

## EZEKIEL 35:1-48:35 | THE RESTORATION

## EZEKIEL 35:1-15 | JUDGMENT ON ENEMIES (SEIR)

- Verses 1-5 - Promised Desolation for Hatred of Israel.
  - Ezekiel was instructed to **set thy face against mount Seir** (Edom) and to **prophesy against it** (v. 2). This is the final (and future) judgment of nations before the re-establishment of Israel.
  - In this judgement, God Himself **will make thee most desolate** (v. 3).
  - The stated reason for the promised desolation is the **perpetual hatred** of Israel, and the shedding of her blood during the time of Israel's judgment (v. 5, **the time that their iniquity had and end**).
- Verses 6-10 - Promised Desolation for Possession of Israel
  - Once again, Seir will become **most desolate**, and **cut off** from travelers (v. 7). The coming judgement will be **perpetual desolations** and the existing cities **shall not return**.
  - The reason for the desolation was Seir's desire to **possess** (v. 10) **these two countries** (v. 10), that is, Israel and Judah.
  - Concerning the words **we will possess it** (v. 10), Bullinger (*The Companion Bible*) comments, "Can this refer to the blessing which Esau sought?"
- Verses 11-15 - Promised Desolation for Rejoicing at Israel's Pain.
  - By judging Seir, God will **make myself known** (v. 11) among the land of Israel and Judah. But this will come after the judgment of Seir, and prior to the yet future judgement Seir will say that the lands of Israel **are given us to consume** (v. 12). This indicates yet another aspect of eschatology which is often left out of prophecy discussions: *the land of Seir (currently Jordan) will seek to possess the land of Israel*.
  - This desolation will come **When the whole earth rejoiceth** (v. 14). When is this time? Could this align with Revelation 11:10?
- Chapter 35: An interpretive issue
  - Is this judgement future (as we contend) or has it been fulfilled?
  - Here are some reasons for a futurist interpretation-
    - The "tattletale" phrase, **thou shalt know that I am the Lord** (v. 4, 9, 12).
    - The judgement comes **in the time that their iniquity had an end** (v. 5). This time of the final punishment for Israel's sins is yet future, thus this prophecy must be as well.
    - The land of Seir has never become **perpetual desolations** (v. 8) with no cities (the ancient/modern city of Madaba, population 60,000 is there today).
    - The words of Verse 12, **they are given us to consume**, this speaks of a time of a *reunified* Israel and Judah, something that didn't happen until 1948, and thus could not have been a past fulfillment.
    - There is nothing in history to match the described destruction of Seir at a time the whole earth was rejoicing (v. 12).

- Now Ezekiel's prophecy moves to **the mountains of Israel** (v. 1). That is, *this is a prophecy concerning the land itself*, as explicitly stated in verse 6.
- The enemy wanted to possess the land and make it desolate (v. 6). They wanted the land to be a **possession unto the residue of the heathen** (v. 3), that is, an international land rather than a Jewish land.
  - Notice that the land is **taken up in the lips of talkers and an infamy of the people** (v. 3). These words perfectly describe the land of Israel through the ages.
- Notice also that the *future* for the land of Israel is even greater derision. Someday the "United Nations" of the one-world order will **have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart** (v. 5).
- Furthermore, notice the emphasis on the land in connection with God's **jealousy** (v. 6).
  - When we recognize the land of Israel as the future *Beulah land* (Is. 62:4), that is, *married land*, then we understand how there is a jealousy when the land becomes **the shame of the heathen** (v. 6).
  - After God's judgment against those that abuse her, the land **shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come** (v. 8).
- The land will be **tilled and sown** (v. 9), and **all the house of Israel, even all of it** (v. 10) will be multiplied. Note the emphasis on the entire **house**, not the divided house.
- Is this reference to the restoration of Israel fulfilled in the Zionist movement (1898-present)? While it is almost universally taught as so among dispensationalists (of whom I belong), such an interpretation requires two things, both largely insurmountable:
  - That the desolation of Seir be either interpreted from a preterist point of view, for it comes *prior to* the restoration of the land.
  - That God is fulfilling prophecy during the mystery time-period (a premise acceptable to most dispensationalists but not to "right division" dispensationalists).
- Certainly there has been a wonderful and beneficial return of the Jews to their homeland in the Zionist movement. These Jews have built a great nation. They will likely someday be the ones that build the next Temple. However, in the tribulation they will once again be scattered, and the regathering of Ezekiel 36 is about the *future* regathering, not that which took place over the past 125 years.

- Verses 16-20 - Israel's past
  - In days past **when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it** (v. 17).
  - This is likely a reference to the northern Kingdom alone, but the terms are used collectively throughout the book.
  - Because of Israel's sins, God **scattered them among the heathen** (v. 19).

- The very fact that they were dispersed **profaned my holy name** (v. 20) as these Israelites would (rightly) claim to be **the people of the Lord** (v. 20) but could not testify to the Lord's protection, for they had been punished by the Lord.
    - Had they not defiled the land, the Lord's protection would have been upon them and they would not have defiled His name by their diaspora.
- Verses 21-24 - A Promised Return
  - Because the house of Israel had **profaned** the name of the Lord **among the heathen, wither they went, God had pity**. Not for Israel, but for **mine holy name** (v. 21).
  - For God's own name He will return the people to their land.
    - If the current Zionist movement is the fulfillment of this, we must ask whether God's name has been sanctified (v. 23) and whether **the heathen shall know that I am the Lord** (v. 23).
    - The people have certainly been brought back into the land, as promised in verse 24, but is this the fulfillment of the prophecy or shall we look for another?
- Verses 25-29a - The Future Cleansing
  - There is a coming time in which God will bring a great cleansing to Israel. This includes:
    - **sprinkle clean water** on the people of Israel, and it **shall be clean** (v. 25). God will give **a new heart** and **a new spirit** to the Jewish people (v. 26). In that day, the Jewish people will have an infusion of God's spirit (v. 27) and God will **cause** them to obey His **statutes** and **judgments** (v. 27). Most importantly, at this time, **ye shall be my people, and I will be your God** (v. 28). At this time God will save Israel **from all your uncleannesses** (v. 29).
  - These prophecies of cleansing are interpreted as taking place within the church (or the heart of the individual) by amillennialists, and pertain to Israel in the future by most dispensationalists. If these verses are future, as with the majority of dispensationalists, is there any evidence that the previous verses concerning the return are not also future? The strongest evidence that *both* are future is that this cleansing simply has not happened, and the cleansing happens **then** (v. 25). The word **then** is based on a Hebrew conjunction. The purpose of a conjunction is *hook up phrases*. The Hebrew does not contain a *time word* but a *connection word*. When the previous verses happen, **then** these verses will *also* happen.

Coming next week...

---

EZEKIEL 36:29B-38 | RESTORATION OF THE LAND, PART B

EZEKIEL 37:1-28 | RESTORATION OF ISRAEL (SYMBOLIC)