



Ezekiel 36

Tape #7331
Ezekiel 36
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Ezekiel chapter thirty six. The word...

Also (36:1),

That begins the chapter, would of course, refer you back to the preceding chapter, which was a prophecy against mount Seir.

Now mount Seir is south of the Dead sea, on the east side of the valley, down to the gulf of Aqabah. It was at one time the home of the Edomites, a very powerful, and renowned civilization of people, who had really an advanced form of architecture. They were noted for their architectural genius. There was a very large, and vast number of people living in that area, because it is sort of climate wise similar to California in many ways. It is an excellent area for growing produce and all.

The prophecy against mount Seir was that God was going to make it a perpetual desolation. In spite of the fact that it does have beautiful, natural kind of conditions it is even to the present day a desolation. There are only three miserable villages in the whole area of mount Seir, connected only by paths that can be traversed only by donkey, or some areas four wheel drive vehicles. It's very backward, very primitive. There are no real amenities like we have here. There are no you know, running waters in the faucets, or electricity, or things of that nature. It's just an area that is desolate.

Now in sharp contrast to the prophecy against Seir what was, which was to become a perpetual desolation, the Lord is now going to prophesy to the mountains of Israel. Thus, "Also"...

thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord (36:1):

Now it's an interesting thing as he prophesies to the mountains of Israel, he has a hard time to get into the actual prophecy itself. He, he about three or four different times says, "Now hear the word of the Lord", and then he doesn't give you, he talks about, "If you now hear what God says", and then he doesn't say it. He goes on and on, until he finally gets to it. But you know, by the time you get there, you're almost exhausted, because he's taken you around the corner so many times!

Thus saith the Lord God; [Alright, we're gonna hear it, no, don't think so.] Because the enemy [So he gives you now why God is saying these things, and he'll give you why God is, is giving, because the enemy"] has said against you, Aha (36:2),

As I say, that must be something mean, and dirty in the scriptures because it always condemns those who say, "Aha". So watch that word, it's in the biblical context not a nice thing to say. "Because your enemy has said against you, "Aha"...

even the ancient high places are ours in possession (36:2):

When Israel fell to Babylon, the surrounding nations, the Edomites, Moabites, and all were gloating thinking that, "Now we can move in and take over". Israel had developed the land. They are an industrious people. They had developed the land agriculturally. The land was a, a beautiful land as the result of, of their hard labor. Now when Israel is defeated by the Babylonians, the neighboring cities think, "Alright! Aha! We'll go in, and we'll move in and we'll take over the land. It is ours in possession! We can go in and possess that land!"

Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Because they have made you desolate, [You see he still doesn't get to the prophecy of the mountains, "Because they have made you desolate".] and they have swallowed you up on every side, that you might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and you are taken up in the tongues of the talkers, and are an infamy of the people: [Because Israel has been destroyed, and because the land is now being possessed by the heathen, people are talking against the people of God.] Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the

mountains, and to the hills, and to the rivers, and to the valleys, and to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and a derision and to the residue of the nations that are round about; Therefore [You think, "Well okay, what's he gonna say", but then he goes on again and he hits another, "Therefore", or "Because", "Therefore",] thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the nations, and against all of Idumea, [Or Edom, mount Seir, the previous chapter.] 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. [So again, because these nations are gloating, because they are thinking that they're gonna take over God's land.] Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, and to the hills, and to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because you have borne the shame of the nations (36:3-6):

He still doesn't get to the message! It's one of those things, I, as I was reading, I was saying, "Come on let's hear it! What do you have to say to the mountains, and all, of Israel?" So we finally get there. Verse eight...

But ye, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come (36:8).

Now this prophecy came after Ezekiel received the word from the refugees that the city of Jerusalem had fallen, and was destroyed utterly by the Babylonians. This is something that Ezekiel had been prophesying. He had been saying that Jerusalem was going to fall.

But now there were false prophets, and there are always false prophets. False prophets who made fun of God's word, who made light of the word of God. The false prophets were prophesying that Jerusalem would not fall.

During Jeremiah's prophecy, and they both, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel prophesied at the same time, but Ezekiel was a captive, and he was in Babylon. He was basically prophesying to the other captives in Babylon, whereas Jeremiah was back in Jerusalem prophesying to the people that were there in Jerusalem. Their prophecies were the same. "Because of your sin, and because of your iniquity, God is going to deliver you into the hands of the Babylonians."

So the false prophets were disputing with Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. The false prophets were saying, "Thus saith the Lord, The Babylonians will not shoot an arrow into the city. God is gonna turn them back! We're gonna be victorious!" The people loved to hear that. They didn't like to hear what Jeremiah said.

But Jeremiah was insisting that because of the iniquity of the people, God was gonna deliver them into the hands of the enemy. Finally, Jeremiah was arrested for treason, because they said, "He is demoralizing the people, so that they will not resist or fight against the Babylonians". He was put in the dungeon.

Ezekiel was prophesying to the captives who the false prophets were saying to those in Babylon, "Hang loose, don't settle down. Only a matter of time, and you'll be back home again. The Babylonians will be defeated, and you will be back home. So don't plant vineyards, don't plant gardens. Just hang loose, because it's just a short time, you'll be returning to the land". But Jeremiah said, "No it's gonna be seventy years before you return to the land. Settle down, plant vineyards, build houses", and so forth, "cause you're gonna stay there awhile!" Ezekiel of course was saying the same thing, as was Jeremiah.

But word finally came that the city had fallen, that the people were dispersed, there was nothing left to go home to. It is then when this word came, the darkest hours for the nation. The despair that came with the news that the thing is destroyed, there's nothing back there to go home to. It's, it's a rubble, it's a mess. In those dark hours of, of despair, wondering, "What shall we do?"

It is then that the Lord began to give prophecies of the future. Though they were going through a dark and dismal period of their history, one of the darkest, scattered, and spread by dispersion through the nations, yet, God was not through with them. The purposes of God were not yet fulfilled, and the purpose and plan of God was to bring them back into the land again, that they might dwell again in the land.

So these prophecies now, from this point out, to the end of the book of Ezekiel, are prophecies of the future glory that will yet come upon this nation, as God fulfills in and through this nation, His purposes for the world. So, "The mountains of Israel, you're going to be planted again. You're going to bring forth fruit

to my people of Israel, for they are at hand to come. They will be coming back again”.

Now they did return after the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, however, the prophecies here in chapter thirty five were not fulfilled in that return, after the Babylonian captivity. The prophecies in chapter thirty five are actually being fulfilled today. Before our very eyes, they are being fulfilled! As we go on into chapter thirty seven and thirty eight, chapter thirty six is being fulfilled, chapter thirty seven, thirty eight. Thirty seven has been fulfilled. Chapter thirty eight will be fulfilled as far as the next order of event for the nation of Israel. The next major order of event will be the fulfillment of chapter thirty eight, thirty nine. Then the rebuilding of the temple, and things of that nature as you get into chapter forty, forty one, forty two.

The interesting thing of course is that there is today in Israel a very strong movement for the rebuilding of the temple. You can go to the temple foundation there in Jerusalem, and you can see the, the implements for temple worship that are already made by this temple foundation! The instruments to carry the blood of the sacrifices, the robes for the priests, the trumpets to call the solemn assembly, the silver trumpets. You can see the implements for temple worship! They are already making them in anticipation of the fulfillment of the scripture which declares that, “the temple will again be rebuilt”, according to Ezekiel, and the dimensions and all that are there in Ezekiel. Because they also believe the prophecies of Ezekiel, they are looking forward to the, the restoration of their worship in the temple, as is described in the prophecies of Ezekiel.

So the prophecy begins first of all with the land, Ezekiel thirty six. Then, the nation itself, the people, chapter thirty seven. Then when thirty six, and thirty seven are complete, then you get into the invasion, and the attempt to destroy the land of Israel with God’s intervention, in chapter thirty eight. Then into chapter thirty nine, that complete destruction of the enemies of Israel, accomplished by God, as He again reveals Himself to the nation, and puts His Spirit upon them once more.

So the mountains of Israel basically are going to yield fruit again. As we mentioned this morning, you go over to Israel, and you are impressed by the agricultural development. The mountains of the Golan covered with apple orchards. The hills around the Galilee, covered with banana trees, kiwi trees, avocado trees. The hills around the Sharon plain and all, covered with citrus trees, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, and all. Tremendous agricultural development in the land.

For [The Lord said] I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and you will be tilled and sown (36:9):

So the promise of God. There’s gonna be farming, the land’s gonna be plowed, the land is gonna planted. Again, you go down to the area even of Beersheba where they have brought the water from the Jordan river, and you see the fields as far as your eyes can see, you see the grain fields. The farming there is much like the San Joaquin valley. The, the land is very fertile, and all they needed was the water, they brought the water from the Jordan, and the desert is blossoming like a rose! That once barren wilderness desert land is become like the Garden of Eden. It’s sort of the Imperial Valley of sorts, in that it is just so green, and lush, and fertile! So you can see in Israel today, the fulfillment of this prophecy! The Lord said...

I will multiply men upon you (36:10),

Turn of the century, fewer than a hundred thousand Jews in all of the land of Israel, today they number into the millions. Of course, the numbers are growing rapidly with the immigrants coming from Russia. So God is multiplying the men upon the mountains of Israel.

and all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be built (36:10):

These settlements going up all over the country in, in sort of desolate kind of places. You see these settlements going up in, in these rocky barren places. But you go back in a few years, and you’re amazed at the trees that are planted, the development of these areas and all. It’s just really exciting to see the word of God coming to pass before your very eyes, throughout the land, as, as God’s word is, is being fulfilled! Settling after their old estates in, in the, so many of the cities that you read of in the Bible, are new cities, are rising up right next to the ruins of these ancient cities, taking on the names of the ancient cities.

and I will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and you shall know that I am the Lord (36:11).

God speaks of these things in advance, so that when you do have, when they do take place, then you

know that it was God who has spoken. "When I have done this, you will know that I am the Lord."

Yes, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no more henceforth bereave them of men (36:12).

The scripture speaks of, of the land being bereaved because of the invasion, and the being carried away captives. But when God again works, they will no longer be bereaved of men, when He fulfills His promises here.

Thus saith the Lord God; Because they say unto you, [Now all the way through the Lord gives the reason, "Because this...", and, "Therefore", and, "Because of this", and so, "because they say unto you",] you are a land that devours up men (36:14),

You remember when the twelve spies were sent into the land? The ten spies came up and they said, "It's a land that eats up its people". That is, the land cannot produce enough to take care of the inhabitants. The land it just isn't capable of, of feeding the people, or taking care of the people. Because that was the charge, now God said, "I'm gonna bring you into a land that is well watered, a land that's flowing with milk and honey". God promised that the glory of the land He was going to give to them. The spies came back, and they said, "You know it isn't, it isn't a great land, it's a land that eats up its inhabitants. It can't support the people that are there!" "Because of this, and because of the land had been bereaved by the invasion of these nations."

Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the nations any more, and neither shall you bear the reproach of the people any more, and neither shall you cause your nation to fall any more, saith the Lord God (36:14-15).

God is gonna plant them there. He's gonna give it to them. They will not be bereaved again by the destruction, and annihilation of, of the nations. It will produce sufficient for the people.

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, [He's going to give now the reason why they went into captivity, the reason why the land became desolate, the reason why it was bereaved of its inhabitants, "the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 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 (36:16-17).

A woman that was going through her menstrual period would have to be sort of set aside, removed. So God is saying that, "I have removed them like a, a, a, a menstruous woman, because they have defiled the land by the things that they are doing, by their actions."

Wherefore [Because of this,] I poured out my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols whereby they had polluted it (36:18):

The blood that was shed upon the land was the innocent blood of the children who were sacrificed to the god Molech, and thrown into the fires to, in their worship of the god Molech. The idols were the pornographic idols of Ashtoreth, which the children of Israel were constantly turning to, this worship of Ashtoreth, and pornography. So it was because they had polluted themselves with pornography. Because they were destroying the innocent babies. God said He was furious with them over these things! Thus, He poured out His fury upon them in allowing them to be destroyed by the nations, especially Babylon.

And I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way, [Or because of their ways] and according to their doings I judged them (36:19).

Because of the things they were doing, it was God's judgment that came upon them. Now when our nation leads the world in pornography, and probably I would suppose if statistics were given, we'd lead the world in abortions. There have been now close to thirty million abortions since the Wade-Roe decision! If this angered God to the point of destroying the nation of Israel, what makes us think that God is going to spare us, when our nation is guilty of doing the same thing that brought His judgment upon Israel?

When our nation votes for a man to be president, who declared that he supports abortion on demand. A man who declares that he supports legislation for allowing the homosexuals special treatment, and we elect such a man to lead our nation, it is more or less, the nation snubbing its nose at God, and the laws of God! What makes us think that God is just going to close His eyes to it, and will not bring us into judgment?

His fury was poured out upon His people Israel, because of the blood that they shed, and the idols by which they had polluted the land. But the problem was...

When they went into these heathen lands, [verse twenty] they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of Jehovah, and have gone forth out of his land (36:20).

They, they took with them their disgraceful practices into, and the people said, “Yeah, they’re, they’re God’s people, they’re the people of Jehovah”.

It’s a sad thing to bring shame on the name of the Lord. How the world is ready to pick up on anything in order to blaspheme God! As David was faced with his sin with Bathsheba, the prophet said to him, “And you have given cause for the enemies of God to blaspheme”. That’s a sad thing. Here were God’s people taken captives, and they said, “Oh those are the people of Jehovah”. But they didn’t really represent the Lord.

But [The Lord said] I had pity not for you, but for my name, my holy name, which the house of Israel hath profaned among the heathen, wherever they went (36:21).

They had profaned the name of the Lord. God had pity upon His name. God honors His name above His word!

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, [“I’m not bringing you back and bestowing all of these blessings upon you for your sakes.”] O house of Israel, but for my holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the [heathen, or] the nations wherever you have gone (36:22).

So God, in order to protect His own name, is going to do this work. Not because the people are deserving. I think so many times people today who take the anti-Semitic position, which I feel is extremely unscriptural, inasmuch as God is doing these things, they, they point out the flaws. They point out, “Well they’re not a perfect people!”, and surely they’re not! They’re not even a religious people for the most part. It isn’t because of they are so wonderful that God is doing it. It isn’t because they deserve it that God is doing it!

But really, look at yourself. It isn’t because you’re so wonderful that God has bestowed His grace upon you! It isn’t because you’re so deserving that God has blessed you. You see, grace is receiving those undeserved favors of God. He does it for His own name’s sake! Thus, we are blessed not because we are worthy or deserving, not because we’re wonderful people, not because God is rewarding us because of some merit that we have, but that He might magnify His name, and His grace. He bestows upon us, the glories and the blessings of His grace.

So God here is declaring that, “It isn’t because they are deserving or worthy”.

And I will sanctify [He said] my great name, which was profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes (36:23).

Now this is an important term, “When I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes”. That time is coming, and we’ll get to that in Ezekiel thirty eight. We’ll get to it also in thirty nine, and it is a key. When God sanctifies His name in the nation of Israel, then the world will know that Yahweh is indeed the Lord God! We’ll, we’ll come back to this as we move into the thirty eighth, and thirty ninth chapters.

For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all of the countries, and I will bring you into your own land (36:24).

The prophecy says, “You’re gonna be scattered, scattered among the nations. You’ll become a curse and a by-word on the lips of the people”. Yet they were to be preserved as a nationality, as an ethnic group. The miracle of, of the history of, of mankind, is how the Jews were able to maintain a national identity for close to two thousand years, without having a homeland! It is unparalleled in history! There is no other ethnic group ever in the world that has survived for more than four centuries, as a ethnic racial group, without having a homeland. Yet, the Jews have done it for two thousand years!

Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, [The water of washing, cleansing.] and you shall be clean: from all of your filthiness, and from all of your idols, and I will cleanse you (36:25).

This is yet future, that restoring of God’s grace upon Israel as a nation. His being acknowledged by

them as a nation. This whole spiritual restoration again of the, events that surround it are given to us in Ezekiel thirty eight, and thirty nine. But, God said...

I will give you a new heart, 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 a heart of flesh (36:26).

In Jeremiah God said, "And in those days, I will no longer write my law on tables of stone, but upon the fleshly tablets of your heart". A heart towards God. Oh how we need to have that! A heart that is tender towards God. A heart that longs after God, and the things of God. This is what God is promising He's gonna do. He's gonna give them a new heart, not a stony heart, but a heart of flesh, a heart that longs and seeks after God. Then the promise...

I will put my spirit within you (36:27),

Joel also prophesies that, "In the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, and upon my servants and handmaidens will I pour out my Spirit in that day, saith the Lord". Then he speaks of the great tribulation period in, in regards to this pouring out of God's Spirit, and it indeed will be that in that time of the great tribulation, God's Spirit will be poured out upon the nation of Israel. But again the events that bring this outpouring of God's Spirit are chronicled for us in Ezekiel thirty eight, and in thirty nine. Then the Lord said...

I will also save you from all of your uncleanness (36:29):

These things that God is promising to Israel, are the things that God has done for us! We have become the partakers of God's promises, because of our faith, God has bestowed upon us, His Spirit, God has given to us a new heart, and God has granted us salvation from our sin, from our uncleanness! Then God said...

I will call for the corn (36:29),

I like that! It's like God is commanding the, the, the grain fields to produce, you know, to, to up their production! "And I will call for the corn"...

and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you (36:29).

The nation now produces so much fruit, flowers, and produce that it is actually sending fruit and produce from Israel all over the world. Isaiah in chapter nineteen makes that fascinating prophecy concerning those that come from Judah will blossom, and bud. I guess nineteen is against Egypt. It's, it's there in Isaiah. You look for it, you'll find it. "They that come from Judah will blossom and bud, and fill the earth with fruit." That's exactly what's happening today, filling the earth with fruit.

I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field (36:30),

God is promising this, this tremendous agricultural development. Now the Jews are quite ready to take credit for it at the present time. They have the agricultural college down in Beersheba, and they are you know, genetically engineering new types of tomatoes. In fact they have genetically engineered a tomato that can be watered with salt water. Now you don't get salty tomatoes, but that would be probably something they could work on. You know, the tomatoes already salted you know. But they have engineered this special tomato that they can grow there in the desert, and they can use the Mediterranean water to irrigate. They are developing other vegetables and all that can be irrigated with salt water, because of the abundance of the salt waters. Think of what that would do for the agricultural development of the world, if we could start using salt water to irrigate our agricultural products! It would open up a lot of territory for agricultural development that is, at the present time, arid and barren, but close to coastal areas. So they've, they're doing marvelous things with the agriculture. They're making tomatoes that are especially resistant to different types of pests that destroy tomatoes, and they, they are, they're ready, as I say, to take credit for the tremendous agricultural development in the land. But again, who gave them the brains to work on these genetic codes of the plants? Who gave them the ability to do the, you know, it comes back to it was God, who has guided and directed.

there will be no more famine [The Lord said] among the nations, no more reproach of famine among the nations. Then shall you remember your own evil ways (36:30-31),

When God's grace is bestowed, it is the goodness of God that leads a man to repentance. God is so

good to us, we have failed. We've all of us, failed. "There is none righteous, no not one." John, writing to the Christians said, "If you say you have no sin, you only deceive yourself. The truth isn't in you. But if you will confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness." So...

You will remember your evil ways and your doings that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight (36:31),

You will say, "How could I do that? How could I have done that!" You will loathe yourself in your own sight.

for your iniquities and for your abominations. [So the Lord is again repeating,] It's not for your sakes that I'm gonna do this, saith the Lord, ["Not for your sakes, not because of what you are, not because you're so good, holy."] be it known unto you: and be ashamed of your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I have cleansed you from all of your iniquities (36:31-33)

What a glorious day, when the Lord has cleansed us from all our iniquities! "Oh how happy is the man whose sin is covered, whose transgression is forgiven. Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity." In the day when your iniquities have been cleansed.

I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes [desolate places] shall be built. And the desolate land shall be tilled, [farmed] whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. [That land lay there desolate for close to two thousand years, and now in the last century, the agricultural development is just amazing!] And they shall say, This land that is desolate is become like the garden of Eden; [And, indeed it has, it's become like the garden of Eden!] and the wast and the desolate and the ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen [Or, the nations] that are left found about you shall know that I the Lord [Or Yahweh] built the ruined places (36:33-36),

I love that! God, God is the one who builds the ruined places, the ruined lives! God's desire is always that of, of taking the ruined lives and making something of worth and value out of them. So many people have ruined their lives through sin. But what a glorious work of God's grace in taking those ruined lives!

How we have seen that here at Calvary Chapel! I look at these fellows who are today in the ministry, and being used so effectively by God, and I think of their backgrounds. I look at Jeff Johnson there in Downy, by far the largest church in all of Downy. He has an auditorium now that seats over three thousand, and they have three services on Sunday morning. The largest church in Downy!

He used to be the largest drug dealer in Downy. That was his reputation. His life was all messed up with drugs! I see what God is doing. He's taken a life that was ruined as the result of sin, and He's put him in that position. What a thrill it is to see what God can do in a life that has been destroyed by sin. What a wonderful, wonderful God! He doesn't give up on people. He doesn't give up on me. He doesn't give up on you.

You parents, as you were teaching your children to walk, you taught them through constant encouragement, through patience, you were encouraging, "Come on, take a step now!" Holding them up until they could sort of balance, gradually taking your hands away, letting them just sort of stand there. All of a sudden, they realize, "I'm standing! Where's daddy's hands?", and they'll sit you know. Ha, ha! So then you prop them up again, you sort of hold them until finally, you say, "Come on, come on, come on, come on!" When they take that step, you scream, you yell, you clap your hands, you praise them, you hug them, you tell them how wonderful, and how big they are and everything! You encourage them to walk.

Now as, as you're teaching them to walk and, and they stumble and fall, you don't slap them around and say, "You little brat I told you to walk! Why did you stumble?" "Never gonna try and teach you anything again! You're through!" You know, no, no, no, no! In fact the time of stumbling and falling, maybe they've sort of hurt themselves, that's the time when you hold them even closer, you hold them even tighter, and you say, "That was a good try! Try it again!" You don't, you don't stop the process because they've stumbled.

Thank God He didn't stop His process in our lives when we stumbled! But, He'd dust us off, and He says, "Alright, let's do it again, with my strength, and with my help, you can do it." He encourages us, and

He surrounds us with His love and encouragement. Gradually, we learn to walk. With His support, and with His help, we learn to walk. He is such a precious, wonderful, patient, tender, loving Father! Watching over the development of His child. Interested in every aspect of our growth, and lifting us up when we fall, and encouraging us when we stumble. That's the kind of a God that we serve and we worship. He is the God who builds the ruined. The word "places", is inserted, you can just put in there whatever you want. The translators put "places", but you can put in there anything. He rebuilds the ruined, whatever, your life, or whatever, that which has been ruined because of sin, God is in the business of restoring.

I will plant the desolate places: I the Lord have spoken it, [He said] and I will do it (36:36).

I love that! I love it when God brags! "I have spoken it, I will do it!" Oh, how sure can a thing be when God has spoken?

Back in, and we've passed over it, in verse seven...

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I have lifted up my hand, surely the nations that are about you, they shall bear their shame (36:7).

That, "I have lifted up my hand", the idea is, "I've lifted up my hand in an oath", you know it's when you're a boy scout, "I swear by my scout's honor". So a person lifts up their hand to take an oath, and thus this "lifting up of His hand", God said, "I've lifted up my hand", God's sort of taking an oath. "This is what I'm going to do!" Now as He gets to the end, He said, "I have spoken it, and I will do it." Now it took Him awhile to get around to it! Almost twenty five hundred years! Yet in God's timing, you know that's nothing. A day is as a thousand years unto the Lord. A thousand years is unto a day. So couple and a half, a couple and a half days, and He's gotten around to it. That land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden. It has been tilled and sown. It is producing fruit abundantly. The waste cities have been rebuilt, the ruins have been restored.

And thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; and I will increase them with man like a flock (36:37).

That is, "I will answer their prayers, I will be open to their prayers, I will listen to their prayers. I will be inquired of by the house of Israel", means that God is yet going to work with the nation of Israel.

You see, God has a seven year obligation yet, for Israel. There were seventy sevens that were determined upon the land, sixty nine of them were fulfilled. But there's one seven year period in which God is going to be dealing with the nation of Israel, in which He will at that time, put His Spirit upon them. He will be inquired of by them. They will again become His people, and there will be this renewed relationship as a, as a wife that has been unfaithful is restored to her husband, so Israel will be restored unto God. God will again move in a very direct way upon the nation of Israel for this seven year span of time. "And I will increase the men like a flock"...

And as the holy flock, [The flock of God.] as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; and so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am Yahweh (36:38).

The Lord, the God of Israel. So prophecy to the mountains of Israel.

Now next week we look at another fascinating prophecy concerning the rebirth of the nation of Israel of which much of it has already been fulfilled, and yet, there are portions of it that are yet to be fulfilled, tied with thirty eight and thirty nine. So we really will be tying all of these prophecies together. The restoring of the land, the restoring of the nation, and then the events that will bring to pass the outpouring of God's Spirit upon these people, and this renewed relationship with God that shall come to pass as the result of God's grace being manifested upon them. So we've got some really exciting chapters ahead, as we look at God's future dealings, present dealings, and future dealings with the nation of Israel.

Don't let anybody tell you that God is through with Israel. That's heresy. Don't let anybody tell you that the church has replaced Israel. We, the church, by God's grace, are an unnatural branch that God has grafted into the tree, to partake of the, of the richness of the tree.

But, being unnatural branches grafted in, we're not to boast against the natural branches. For if God removed the natural branches because of their failure, how much more will He remove the unnatural branches. God said He's able to graft the natural branch back in again, which He shall do. We have not replaced Israel. Israel still has that special place in the plan of God.

We have a special place in the plan of God. I rejoice in the place that we have! It doesn't bother me that God still has a special place for the nation of Israel. That's God's faithfulness. I admire God for His faithfulness. I thank God for the place we have! I may, I would rather have the place I have, than the place Israel has! Being the bride of Christ, what, what could be more exciting and glorious than that? Being joint heirs with Jesus Christ! What could be more glorious than that?

But God is still going to work with the nation of Israel, it's not yet complete. As we said, as we get into Daniel, the next book, we'll get into these seventy sevens of Daniel, and we'll, we'll see that God has a seven year period in which He is going to be dealing with the nation of Israel, as He has completed His purpose in, and for the church. Having completed His purpose, has removed the church. Then He again concentrates on Israel for that seven year span.

So a lot of exciting things ahead as we continue through these books of prophecy through the Old Testament.