"GOD'S HOLY NAME"

A Sermonic Development of Ezekiel 36:21-38

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BASIC OUTLINE OF EZEKIEL

I. THE REAPING OF REBELLIOUS ISRAEL (chapters 1-24)
II. THE RETRIBUTION OF RIVAL NATIONS (chapters 25-32)
III. THE RESTORATION OF RENEWED ISRAEL (chapters 33-48)

OUTLINE OF EZEKIEL 36

(The basic thrust of chapter 36 deals with the **"land"** of Israel)

I. **Repossession** of the land which will produce fruit and provision for Israel (v.1-15).

II. **Removal** from the land which produced a profaning of the name of God (v.16-20).

III. **Renewal** in the land which will (in the millennial kingdom) produce a knowledge of and reverence for God and His Holy Name (v.21-38).

INTRODUCTION

(Brief commentary of the immediate preceding context)

The 36th chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy is often called "the brightest in the whole book". "The prophecy of doom addressed to Mount Seir (chapter 35) is now balanced by this prophecy of hope addressed to Israel's mountains. The two prophecies together vividly contrast God's coming actions with the existing state of world affairs"(Cragie p. 252). This prophecy is also in contrast to Ezekiel 6:1-7, where the prophet declared the pending desolation of Israel's mountains. "Now that this earlier prophecy had been fulfilled, the prophet sees beyond that desolation a new hope for the Land of Israel"(Cragie p. 253).

In chapter 36, Israel is pictured as having been scorned (laughed at) and her land taken by foreigners (v.2). Therefore Ezekiel is told to prophesy, and basically says to Israel, "you deserve it!"(v.3). However God "in the fire" of His "jealousy" speaks against the nations (specifically-Edom) who appropriated God's land for themselves with wholehearted joy and scorn (v.5).

God again beckons Ezekiel to prophecy concerning the land that He has spoken in His wrath and jealousy because Israel endured such insults of the nations (v.6). God then turns the tables in verse seven and promises (with an oath) that the nations will reap what they have sown. They will "themselves endure their insults"(v.7).
In contrast to the present state of dispersed Israel, God then promises that the land will one day (in the Millennial kingdom) only produce fruit for God's people-Israel (v.8). God's program was & will be with Israel, and He will turn back to her and replant her (v.9). God's replanting will be fruitful as God's people (Israel)
will be multiplied on the mountain (promised land) of Israel, and the land will be rebuilt (v.10).

In the Kingdom God will treat the Mountain of Israel "better than at the first" time, when He allowed Israel to conquer, possess, & harvest this land (v.11). The land ("Mountain"), which is Israel's inheritance, will be repossessed and (with the curse reversed) will never again cause the death of an Israelite. The Mountain "will never again bereave them of children"(v.12). The land will never again be accused (by foreigners) of "devouring its inhabitants"(v.13)
(cp. Num. 13:32). It will never be accused of devouring its own people (nation)(v.14). Foreigners will no longer insult the Mountain of God, nor will it bear disgrace or cause its nation (Israel) to "stumble any longer" (v.15).

Ezekiel in verses 16-17 receives more revelation concerning the land. Now however, the emphasis is on the wickedness of the Nation that dwelled in it. Israel even in her own land defiled it by her ways (conduct) and deeds (actions)(v.17). Israel's way was repulsively unclean before God's sight (v.17b). Therefore God gives the reasons for His judgment on Israel. Israel faced God's wrath because of bloodshed in the land, and idolatry, which defiled the land (v.18; cp.Lev.18:28; Num.35:34). Israel also was judged by God scattering her among other nations and lands in accordance with their measure of wickedness in ways & deeds (v.19).

In verse 20 God demonstrates that Israel's wickedness,
resulted not merely in expulsion from the land, but this scattering resulted in God's Holy name being profaned among other nations.
God's name was profaned when "they (heathen foreigners) said to them (Israel), "These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land". How was God's name profaned by this remark? While it is true that they might have pointed their
finger at Israel and sarcastically said: "These are the people
of the Lord", meaning, "They certainly do not act like it", the emphasis on the phrase "and are gone forth out of **His** land"
indicates that they were really pointing their finger at **God**. The surrounding Nations thought they saw God as being impotent. They were irreverently saying: "Hey look! look here! "These are the people of **the Lord** yet they have come out of **His (YAHWEH'S) land**", meaning: "If their God whom they preach had been
omnipotent, He would not have allowed them to be expelled from His land"(Delitzsch p.108). They in effect saw their "gods" as
being more powerful than Israel's YAHWEH. This knowledge,

though false, greatly diminished God's reputation ("name") among these lost nations. Hence, "the only way God could destroy this delusion was by manifesting Himself to the heathen as the almighty God and Lord of the whole world through the redemption and glorification of His people"(Delitzsch p.108).

This purpose God takes up in Ezekiel 36:21-38.

OUTLINE

Title: "God's Holy Reputation"

Text: Ezekiel 36:21-38

Proposition: GOD'S REPUTATION ("NAME") NEEDS TO BE OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO YOU!

Interrog: Why? Because of God's attitude and action toward His Holy Name.

In verses 21-23, God demonstrates **WHY** He desires to sanctify His Name - (Reputation lost); And in verses 24-38, God demonstrates
HOW He will sanctify His Name - (Reputation regained)

I. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS REPUTATION
(Vindictive attitude)-(v.21-23).

A. THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S NAME IS HIS PRIORITY (v.21-22).
1. God's name is Holy (v.21)
2. God's work is for His own Honor (v.22)

B. THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S NAME IS HIS PROMISE (v.23).
1. God will prove that His Name is Holy (It is great!)
2. God will prove that His Nature is Holy (He is Lord!)

II. GOD WILL CONFIRM HIS REPUTATION
(Vindictive action)-(v.24-38).

A. BY REDEMPTION (v.24)

B. BY REGENERATION (v.25-27)

C. BY RESTORATION (v.28-30)

D. BY RECOLLECTION (v.31-32)

E. BY RENOVATION (v.33-36)

F. BY REPRODUCTION (v.37-38)

I. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS REPUTATION

(Vindictive attitude)-(v.21-23)

A. THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S NAME IS HIS PRIORITY (v.21-22).

1. God's name is Holy (v.21).

The word "Holy" ( ) refers to that which is sacred, hal lowed, or set apart from the common or profane. God's Name
is totally distinct and set apart because He is. His Name is intrinsically sacred.
Ill. Of Jewish scribes who wrote God's Name ( ) with extreme care & caution. (ex. bathing, new pen etc.)
Ex. Mt. 6:9 - Lord's Prayer - "Hallowed be thy Name"
Appl. Don't take His Name in vain (Ex. 20:7) that is: Don't state it, pray it, write it in a frivolous manner.
Guard God's Reputation - Don't drag Him down to man's level. Keep Him high & lifted up!
God's Holy Name is of primary concern
God is Jealous about the image that is portrayed of Him among the lost.
appl.- The sin of a Christian does not merely affect himself. It defames His God in the eyes of the lost!

2. God's work is for His own Honor (v.22).

The word "profane" ( ) literally means "to pierce through, penetrate (Ps. 109:22), wound (Ez. 28:9), or stab; It means to violate, dissolve (Ps.55:21; 89:35), or to open up, lay open, or give access to." To open something up that which is Holy to public access is to "profane". To remove that which is considered "Holy" from its unique & distinct position and purpose is to make it common or profane. For example to prostitute one's daughter is to profane her (Lev.19:8, 21:9). The Sabbath (Ex.31:14), the Priests (Is.43:28), a Father's bed (Gen.49:4), a dedicated vineyard (Lev.19:23; Deut.20:6, 28:30) were not to be profaned!

But above them all, God's Holy Name is never to be treated common. To do so is to strike a piercing blow to His very character & essence in the minds of men.

The opposite of profaning God's Name, is showing it to be Holy ( ). The way to do this is not to profane ( ) it but to ( ) it, which means to shine or praise!

God will specifically begin "to act" ("do") in the Great
Tribulation when He makes Israel a burial ground for Gog (39:11), and burns Magog (39:6). At this time God declares: "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my
people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."

"I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake..."(36:22).
appl. - God does not always merely act for the welfare of man, but to uphold His own Honor & Glory. If God's Honor & Glory are of primary importance to Him it must be to us!
"Do all to the glory of God"

B. THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S NAME IS HIS PROMISE (v.23).

1. God will prove that His Name is Holy (It is great!)

To "sanctify"(set apart as distinctively holy) describes the removal of blots and blemishes. While the giving up of His people was regarded by the heathen as a sign of weakness, God's regathering of Israel will remove this stigma.
To "sanctify" is the opposite of "profaning"
God's name is "Great"; therefore because God's name is
described as "Holy", "greatness" is an element of "holiness"
God desires that His Name be shown, proven, or vindicated as being "Holy".
appl. - Our lives ought to magnify God's Name as being
"Holy" and "great"!

2. God will prove that His Nature is Holy (He is Lord!)

God's "Name" and God's person ("myself") are practically
synonymous. Both are called "Holy" and both are "proven" Holy. However "Name" is not directly equivalent to "person", but is a reflection or expression of the person. God's name is characteristic of His essence. Therefore it must never be profaned! In verse 23 God's name "is being profaned (pual participle) by the heathen, because Israel profaned (piel
perfect) it.
Just as God's Name was torn down from its high and lofty position because of Israel, it will be exalted in the Millennial Kingdom through Israel.

Ill.- Contrast the life of a "nominal Christian" or backslidden one who drags God's name in the mud of this world, with a true Christ-like Christian who lifts up & magnifies God's Name. (cp. I Pet.4:14-16).
God uses men to vindicate the holiness of His Name.
Note: ( ) "in you", "through you".

The result of God's name being proven Holy will be nations coming to know Yahweh as Lord (sovereign) ( ).
appl. - The lost need to <u>see</u> God's holiness in the lives of God's people! Only then, by seeing our good works, will they come to know and "glorify (our) Father which is in heaven."
(Mt.5:16).

II. <u>GOD WILL CONFIRM HIS REPUTATION</u>

(Vindictive action)-(v.24-38).

A. BY REDEMPTION (v.24)

God now tells **<u>HOW</u>** <u>He</u> will prove His name to be Holy among His people (specifically-Israel) "<u>For</u> I will..."

Note: It is God who does the work; He takes the initiative!
Compare all of the "I wills" in verses 24-37: "I will take you (v.24)...I will sprinkle clean water (v.25)...I will cleanse you (v.25)... I will give you a new heart (v.26)...I will put a new spirit within you (v.26)...I will take away the stony heart (v.26)...I will put my spirit within you (v.27)...I will be your God (v.28)...I will call for the corn (v.29)...I will multiply the fruit of the tree (v.30)...I will also cause you to dwell (v.33)...
I will do it (v.36)...I will yet for this be inquired (v.37)...I will increase them (v.37).

God begins to reveal His holiness by:
1. <u>Separating</u> His people from the world. ("I will take you...")
2. <u>Uniting</u> His people together. ("gather") (cp.John 17)
   For "Unity" of the nation see Ez. 37:15-23 "one stick"
3. <u>Giving</u> to His people the <u>privileges</u> that come with being God's Children. (Israel will re-inherit her own land).

appl.- God desires to make His people <u>distinct</u> (set apart from the world) God bought us with Christ's blood (I Cor.6:20) so that we would be a distinct people.
We are a "chosen...royal...holy...peculiar people" to bring praise to God who redeemed us "out of darkness into His marvelous light".(I Pet.2:9)

B. BY REGENERATION (v.25-27)

1. Purification (v.25)

God's cleansing has 2 aspects:
His cleansing positively produces cleanness.
His cleansing negatively removes "all" filth (impurity) and "all" Idolatry (anything that diverts your worship of the one & only God.)

This cleansing corresponds to justification.

appl.- When God cleanses He **totally** cleanses ("all").
ex. Jesus said to Peter "clean every whit" (Jn.13:10).

Note the expression "clean water" - That which cleans must be clean itself. (ex. Christ's spotless life)
Man being unclean is totally unable to clean himself!

"To sprinkle with clean water" refers particularly to the "purifying from defilement from the dead by sprinkling with the water prepared from the ashes of a red heifer" (Num.19:17-19) (Delitsch p.110).

2. Transformation (v.26)

A transplant of man's total personality will occur.
"Heart" and "spirit" are "not so much parts of man's make-up as aspects of his total personality. The "heart" includes the mind and the will, as well as the emotions; it is in fact the seat of the personality, the inmost nature of man. The
"spirit" is the impulse which drives the man and regulates his desires, his thoughts and his conduct" (J.B. Taylor, Tyndale Commentary. p.232).
God promises a new heart and a new spirit. See Psalm 51:10 "clean heart...renew a right spirit".
The new heart is soft and the new spirit is God's (v.27). Hence the Spirit is that which **moves** (gives impulses to) the heart and the heart in turn (being soft) **responds** positively to those impulses.
The heart being "soft" is therefore impressible, and sensitive as opposed to hard, rebellious, and insensitive. The "heart" is made passive, receptive and responsive, while the "Spirit" is active, operative, and directive. (cp. Jer.32:37-39).

The new heart & new Spirit are the equivalent of a **new nature**.
appl.- Are you controlled by the old nature or new? (Eph.4:22- 24). Which one do you feed?

3. Operation (v.27)

The old stubborn spirit of Israel will be replaced with God's life-giving Holy Spirit. (cp.Ez.11:19-21)
"Spirit" - See the necessity of the Spirit to give life (resurrection) to "dead bones"

(Ez.37:9-14).

The internal dwelling of God's Spirit causes (produces) a walk that is consistent with God's statutes (decrees) and results in a careful observance of God's ordinances (laws).

Ill. of "car & driver" representing "man's heart & the Holy Spirit" The car (represented by a responding, controllable "heart") and the driver (represented by a guiding and controlling "Spirit").

Israel's transformation and divine empowering (operation) will lead to a spontaneous, un-coerced **willingness** to do God's will.
This brings glory to God!

appl.- To be a Christian is to have received that "radical spiritual surgery which will enable us to live our lives fully to the glory of God." (Cragie p.258)
Are you controlled by the Holy Spirit? (Eph.5:18)
Or are you trying to live the Christian life by your own power and ability? Victory is won "...not by might nor by power (of man's efforts) but by my Spirit saith the Lord..." (Zech.4:6).

C. BY RESTORATION (v.28-30)

The undeserved redemptive and regenerating work of God results in restoration or renewal. This restoration involves:
1. Renewed inheritance. ("you will dwell...")
2. Renewed intimate relationship. ("My people...I will be your God").
3. Full deliverance. ( ) resulting in total victory over sin.
("All your uncleanness") Note: It is a salvation provided by Messiah (Is.35:4; Zech.9:9; Ps.98:1)
"The nation's tendency to lapse into sin will be overcome by the power of the new Spirit" (Stalker p.254).
4. Abundant material provision. (multiplied grain (v.29), fruit of the tree, and produce of the field (v.30).
Cp. The N.T. believer's abundant riches "in Christ" (Col.2:10; Eph.1).
5. Absence of famine (v.29) and disgrace (v.30).

appl. The believer today needs to know his intimate relationship to God "in Christ"; his full deliverance (victory) over sin (being positionally "dead to sin"); as well as the assurance of resurrection to actually benefit in his inherited
Heavenly home and live in response to this reality right now! (cp. Rom.6:1-13).

D. BY RECOLLECTION (v.31-32)

The undeserved blessing of God results in a recollection of what we were saved from. This recollection involves:

1. A remembering of former "evil ways & deeds"
2. A sickening ( ) because of former "iniquities and abominations" The word ( ) refers to a loathing (of past life); To be nauseated (by the very thought of it. cp.Ez.20:43) This "remembering" will deliver Israel from any desire to indulge in her former ways. It will be sickening to think about!
3. A humiliation (shame) because of former ways.

God's grace is shown so that glory will go to Himself (His name - cp.v.22)

"One of the hardest lessons to learn is that all this work of God is not for our sake alone, but for `The sake of His Name'...It is impossible to live for one's self alone...Our lives are to be avenues through which God's holiness and will are made known to all the world." (Cragie p.258)

appl.- You need to see what God saved you from! All believers must "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." (Is.51:1) (see also Ps.40:2).
This retrospective look is not to cause discouragement or a sense of pride, rather it is to see the magnificent grace of God and return all the praise to Him for it (Ps.40:3).

E. BY RENOVATION (v.33-36)

1. It is a work of God. "I will..."
   a. Cities will be inhabited (v.33)
   b. Waste places will be rebuilt (v.33)
   c. Desolate land will be cultivated (v.34)

2. It is a testimony to God. "surrounding nations..."
   a. They will **"see"** (v.34b) (no desolation!)
   b. They will **"say"** (v.35) (like garden of Eden!)
   c. They will **"know"** (v.36) (God keeps His word and is Powerful)

God's remodelling of the land of Israel will redound to His glory. To transform the land from its utter ruin after the Great Tribulation to that comparable to the garden of Eden will be astonishing!

appl. The lost need to see the renovation that God did in your life when He saved you! (see Titus 2:10-14).

F. BY REPRODUCTION (v.37-38)

1. God's response to man's (Israel's) Prayer (v.37)

"inquired" contrast with Ez.14:3; 20:3,31.

"I will increase their men like a flock..."
"increase" contrast with Neh.7:4.

2. Man's (Israel's) response to God's <u>power</u> (v.38)
"<u>Then they will know that I am the Lord!</u>"

appl. God answers the prayers of the righteous.
Just as Jesus multiplied the bread and fish to feed the 5,000 and just as God multiplied the disciples (Acts 6:7),
He can "make all grace abound to you!"
But always remember: God does so for the exaltation of His own **<u>HOLY REPUTATION!</u>**