the the land would be made for Israel's rejoicing now
 - The people would exist in the land in perpetual gladness
 - What a contrast from Israel's typical experience
 - The Lord too would be glad in His people
 - And there would no longer be any sound of Israel crying or weeping
 - Can you contemplate how different that kind of life will be?
 - Now think about how far we are from that reality most days today
 - And in that difference you can see the effect of sin on the quality of life

- God created us to know the experience of the Kingdom, which mirrors the experience of Eden
- And today our lives are so defined by sin that we literally can't imagine what life would be like without it
- Yet that's what's coming for Israel and for us in a Kingdom soon to appear
 - In v.20 we're told that infants won't die and there won't be death from old age
 - Instead, youth will die at age 100 because they are thought accursed
 - In other words, death will be limited to a single age, 100, and only for those who are accursed for unbelief (*see Revelation Lesson 20C*)
- The everyday life of the Kingdom will still be recognizable to us
 - People will build houses and plant fields and eat the produce
 - No one will worry about building or planting only to have it taken away by someone else
- In other words, Israel will experience perfect security in their land
 - That's the promise Ezekiel has been giving to God's people: they will finally have their land unchallenged
 - They will finally get the benefits of living in that land without worry that someone will take that blessing from them
- Notice again that people will live out their days in the kingdom like the lifetime of a tree
 - They live so long they wear out the work of their hands (v.22)
 - Your houses and possessions won't outlast you and be handed down to another
 - When you live forever, you outlast your things and not because they are made cheaply
- More over, no one will worry about reproducing in vain or giving birth only to see the death of your children on some future day

- Simply put, there is no reproducing since we are all the offspring of the Lord at that point
 - For the glorified who live in the Kingdom, all the producing has been done
 - And now we need not worry about that process much less the possibility that it might result in another loss
 - All loss has been eliminated and all that remains is enjoying what God has created
- We live in a place and time when life is fully, completely and unendingly satisfying
 - And at the end of v.23, the Lord assures Israel that all her descendants would be with her too
 - Perhaps this is one of the greatest comforts of the Kingdom age to come
 - All those who share our faith will be there on Day 1, which means we lack nothing and no one
- Finally, notice our spiritual state of mind: in v.24 Isaiah says that even as we call out to Christ, He will hear us and answer us instantly
 - Even as we're still speaking to Him, we get our response
 - Though Christ won't be physically with us wherever we are on the earth, nevertheless in our glorified state we communicate freely
 - He hears us instantly, responds immediately and we understand Him perfectly
 - This will be how the Lord works through His government communicating His rule to those who carry it out worldwide
- And not only will the people be fundamentally different in the Kingdom, so will nature itself
 - The Lord will restore the world back to a state similar to what existed during the time of Adam and Woman in the Garden
 - Before sin entered the world, there was no cause for death
 - So man didn't die nor did animals

- Which means that animals weren't eating other animals in predator-prey relationships
- All animals ate vegetation, like Man himself
- But after the Fall sin entered, and with sin came death, Paul tells us in Romans
 - And it wasn't long after that, that God permitted animals and man to eat meat
 - But in the Kingdom to come, the Lord removes the predator-prey relationships that define life in nature today
- Instead, in v.25 Isaiah says that the wolf and lamb will graze together
 - Obviously, wolves don't normally eat grass
 - And if a lamb was within sight of wolf, both would be running, one after the other
 - Instead, they will simply graze together with no regard for the other
 - Predator-prey relationships will end, which means animals don't kill each other or us
- Notice at the end of that verse we're told that these animals will do no harm in all God's mountain
 - That refers to the entirety of God's Kingdom
 - Elsewhere in Isaiah we hear something similar

Is. 11:6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
 And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,
 And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
 And a little boy will lead them.

Is. 11:7 Also the cow and the bear will graze,
 Their young will lie down together,
 And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

Is. 11:8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,
 And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

Is. 11:9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.

- Once again, Isaiah says that animals will no longer fear nor attack one another
- And even a young child could play with a deadly cobra without concern in the Kingdom
- The entire earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
- So that's just some of what we know is coming for Israel and for us in the Kingdom
 - And as reassuring as that may have been for Israel, it was hard for them to understand why God would promise them so much
 - And yet here they were sitting in exile
 - So the Lord felt obligated to explain again that they are in exile for good reasons

[Ezek. 36:16](#) Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.'

[Ezek. 36:21](#) "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

- So as background, the Lord explains that the reason Israel left the land was their offenses against God
 - The Lord is connecting several important cause-and-effect dots here

- Israel's presence in the land could not continue because security and prosperity gave a sinful Israel opportunity to magnify their sin
- They were living in the land and it was while they were in the land that they began to engage in so much sin
 - They put idols throughout the land and so they defiled it
 - The Lord had called them and sanctified them, and so when they worshipped idols, it brought shame to the name of the Lord
- So the Lord knocked them outside the land
 - But while they were outside the land, the Lord suffered even greater indignity among the nations
 - In v.20 the Lord says the nations witnessed His banishing Israel and ridiculed the Lord for not protecting His people
 - Also, Israel profaned the Lord as well by continuing to sin while in exile
- So those dots all lead to an unavoidable dilemma – if Israel being in the land contributed to their opportunity to sin...
 - And if sinning in the land caused the Lord to disperse them from the land, then how can the Lord restore them into the land in the future?
 - Won't that simply repeat the cycle over again?
 - Won't Israel return to the land, begin sinning again, and then be sent out again?
 - What will prevent that?
 - The Lord says in v.21 that because He has concern for His holy name, He will act to stop this cycle once and for all

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 36:24](#) “For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.

[Ezek. 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.

- This passage has obvious parallels to Jeremiah 31, where we commonly go to find the promise of the New Covenant
 - But God spoke similar things through Jeremiah’s contemporary here
 - This turn of events is not deserved on Israel’s part
 - Rather, the Lord has determined to act to preserve Israel for His name’s sake
 - The Lord is taking action to stop the cycle of Israel profaning the name of the Lord
 - Because the Lord had placed His name in the people of God
 - The word Israel includes a reference to God (*el*)
 - Moreover, He had associated Himself with this people publicly, and the world knew that Jehovah was the God of Israel
 - So the Lord says He is acting to make sure that Israel represented Him properly
 - As someone looked at Israel, they could see the character of God
 - Whereas in the past, people looked at Israel and saw the opposite of God’s character
 - And in that way God’s name was profaned
- Obviously, Christians share the same obligation, even if we don’t necessarily share the same fate as Israel
 - We must recognize that what we say and do is a reflection on Christ

- And if we act as Israel did, profaning the name of the Lord, the Bible says the Lord may act to correct our behavior
- That acting vindicates Him in the eyes of the world, because to fail to act would make it appear as if the Lord is content with sin
- And that does damage to His reputation
- So He doesn't condemn a believer nor do we risk the promise we have of eternal life in Christ
 - No, it's because we have eternal life in Jesus and have become His child by faith that we would know God's discipline
 - And therefore He acts to make clear we are not living in keeping with His character and in that way His name is vindicated
- But to the larger question...how does the Lord stop the bad pattern, the Lord explains beginning in v.24
 - He says the process begins with a great regathering, which we discussed last time
 - There is a regathering prior to Tribulation, and that regathering of Israel is underway now
 - And at the conclusion of the Tribulation, a second and permanent regathering will take place in preparation for the Kingdom
 - That's the regathering in view here
- Immediately after that regathering, the Lord will move to change the very nature of His people
 - He will cleanse them, spiritually speaking, so that they will no longer desire to engage in idolatry or sin of any kind
 - All Israel will be cleansed in this way, He says
 - This change happens because the nation will possess a new heart and new spirit
 - Their new heart will not be a heart of stone but of flesh
 - A heart of flesh refers to a heart that is responsive to God; soft, obedient

- While a heart of stone is the hard heart of unbelief and rebellion
- So the Lord is pouring out His Spirit on Israel, like water, to bring about this national spiritual rebirth
 - Obviously, this process is no different than what we've all experienced personally
 - Except this is a promise of national regeneration
 - An entire nation of people will receive this mercy, the Lord says
- The effect of this spiritual revival will be a nation that will follow the Lord's statutes and commandments
 - We're talking about perfect, sinless, living by an entire nation of people
 - The only way something like this could happen is if the people were glorified, sinless
 - And that's what the Lord is promising here, of course
 - The Israel that exists in the Kingdom will be sinless and glorified, just as we will be as well
- Those believers among Israel (the remnant) who die prior to the Kingdom will enter just as any Church believer enters
 - They will have been resurrected and received their new bodies before the start of the Kingdom
 - And so they simply walk into the Kingdom already having been brought to this point of perfect obedience
 - Daniel tells us about that resurrection in Chapter 12:

Dan. 12:1 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Dan. 12:2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Dan. 12:3 "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

- The Old Testament saints are resurrected at the end of Tribulation (“at that time”)
 - They are those who slept in the ground
 - The saints are raised to everlasting life in the Kingdom, shining in their righteousness
- So why does the Lord need to make this promise in Ezekiel? Why pour out His Spirit on Israel in this way if all Old Testament saints are raised perfect?
 - Because there is another group of Jews who are included in the Kingdom but who haven’t died yet at the start of the Kingdom
 - These are the “sheep” of Matthew 25 that Christ separates from the goats
 - They are Jewish men and women who live through the Tribulation and are rescued by Christ’s Second Coming
- As Christ returns, they are now invited into the Kingdom

[Matt. 25:31](#) “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

[Matt. 25:32](#) “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;

[Matt. 25:33](#) and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

[Matt. 25:34](#) “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

- And Paul says that all those who are Jewish and alive at Christ’s return will be included in this national salvation

[Rom. 11:25](#) For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

[Rom. 11:26](#) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

[Rom. 11:27](#) “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,

WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

- All Israel will be saved, Paul says
 - And it's this national conversion of all Jews at the end of Tribulation at Christ's Second coming that Ezekiel is describing
 - The Lord says He will pour out a cleansing water, His Spirit, to bring a national conversion
 - And following that national conversion He glorifies all Israel to ensure perfect obedience in the land
- And in that way He ensures they can never sin against Him again and be removed from their land again
 - Nor will they suffer under curses or discipline again

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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!"

Ezek. 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.

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

Ezek. 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.'

Ezek. 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."

Ezek. 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.

Ezek. 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."""

- The sum effect will be a people dwelling securely in the land, without fear of reprisals or attack – and all of it will glorify the Lord
 - The Lord acts in these ways for His own name's sake, so that all the world will declare that God is a covenant-keeping God
 - And everyone will marvel at how much better Israel has it now
 - And how much the Lord has done to restore their fortunes
 - And Israel will learn something too
 - They will see the before-and-after and recognize how much they sinned against the Lord
 - And He says they will loathe themselves for all they did to injure the God Who called them and saved them
 - That's the Lord's promise to provide Israel the land
 - Israel will return, they will have the land, and no one else will ever take it back
 - Israel will be at peace with their neighbors and with the Lord
 - And everyone on earth will know that the God of Israel is Lord