Ezekiel 36

A New Heart:
For My Holy Name's Sake

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Israel gave God's name a black eye among the nations, and God's answer was not to give up on them but to change them from the inside. He washes them, gives them a new heart, puts His own Spirit in them, and rebuilds the ruins until they look like Eden. He does it for His name — which is the only reason a man like me has any hope.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 36 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

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

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

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:

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;

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.

6 Prophesy 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:

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.

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.

9 For, ▲ behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

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:

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.

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.

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

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

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.

16 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

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.

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:

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.

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.

21 But ▲ I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had ⇄ profaned among the heathen, whither they went.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD
- **v2** Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession
- **v5** in the fire of my jealousy
- **v8** ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit
- **v9** behold, I am for you
- **v11** will do better unto you than at your beginnings
- **v11** ye shall know that I am the LORD
- **v17** they defiled it by their own way and by their doings
- **v18** for their idols wherewith they had polluted it
- **v20** they profaned my holy name
- **v20** profaned *(every occurrence)*
- **v21** I had pity for mine holy name
- **v22** I do not this for your sakes
- **v23** I will sanctify my great name
- **v24** will bring you into your own land
- **v25** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean
- **v26** A new heart also will I give you
- **v26** I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh
- **v27** I will put my spirit within you
- **v27** cause you to walk in my statutes
- **v28** ye shall be my people, and I will be your God
- **v31** shall lothe yourselves in your own sight
- **v32** be ashamed and confounded for your own ways
- **v35** is become like the garden of Eden
- **v36** I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:11 (KJV)

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.

Setting

Jerusalem lies in ruins (33:21), and Edom has claimed the empty land for itself (ch 35). Now God turns and speaks to the land itself: "O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD" (v1). Chapter 35 was against Mount Seir; chapter 36 is for the mountains of Israel. The chapter has two halves — the renewal of the land (vv1–15) and the renewal of the people (vv16–38) — and at its center is one of the great new-covenant promises of the Old Testament.

Structure

- vv1–7 — **the enemy's taunt answered:** the enemy said, "Aha!" and "The everlasting heights have become our possession" (v2). God has spoken "in the fire of My jealousy" against the nations and against all Edom (v5). The nations that insulted Israel will bear their own insults (vv6–7).

- vv8–15 — **the mountains revived:** "you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel" (v8). "Behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you" (v9). Cities rebuilt, people multiplied — God "will treat you better than at the first" (v11). The land once called "a devourer of men" (v13) will bereave its people no more (vv13–15).
- vv16–21 — **why Israel was scattered:** "they defiled it by their ways and their deeds" (v17). "I poured out My wrath on them" for bloodshed and idols (v18) and scattered them (v19). In exile "they profaned My holy name," because the nations said, "These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land" (v20). "But I had concern for My holy name" (v21).
- vv22–32 — **a new heart for His name's sake:** "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name" (v22). "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name" (v23). God will gather them and "bring you into your own land" (v24). "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean … from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (v25). "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" (v26). "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (v27). "You will be My people, and I will be your God" (v28). Then "you will loathe yourselves in your own sight" for past sins (v31). "I am not doing this for your sake" (v32).
- vv33–38 — **Eden restored:** "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities" the cities will be rebuilt (v33). "This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden" (v35). "I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it" (v36). "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock" (v37), and the waste cities will "be filled with flocks of men" (v38).

Repeated words

holy name / My great name (vv20, 21, 22, 23); profaned (vv20, 21, 22, 23); nations (vv3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 36); desolate / waste (vv3, 4, 10, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38); know that I am the LORD (vv11, 23, 38); for your sake (vv22, 32); insults (vv6, 7, 15).

Contrasts

the enemy's "Aha!" (v2) ⟷ "Behold, I am for you" (v9). A land that devours men (v13) ⟷ a land filled with flocks of men (v38). Israel profaned His name (v20) ⟷ God vindicates His name (v23). Filthiness and idols (v25) ⟷ clean water and a clean people (v25). A heart of stone ⟷ a heart of flesh (v26). "Not for your sake" (vv22, 32) ⟷ "you will be My people" (v28). A desolate land ⟷ "the garden of Eden" (v35).

Chapter theme (my words)

Israel gave God's name a black eye among the nations, and God's answer was not to give up on them but to change them from the inside. He washes them, gives them a new heart, puts His own Spirit in them, and rebuilds the ruins until they look like Eden. He does it for His name — which is the only reason a man like me has any hope.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:5 (KJV)

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.

The mountains addressed (vv1–7)

Ezekiel had once prophesied against the mountains of Israel because of their idol shrines (ch 6). Now he prophesies to them with hope. Guzik notes the focus here is on the land itself, not only the people. The enemy, especially Edom (v5), had claimed the land with glee and contempt. God answers in the fire of His jealousy — not petty envy but zeal for what is His. Trapp, in Guzik: "Jealousy is hot as hell." God lifts His hand in an oath (v7): the mockers will carry their own shame.

Better than at the first (vv8–15)

The mountains will grow branches and fruit "for they will soon come" (v8) — the land is told to get ready for its people. Guzik cites Israel's agricultural growth since 1948 as "a mere beginning" of greater fruitfulness. The land's old reputation as a devourer of men goes back to the spies' report (Num 13:32); God will end that reputation and the nations' reproach.

Why they were scattered (vv16–21)

Israel defiled the land the way ritual impurity defiles (Lev 18:24–28). Feinberg, in Guzik, says the "blood" likely means murder, judicial violence and child sacrifice. Then, in exile, they profaned God's name just by being there: the nations looked at the refugees and concluded that their God could not protect His own people. Alexander, in Guzik, makes this point — exile made the nations think Israel's God was weak.

For My holy name's sake (vv22–23)

This is the hinge of the chapter. God says plainly that He is not acting because Israel deserves it. Guzik says the restoration is "not only for the sake of Israel but even more so for His holy name." Taylor, in Guzik: "He wants his name to be great, so that the nations may regard him not as an ineffective tribal god." That is good news: if my rescue rested on my record, I'd have no hope. It rests on His name (Ps 23:3; Isa 48:9–11).

Clean water, a new heart, His Spirit (vv24–28)

God's order is gather, cleanse, renew. The sprinkling of clean water draws on the Law's purification rites (Num 19:17–19; Ps 51:7). Guzik does not call it baptism; he sees a true cleansing accomplished by Christ's death, and he calls John 3:5 — "born of water and the Spirit" — "the likely connection Jesus had in mind" (compare 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5). Wright, in Guzik: "the Ezekiel promise was about to be fulfilled." The new heart and new spirit are a heart transplant — stone out, flesh in. Guzik says this

works "from the inside out" rather than from the outside in (2 Cor 5:17). And God puts "My Spirit" within them so that obedience flows from the inside (Rom 8:4, 9). This is the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31–34 by another name; Block, in Guzik: "what Jeremiah attributes to the divine Torah, Ezekiel ascribes to the infusion of the divine ruah."

Who receives it?

Christians differ. Many (covenant and amillennial readers) see the promise fulfilled in Christ and His church — Jew and Gentile together receiving the Spirit, with the land promise widened to the renewed earth. Others (dispensational and premillennial readers) see it inaugurated in the church but awaiting a future, national fulfillment for Israel (Rom 11:26–27). Guzik holds the second: the new covenant was inaugurated by Christ (Luke 22:20) but is "not yet complete" until these promises to Israel are fulfilled, probably at Christ's return. He calls removing the land promises "a plain and serious error," and quotes Block that restricting fulfillment to the church is "to annul the hope" of the prophet.

Remembering, and Eden restored (vv29–38)

Grace doesn't make sin trivial — renewed people "loathe" their old ways (v31). Wiersbe, in Guzik: true believers are "ashamed of themselves" over past disobedience. Then the ruins become like the garden of Eden (v35), and the nations recognize the LORD's work (v36). The chapter closes with prayer: God will let Israel ask Him for what He has already promised (v37). Spurgeon, in Guzik: "we must plead and enquire, or else the increase will be withheld." The waste cities will be full of people, like Jerusalem's streets crowded with flocks at the feasts (v38).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **jealousy — *qinʾah* (H7068):** zeal, ardor, jealousy for what belongs to one.
- **holy — *qodesh* (H6944):** holiness, set-apartness.
- **name — *shem* (H8034):** name, reputation, character.
- **profaned — *chalal* (H2490):** to defile, pollute, treat as common.
- **vindicate the holiness — *qadash* (H6942):** to sanctify, show oneself holy.
- **sprinkle — *zaraq* (H2236):** to toss, sprinkle, as in the rites of cleansing.
- **clean — *taher* (H2891):** to be pure, clean.
- **filthiness — *tumʾah* (H2932):** uncleanness, defilement.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — related to a word for dung; Ezekiel's favorite term of contempt.
- **new — *chadash* (H2319):** new, fresh.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the inner man, mind, will, heart.
- **spirit / Spirit — *ruach* (H7307):** breath, wind, spirit.
- **stone — *ʾeben* (H68):** a stone.
- **loathe — *qut* (H6962):** to feel disgust, loathe.
- **ask — *darash* (H1875):** to seek, inquire of, ask.

Cross-references

Lev 18:24–28; Num 19:17–19; Deut 30:6; Ps 23:3; Ps 51:7–10; Isa 48:9–11; Jer 24:7; Jer 31:31–34; Jer 32:39–40; Ezek 11:19–20; Ezek 37:14; Joel 2:28–29; Zech 12:10–13:1; John 3:3–8; John 7:37–39; Rom 2:28–29; Rom 8:4–9; Rom 11:26–27; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 3:5; Heb 8:8–12; Heb 10:22.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 36:26 (KJV)

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.

Command to obey — "Be ashamed and confounded for your ways"

(v32). God's grace doesn't ask me to pretend my past was fine. It asks me to own it — to call it what it was — and then receive what I didn't earn. The men I walk with in recovery call that a fearless inventory. I'll do it honestly, and then rest in grace, not in my record.

Sin to confess — a heart of stone

Before God touched me, my heart was hard — toward Him, toward my wife, toward people who needed me. Some stone is still there. I confess where I've gone cold and stopped feeling what God feels, and I ask Him to finish the transplant.

Warning to heed — my life carries His name

Israel profaned God's name just by how they lived among the nations (v20). People judge Jesus by the men who wear His name. The men I disciple are watched by their families, cellmates and coworkers. So am I. How I live either honors His name or drags it through the mud.

Promise to trust — "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you"

(v26). This is the promise I hand every man who says, "I can't change." He's right — he can't. But God can. He washes "from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (v25), and He puts His own Spirit inside to make a man walk in His ways (v27). The addiction, the record, the shame — none of it is too dirty for the clean water God provides in Christ.

Example to follow — ask Him

God promised to do it, and then said He would let His people ask Him to do it (v37). Promises are meant to be prayed. I'll take what God has said and bring it back to Him by name: "You said You would give a new heart — give it to this man."

Worship

God acts for His holy name. He washes the unclean, raises the ruined, puts His Spirit within, and turns wastelands into Eden. He has spoken, and He will do it. He is the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I don't deserve anything You've done for me — You did it for Your name. Wash me clean. Take out what is stone and give me a heart of flesh. Fill me with Your Spirit so I can walk in Your ways. Use my life to honor Your name, and do this same miracle in the men You've given me to love. In Jesus' name. Amen.