



Ezekiel - Lesson 16B

Chapter 16:35-63

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- Excuses, excuses...we all hate hearing them but we love to rely on them
 - Israel certainly relied on excuses, and we're in the middle of studying them
 - During the early years Israel spent in exile as captives in Babylon, they lived in self-denial
 - They told themselves that they need not worry that the Lord's judgment was coming for them
 - When Ezekiel, their prophet in Babylon, told them that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people barred from the land, they scoffed
 - They offered excuses for why Ezekiel's prophecies weren't to be trusted and therefore why they need not repent
 - Altogether they offered eight excuses, and we're in the middle of studying the Lord's response to each one
 - And as we look at one, we're also considering how we too can justify our own disobedience at times using similar excuses
 - We're currently studying Excuse #5 which began in Chapter 15 and continues into Chapter 16
 - The excuses themselves are often missing from the text, so we have to understand them by what the Lord says in response
 - In this case, we've learned that Israel's fifth excuse declared that Israel wasn't in jeopardy of judgment because the covenant protected them
 - God couldn't wipe Jerusalem off the map or bar the people from the land for hundreds of years because that would violate His promises to the nation
- The Lord's first response, found in Chapter 15, simply pointed the exiles to the reality of their circumstances in Babylon
 - Using an allegory, the Lord emphasized Israel was a weak nation twice-defeated by powerful enemies and sitting in exile
 - So their present circumstances were proof that the covenant God made with Israel didn't preclude such calamities
 - So they had no reason to think that couldn't happen again as Ezekiel was promising
 - Then in the first part of Chapter 16, Ezekiel used a second allegory to illustrate why the covenant itself couldn't protect Israel from retribution
 - The Lord compared His relationship to Israel to a husband's relationship to a wife
 - In the allegory, the wife was a poor abandoned child before the Lord took pity on her
 - In time, she grew up to marrying age and then the Lord made her His wife
 - He cared for her lovingly and graciously
 - But rather than remain faithful and grateful, Israel turned on her Husband
 - She rented herself out as a prostitute to passers-by
 - And instead of being paid, the wife took the beautiful things she received from her husband and offered them to her clients

- In literal terms, Ezekiel was describing Israel's choice to pursue idolatry instead of remaining faithful to the Lord
- So Israel played the harlot with the gods of her enemies, and as a result Israel has provoked her Husband to respond with jealousy and wrath
 - This is the key point the Lord is making...that rather than preventing disaster, the Old Covenant actually called for Israel to suffer these things
 - It was the marriage covenant that prompted the husband's strong reaction against His wife
 - In other words, the covenant relationship didn't tie the husband's hands
 - On the contrary, it was the covenant that enabled and necessitated the husband's response
 - Likewise, it was Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord that prompted His strong reaction against His people
 - Their covenant obligated Israel to keep the Law and worship the Lord God only
 - And it also obligated the Lord to judge Israel should she chase after foreign gods
 - The Law even warned Israel in advance that the Lord was a jealous God, like a jealous husband
 - So when the nation played the harlot and worshipped false gods, they should know that the covenant was no protection
 - Instead, they should imagine themselves like a cheating wife who has been discovered by her jealous husband
 - Will a husband say to himself, "I can't do anything about the situation, because after all, she's my wife."
 - Or will he say, "I must do something to correct my wife's behavior and bring her back to me, *because* she's my wife."
 - That's what the Lord was saying to Israel in this allegory
- So let's complete Chapter 16, as the Lord explains how in jealousy and wrath He will respond to Israel's sin as a husband would to his wife

Ezek. 16:35 Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD.

Ezek. 16:36 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols,

Ezek. 16:37 therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness.

Ezek. 16:38 "Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy.

Ezek. 16:39 "I will also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear

down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare.

Ezek. 16:40 “They will incite a crowd against you and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.

Ezek. 16:41 “They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.

Ezek. 16:42 “So I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you, and I will be pacified and angry no more.

Ezek. 16:43 “Because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged Me by all these things, behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head,” declares the Lord GOD, “so that you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your other abominations.

- The Lord’s graphic language in the allegory continues on, now depicting a jealous husband taking corrective action against his unfaithful wife
 - And as harsh as this language sounds to us, husbands in that day would have understood and even sympathized with what the Lord is saying
 - Because as husbands they would have done the same thing
 - This wife’s behavior is outrageous and almost without equal
 - So in the allegory, her husband has no recourse except to let her experience the full weight of her mistakes
 - And so it was for the Lord and Israel
 - Israel committed idolatry and exposed her nakedness (her sins) before her enemies
 - She shamed the name of the Lord, and even went so far as to murder her children
 - So the Lord says He will bring her suiters back against Israel
 - They will further humiliate Israel, exposing her nakedness again
 - There is a play on words here in Hebrew, because the words naked and exile are virtually the same
 - Because Israel exposed herself to her enemies in idolatry, therefore the Lord will exile Israel into her enemies’ lands
 - In v.38, the Lord says He’s treating Israel the way a harlot or idolator or murderer would be judged under the Law
 - In the Law, these crimes were punishable by death
 - An adulterer or murderer was stoned to death while one who practiced idolatry was killed by the sword
 - So here’s another irony...Israel wasn’t willing to abide by the covenant of Law
 - Nevertheless, the Lord says He *will* remain faithful to His covenant by applying its penalties against Israel
- Literally speaking, the Lord’s punishments against Israel came in the form of an army

devastating the city, temple and people who remained in it

- Of course, many would be killed in the fight and the rest would be taken in captivity
 - Notice in v.39 the Lord says Israel will be delivered into the hands of her “lovers,” referring to the pagan nations around her
 - As promised, the Babylonian army burned houses, tore down shrines, took away possessions, and left the people and city bare
- The attack also resulted in the nation losing free access to her land and temple for hundreds of years, as Ezekiel predicted back in Chapter 4
 - Notice in vs.40-41 the Lord warns that Babylon would cut Israel to pieces, referring to their scattering abroad
 - But then notice how v.41 ends, with God promising that this harsh judgment will result in Israel ceasing to play the harlot
- Because of her experience in Babylon, Israel will no longer pay her lovers, meaning Israel will cease in making sacrifices to idols
 - As I mentioned last week, the history of Israel demonstrates that their time in Babylon cured them of any desire for idolatry
 - After they returned, they remained faithful to Yahweh thereafter
 - And as a result of their repentance, in v.42 the Lord says His fury against Israel would depart and He would be pacified
 - Finally in v.43, the Lord summarizes what’s coming and why...the nation will see the consequences of their sins come down on their heads
- Now, take a second look at v.41, where the Lord says that many women would witness Israel’s downfall
 - That refers to the other idolators surrounding Israel, the ungodly cultures that compromised Israel’s walk when Israel turned to them instead of to the Lord
 - Now the Lord begins to elaborate what He meant by Israel being judged in the sight of these other “women”

Ezek. 16:44 “Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb concerning you, saying, ‘Like mother, like daughter.’”

Ezek. 16:45 “You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children. You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

Ezek. 16:46 “Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.

Ezek. 16:47 “Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they.

Ezek. 16:48 “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done.

Ezek. 16:49 “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.

Ezek. 16:50 “Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.

Ezek. 16:51 “Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they. Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed.

Ezek. 16:52 “Also bear your disgrace in that you have made judgment favorable for your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. Yes, be also ashamed and bear your disgrace, in that you made your sisters appear righteous.

- So you may remember from last lesson how the Lord described Israel as the “love child” of an Amorite father and Hittite mother in v.3
 - In other words, Jerusalem and Israel were not inherently better than the pagan Canaanites that lived in the land before her
 - And now the Lord returns to that comparison saying Israel will become the subject of a proverb: like mother, like daughter
 - The mother and sisters in this allegory are the idolatrous nations around Israel
 - In the course of the passage, we find that the mother was the Hittites, which stands for all Canaanite peoples who occupied the land prior to Joshua
 - And the older sister is Samaria and the younger sister is Sodom
 - Notice they are described as to the left and right of Israel
 - But on the map, they are north and south respectively
 - So in order for them to be on the left and right, one would need to be facing East
 - And the direction East represents sin and ungodliness in the Bible
 - So Israel has set her face toward evil, and in that orientation, she is like Samaria and Sodom in her evil conduct
- But she’s even worse than they are, the Lord says, and He then goes on to makes comparisons between them and Israel
 - Beginning with the city of Sodom, the Lord says the people of Jerusalem acted worse than those of Sodom
 - Now every Bible student knows how bad Sodom was
 - They are immortalized in the Bible for their depraved conduct
 - The New Testament tells us the Lord destroyed the city in such dramatic fashion to make it an example for the ages to come

2Pet. 2:6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who

would live ungodly lives thereafter;

- In vs.49-50 the Lord recaps the sins that brought about Sodom judgment
- We remember the city's gross immoralities of men taking men, but it went further than that
- Namely, the people of Sodom were arrogant because the Lord gave them abundant food and a carefree lifestyle
 - Remember Lot chose to settle in Sodom because he took note of how well-watered it was and prosperous
 - This prosperity made Sodomites haughty, thinking they were wealthy and self-sufficient and could do whatever they wanted
- Remember what we learned last week... first comes God's blessings, which leads to pride
 - And pride causes us to forget our dependence on God, which leads us to act in sin
 - That was Satan's pattern, Adam's pattern and Israel's pattern
 - And now we see it was Sodom's pattern too
- In Sodom's case it eventually drove them to gross sexual immorality
 - Yet somehow Israel acted even worse, the Lord says
 - Israel did most, if not all, that Sodom did too
 - But then they added worse sins like child sacrifice – something Sodom never did
- And then there were the Samaritans, the people in the central Israel mountains with mixed Jewish-Gentile heritage who sought recognition as true Jews
 - Samaritans counterfeited Judaism, but in reality they were pagan worshippers
 - But despite being pagan, the Lord says they acted more reasonably than true Jews, not doing even half of what Israel did
 - Samaritans never allowed prostitution to enter into their temple on Mt. Gerizim
 - They never corrupted their priesthood or went after Canaanite gods on high places
 - And they certainly never engaged in child sacrifice
 - But the true Israel did all those things while they looked down their noses at the Samaritans
 - And Israel acted in these ways despite having the knowledge of the living God and His Law to guide them
 - The Samaritans were actually ashamed of the Jews in the south over these things
 - So the Lord says that Israel actually made these "sisters" appear righteous by comparison
 - As a result, the Lord will show mercy to these enemies in the judgment that befalls Israel
 - Babylon allowed Samaritans to remain in the land even after the invasion

because Samaria was willing to fall in line

- And while Sodom was wiped out, the region around that town continued to be inhabited by Edomites afterward
- So the Lord says He will bring Israel back into the land, but when she returns, her neighbors will still be there waiting
 - And the descendants of the Samaritans and Sodomites will remember how Israel's sins gave rise to the region's calamity

Ezek. 16:53 “Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity,

Ezek. 16:54 in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them.

Ezek. 16:55 “Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.

Ezek. 16:56 “As the name of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride,

Ezek. 16:57 before your wickedness was uncovered, so now you have become the reproach of the daughters of Edom and of all who are around her, of the daughters of the Philistines — those surrounding you who despise you.

Ezek. 16:58 “You have borne the penalty of your lewdness and abominations,” the LORD declares.

- Understanding this section requires some appreciation for the poetic nature of this passage
 - The Lord starts saying nevertheless, meaning, in spite of how bad Israel has been, the Lord will restore His people from captivity one day
 - This is a promise that their captivity will not be the end of the nation
 - But likewise, when Israel returns they will find that Samaria and Sodom will have been restored from captivity too
 - Now that's where this can get confusing, because we know that Sodom and Samaria weren't captured
 - We have to understand the Lord is speaking circumspectly here
 - He's using the word “captivity” to represent judgment in general, so He can draw a connection between Israel and these nations
 - Which is that Israel was judged for her sin, and she will also be restored after a time of judgment outside her land
 - But God also judged Samaria and Sodom for their sins, and they were judged for far lessor sins
 - So to be fair, the Lord says He must give opportunity for the descendants of the Samaritans and Sodomites to be restored too
 - The Samaritans would continue to be neighbors of Israel even after this

chapter of history has been concluded

- And the descendants of the Sodomites, called Edomites, will also be in the land
- He restores these nations because Israel has behaved worse than they did, and it wouldn't be just to exclude them
 - Notice in v.55 He says your sisters will return to their former state as you will to your former state, that is living in the land again
 - In other words, how can the Lord treat Sodom or Samaria worse than Israel when Israel committed worse offenses?
 - That's what He means in v.52 when He states Israel's depravity made judgment favorable for her enemies
- In v.54 He adds that as Israel becomes a consolation to her neighbors, she will feel ashamed at what their behavior produced in the land
 - The point is that Israel will be a source of consolation to Samaria and Edom who will recognize that Israel suffered worse than they did
 - And in seeing the Lord treating Gentile pagan people better than He treats Israel itself will shame Israel even more
 - It's like a wayward wife watching her husband giving greater mercy to a neighbor's wife than for her
- And in one final irony, the Lord says in vs.56-57 that though back in the day Israel wouldn't dare pronounce the name of Sodom...
 - In the future the role will be reversed
 - The people of Edom and those living in the Philistine cities in the region of Samaria won't dare mention the Jews of Jerusalem
 - The Jews will be those who were unmentionable
 - All of this is penalty for her lewdness and abominations
- So in summary, the Lord says:

Ezek. 16:59 For thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

- The Lord says I will deal with you as you've dealt with my covenant
 - The people of Israel despised the covenant God gave them
 - And so the Lord will despise His people for a while
 - At this point, you may be tempted to wonder if God is taking this too far with His people
 - What about forgiveness and mercy and love, you might say?
 - Have you heard someone suggest that the God of the OT is different than the God of the NT?
 - A person reads passages like this one and thinks they see a vengeful, unforgiving God

- But then they turn to the Gospels and hear Jesus say turn the other cheek and love your enemies
 - And they can't reconcile the two perspectives
- Of course God hasn't changed...He's always holy, perfect and good
 - The problem is our perspective
 - Because if you lose the appreciation of the Lord's purposes, you may start to question God's goodness in this situation
 - We overlook obvious differences between how God and mankind operate
 - And we judge God's methods rather than seeking to understand His purposes
- First, we overlook differences between God and man – especially differences between our relationship to people and our relationship to God
 - The Lord has directed us to be forever forgiving and loving, both to our brothers and sisters in the Lord and to our enemies in the world
 - Jesus tells believers to forgive our brothers and sisters 70 x 7 times
 - Which means we show limitless forgiveness because we've been forgiven far more by Christ
 - If you ever suppose you have a right to be unforgiving toward another believer, it's a sign you've begun taking your own forgiveness with Christ for granted
 - Remember, what Jesus said to Simon the self-righteous Pharisee

Luke 7:47 “For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

- Jesus says if you keep in mind how much you've been forgiven, then you can't help but love others unconditionally
- But when you forget how much sin you have and how much the Lord has forgiven you, then that allows your pride to take control
- And that leads to an unloving, unforgiving attitude toward others
- Secondly, we're called to love our enemies for the same reason
 - Christ loved us while we were yet His enemy, Paul says in Romans
 - Had Christ waited for us to love Him first, no one would have ever been saved
 - So again we're called to follow Christ's footsteps, which means forgiving those who hate us or persecute us without condition
 - Because that's how we may win them over for Christ, which is our mission
- So the NT calls for believers to turn the other cheek, because that's what God did for us
 - But is that in contradiction with what we see God doing in Ezekiel and elsewhere in the OT?
 - No, because God is different than human beings
 - God has no need to be forgiven of anything, and He's not bound by the rules He has assigned to His fallen Creation

- Moreover, He's the judge of His Creation, so eventually everything in His Creation must face His judgment

1Pet. 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

- Judgment comes to both the Church and to the world in different ways and different times, but it comes nevertheless
 - We can't turn to God and condemn Him when He chooses to bring righteous judgment
 - That's the right thing for the Judge to do...to do otherwise would be unjust
- So we can't turn God's words against Him claiming that He should turn the other cheek
 - On the contrary, every day the Lord delays that judgment is grace and mercy to the sinner
 - And when the Lord finally brings that judgment, we have no right to question it
- Which brings us to the second point, that we mistakenly judge God's methods instead of considering His purposes
 - God is long-suffering in the face of sin, and yet when He acts He does so with the intent to restore His people, not to destroy them
 - Consider all that Israel has done in violation of their covenant
 - How many centuries should God have waited in the face of such sin?
 - How many years did God stand by while prostitutes operated in the temple?
 - How long did God allow Israel to make gifts and offerings to false gods on high places?
 - How many prophets did God send with warnings only to watch them be killed by mob violence?
 - How many Jewish children were slaughtered on pagan altars?
 - So if you're tempted to question God's love or His willingness to show forgiveness, I ask you, would you have waited as long as God did?
 - I doubt any of us would have been so patient
 - We probably would have cut Israel off a lot sooner than God did
 - Yet a holy just God waited and waited for centuries for the repentance of Israel
 - So how can we accuse God of acting in vengeful or cruel or unforgiving ways when He responds to Israel in the way we read here in Ezekiel?
 - In reality, He's showing even more patience than us, more forgiveness than we would under the same circumstances
 - He's carefully calibrated His response to ensure that in the end He saved Israel from self-destruction

- He's not acting to destroy Israel but cleanse it
- And in His omniscience God determined that this was the best way to cure His people of idolatry
 - And He's not done with His people...

Ezek. 16:60 “Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

Ezek. 16:61 “Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant.

Ezek. 16:62 “Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,

Ezek. 16:63 so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done,” the Lord GOD declares.

- One more time the Lord changes direction and says nevertheless, He wouldn't leave Israel despised and rejected
 - In v.60 the Lord makes a blockbuster revelation through Ezekiel that even in the midst of these difficult times for Israel, the Lord will remember His covenant
 - This covenant is one made with Israel in the days of her youth
 - The youth of Israel refers to the very beginnings of the nation, which is a reference back to the patriarchs
 - So we're talking about the Abrahamic Covenant
 - The Abrahamic Covenant was given to Israel hundreds of years prior to the Old Covenant, and it made sweeping promises

Gen. 12:2 And I will make you a great nation,

And I will bless you,

And make your name great;

And so you shall be a blessing;

Gen. 12:3 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.”

- Notice the terms of this covenant didn't depend on obedience
 - It's a suzerainty covenant, which is a one-way grant of privilege from a greater to a lessor
 - In that covenant the Lord promised Abraham's descendants would have land, blessing and peace unconditionally
 - And that covenant also made provision for other nations to enjoy the same blessings
 - These things will come to pass based solely on the Lord's faithfulness to His word

- Later, the Lord took Abraham’s descendants and gave them another covenant called the Mosaic Covenant
 - That covenant made Abraham’s descendants a nation of people, bound together by a Law and under the authority of God directly
 - The Mosaic Covenant established the rules by which the nation would live while they awaited the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - If Israel lived according to these commandments, the Lord would ensure Israel great blessing on earth
 - And if Israel disobeyed the covenant, the Lord would hold the nation accountable
 - But regardless, the nation would one day see the blessings promised in the Abrahamic Covenant
 - And on an individual basis, each Jew had opportunity to be included in these blessings by faith in God’s promise – just as Abraham had faith in the promise
 - The Old Covenant has no bearing on an individual’s salvation
 - It wasn’t a covenant of personal salvation but of national identity
 - Its terms were directed at the the nation as a whole
 - It was the Old Covenant that married the nation of Israel to the Lord as the wife of Jehovah
 - And that covenant mandated Israel’s obedience to the Law and subjected her to penalties for disobedience
 - And so it was the Old Covenant that necessitated Israel’s exile and all the other judgments that were coming upon her now
- But in v.60 the Lord says that their calamity in Babylon won’t mean the end of the nation because of that other covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant
 - So that no matter how bad things got for Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant – and they certainly could get very bad – the Abrahamic Covenant set a limit
 - The Jewish people would never cease to exist, or else the Lord could not be faithful to His promise to Abraham
 - And the nation couldn’t be outside her land forever for the same reason
 - So the Lord says He will remember His covenant with Abraham made in Israel’s youth
 - And that covenant will ensure that Israel still has a bright future
 - Remember, that covenant had no prerequisites, no preconditions
 - So one day Israel will have the blessings of a Kingdom just as the Lord said they would
 - But how will the Lord move Israel from disobedience to glory in the Kingdom?
 - The answer comes at the end of v.60
 - The Lord says He will establish yet another everlasting covenant with Israel
 - This is not a reference to the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenants, because these

covenants have already been established

- He's talking about a future covenant
- This is the first direct reference in Ezekiel to the New Covenant
 - The Lord promises to give His people a New Covenant, one that unites the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants in a sense
 - The New Covenant fulfills the promises made to Abraham by covering our sins which separate us from God and His Kingdom
 - And at the same time the New Covenant fulfills the commandments of the Mosaic Covenant by assigning us credit for Christ's perfection under the Law
 - So by the New Covenant, the Lord will grant both Israel and Gentiles access to glory
 - But notice in v.61 the Lord also tells Israel that in the day these things are fulfilled, Israel's evil "sisters" will become her daughters
 - As sisters, Samaritans and Sodomites shared in Israel's sins
 - But as daughters, these Gentile nations will share in Israel's glory
 - The Lord is describing how Israel will see these peoples again in the Kingdom, when we will all be children of God by faith
 - Notice at the end of v.61 the Lord says the Gentiles will be with Israel as daughters but not because of your covenant
 - "Your covenant" refers to the covenant given only to Israel, the Mosaic Covenant
 - In other words, the Gentiles will receive what God has promised to Israel, but not because of the Mosaic Covenant
 - Rather, the Gentiles receive the Kingdom because of the New Covenant
- And in that day to come, the people of Israel will be ashamed by memories of their past behavior toward God
 - They will be surprised to see their ungodly neighbors included in God's plan
 - And in that moment, the Lord says Israel will remember that she acted so badly toward God when they should have known better
 - Meanwhile, ungodly Gentiles who lacked the Law of God acted better
 - For now Israel's immediate future was bleak, but their ultimate future was bright because the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable
 - So because of what the Lord promised Abraham, He now affirms to Israel that He will restore them through a New Covenant
 - With one of the effects of that covenant being making all Israel know the Lord
 - This is another important promise for the nation
 - Israel was in the midst of terrible judgment because they couldn't obey the Lord's word and keep the Law
 - Moreover, most of the nation was unbelieving and did not even know the Lord
 - In fact, this remains the state of Israel even today
 - Since unbelief and disobedience cannot please God nor even enter His presence,

how can God ever allow Israel into the Kingdom?

- What will prevent Israel from repeating these same mistakes over and over again?
 - A sinless heart is required to keep the Law and to receive the promises of the Old Covenant
 - And a sinless heart is also required to enter into the Lord's presence in the Kingdom
 - So the answer is they need a new, sinless heart, one that knows the Lord truly and obeys Him always
- And at the end of v.62 the Lord says this New Covenant will solve this problem as well
- It will result in all Israel knowing that I am the Lord, He says
 - In the Kingdom, Israel will be glorified, living in new bodies that cannot sin
 - So in that day when Israel is living in peace in her land with Gentile nations around her, Israel will have a different heart
- But in that day, the nation will remember its past disobedience with regret
- This suggests that in eternity in the Kingdom, we will have some recollection about how we used our time on this earth
 - And by that recollection we may carry a certain degree of appreciation for missed opportunities
 - Let that help motivate you to make the most of every opportunity to serve Christ and love your neighbor
- More importantly, they will never again open their mouths in objection or disobedience
- Instead they will live in peace, forgiven by God for all they have done, He says
 - This is the grace of the New Covenant made in Christ's blood
 - Ezekiel has a lot more to say about this coming covenant
 - And at the same time, his contemporary, Jeremiah, was revealing similar things to the Jews in Jerusalem