

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part LVI: God's Gracious Vindication Of His Wrongly Profaned Reputation (Ezekiel 36:16-38)

I. Introduction

- A. Though the people of God are to be holy, separate from sin, the presence of sin natures in even God's people always presents the risk of those people misrepresenting their righteous God before the unsaved so that the lost think poorly of the Lord, and His personal reputation is damaged in the eyes of the unsaved.
- B. That is an intolerable situation to the Lord, for He desires every lost person to know the truth about Himself.
- C. Thus, God will graciously vindicate His reputation, a truth taught in Ezekiel 36:16-38 for our insight:

II. God's Gracious Vindication Of His Wrongly Profaned Reputation, Ezekiel 36:16-38.

- A. The Lord complained to Ezekiel that Israel had profaned His reputation before the Gentiles, Ezekiel 36:16-21:
 - 1. God told Ezekiel that when Israel lived in her own land, she defiled it by had acts of sin, Ezek. 36:16-17a.
 - 2. Israel's sins in God's view was like the ceremonial uncleanness of menstrual impurity, Ezekiel 36:17b.
 - 3. Accordingly, the Lord had poured out His wrath on His people for their murder of the innocent and for their worship of pagan idols whereby they had defiled the Promised Land, Ezekiel 36:18.
 - 4. God then scattered Israel among the Gentile nations (Ezekiel 36:19), but when they were scattered, they profaned the reputation of God so that the Gentiles said, "These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of His land," Ezekiel 36:20 ESV. The Gentiles thus implied that the bad behavior of Israel's people "conveyed the impression that their God was no different from the gods of the heathen," so the Gentiles spoke sarcastically about Israel's God! (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Ezekiel 36:17-20)
 - 5. The Lord noted this terrible state of affairs, and had concern for His reputation which the people of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they had been scattered, Ezekiel 36:21.
- B. God thus promised to vindicate His reputation by graciously purifying and blessing Israel, Ezekiel 36:22-38:
 - 1. The Lord clarified that it was not for Israel's sake that He would act in vindicating His reputation, but for the sake of His reputation that He was about to reverse the poor view the Gentiles had of Him, Ez. 36:22.
 - 2. God would graciously vindicate Himself before the Gentiles *through* His once wicked people, Ez. 36:23.
 - 3. That vindication would involve a transformation of the people of Israel by God's grace, Ezekiel 36:24-29a:
 - a. The Lord would gather Israel to her land from the lands to where she was scattered, Ezekiel 36:24.
 - b. God would then sprinkle clean water on Israel, cleansing her from all her uncleanness and from all of her idols, Ezekiel 36:25. This reference to Jewish ritual cleansing actually refers to the regeneration of the Holy Spirit figuratively and literally mentioned by Jesus in John 3:5 and by Paul in Titus 3:5!
 - c. At that regeneration, God would put a new heart and a new spirit within His people Israel, removing the heart of stone from their flesh and giving them a heart of flesh, one that was responsive to God, a reference to the new birth mentioned by Jesus in John 3:3 and by the Apostle John in John 1:13; Ezekiel 36:26.
 - d. God would also put His own Holy Spirit in His people and cause them to walk in His statutes and heed His rules so that they would be God's people and He would be their God, Ezek. 36:27-29a with John 3:3, 5; Titus 3:5. [This indwelling of the Holy Spirit we believers in the Church enjoy (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9b), and saved Israel will experience this indwelling in Christ's Kingdom, cf. Joel 2:28-32!]
 - 4. God would then pour out material blessings on saved Israel in the Messianic Kingdom, Ezekiel 36:29b-38:
 - a. The Promised Land would produce abundant grain harvests in place of famine, Ezekiel 36:29b.
 - b. The increase of fruit trees and field crops would be great, forever ending famine in the land, Ez. 36:30.
 - c. Israel's people would recall their former sins and loathe themselves over them, and God added that their regeneration would occur not because Israel deserved it, but for the sake of God's reputation, v. 31-32.
 - d. Israel's cities would then be inhabited, her waste places rebuilt, her desolate places tilled as farmland so that the Gentile nations would marvel at God's goodness and restorative grace to Israel, Ezekiel 36:33-36.
 - e. God would let Israel ask Him to multiply her people, and God would graciously, abundantly multiply even His once wicked people so that Israel would know that He was the Lord, Ezekiel 36:37-38.

Lesson: *Though Israel by her sins had profaned the name of God before the Gentiles, God in great grace would save, purify and then bless Israel, causing the Gentile nations to marvel at God's goodness and grace to her.*

Application: *May we marvel at God's grace to us in the new birth like it will be applied to the future saved Israel!*