

Reading Guide for Ezekiel 36:16-38

This unit continues the theme of Israel's restoration from exile that began in chapter 33. The focus is on the sanctity of the Lord's name as the motivation behind His redemptive and restorative activity. His name had been desecrated among the nations because of its association with Israel (a people now exiled) and their land (which they had defiled). The Lord makes it clear that He will act first and foremost for the sake of His holy name. The resulting restoration of Israel to their land will then serve as proof to the nations that the Lord is indeed holy.

Message-reception Formula (36:16)

I. THE LORD WILL SANCTIFY HIS NAME TO THE NATIONS (36:17-32)

The first oracle makes up the majority of this unit. It begins with a direct address to the prophet and reviews Israel's history of defiling the land through their sin. Because of this long history of rebellion, the Lord brought judgment upon them and exiled them among the nations. However, as a result, His name was profaned among the nations who saw the state of Israel and their land. Therefore, for the sake of His name, the Lord promises to act, so that the nations will acknowledge His holiness (v. 23b).

The Lord accomplishes this through the establishment of a new covenant. The need for something radically new is apparent from the fact that Israel was locked into a cycle of disobedience from the beginning (Jer. 13:23; Ezek. 2:3ff). A new covenant is needed, one where the Lord gives a new heart and a new spirit. This section ends with a return to the original theme that the Lord is acting for the sanctity of His holy name.

The Lord's Name Desecrated Among the Nations by Israel (36:17-21)

- Israel Defiled Their Land by Their Sin (v. 17)
- Resulting Judgment: Exile Among the Nations (vv. 18-19)
- The Lord's Name Desecrated Among the Nations (v. 20)
- The Lord Moved to Act for the Sake of His Name (v. 21)

The Lord will Sanctify His Name (36:22-23)

- Command to Prophecy (v. 22a)
- Quotation Formula (v. 22b)
- The Lord will Act Primarily for the Sanctity of His Name (v. 22c)
- The Lord will Sanctify His Name (v. 23a)
- Expanded Recognition Formula: That the Nations May Know the Lord (v. 23b)

How the Lord will Sanctify His Name (vv. 24-32)

- How the Lord will Accomplish His Purposes (vv. 24-27)
 1. *The Lord will Return Them to Their Own Land* (v. 24)
 2. *The Lord will Purify Them* (v. 25)
 3. *The Lord will Give Them a New Heart and New Spirit* (v. 26-27a)
 4. *The Lord will Bring About Covenant Obedience* (v. 27b)

Future Promises (vv. 28-30)

1. *The People will Return to Their Own Land* (v. 28a)
2. *There will be a Renewed Covenant Relationship* (v. 28b)
3. *The People will Be Purified* (v. 29a)
4. *The Land will be Fruitful* (vv. 29b-30)

Remembering the Past with Revulsion (v. 31)

Restatement of the Reason for Mercy: The Lord will Act for the Sanctity of His Name (v. 32a)

Divine Appeal to Feel Shame for Sin (v. 32b)

The two following oracles amplify and build on the theme of the Lord's restoration as a means of sanctifying His name so that the nations may acknowledge it. The first oracle begins by linking the people's purification with the restoration of the land. It ends with another recognition formula, once again defining the purpose of the divine restoration (v.36). The second oracle adds that Israel will increase, comparing them to the flock of sacrificial animals brought into Jerusalem during a feast.

II. THE LORD VINDICATED THROUGH THE RESTORATION OF HIS LAND (36:33-36)

Quotation Formula (v. 33a)

The People's Cleansing Brings Restoration of the Land (vv. 33b-35)

Expanded Recognition Formula: That the Nations May Know the Lord (v. 36a)

Divine Affirmation (v. 36b)

III. THE LORD VINDICATED THROUGH THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE PEOPLE (36:37-38)

Quotation Formula (v. 37a)

Divine Promise: The People will Increase (vv. 37b-38a)

Recognition Formula (v. 38b)