

The Book of Ezekiel, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 16: Judgment on Edom; the Mountains of Israel Restored

Ezekiel 35:1–36:38

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Show that Edom's perpetual enmity and covetousness toward God's people brought certain judgment, warning against settled hatred and greed in our own hearts.

Trace the LORD's promise to restore the mountains of Israel and to act for the sake of His holy name, guarding against any merit-based or unconditional-election reading of grace.

Establish that the clean water, new heart, new spirit, and indwelling Spirit of 36:25–27 are fulfilled in the new covenant in Christ and His church, received through faith, repentance, and baptism, not in a political restoration of national Israel.

Question 1

Student Question:

What is the charge against Mount Seir in 35:1–9, and how does the perpetual enmity of Edom toward Israel reveal the seriousness of long-nursed hatred before God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The word of the LORD comes to Ezekiel, Set your face against Mount Seir and prophesy against it (35:2). Mount Seir is the highland home of Edom.

Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a desolation and a waste (35:3).

I will lay your cities waste, and you shall become a desolation, and you shall know that I am the LORD (35:4).

Edom, descended from Esau, was a brother nation to Israel, which makes its hostility all the more grievous before God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Setting the face against a people is a posture of fixed, deliberate confrontation, the prophet announcing heaven's verdict.
- The brotherhood of Edom and Israel deepens the guilt, for family ties betrayed are no small matter before God.
- The aim of the judgment, that you shall know that I am the LORD, holds God's justice together with His desire to be acknowledged.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the LORD set His face against Mount Seir?
- How does Edom's kinship with Israel deepen its guilt?
- What does the refrain you shall know that I am the LORD show about God's purpose?

Question 2

Student Question:

Where have you allowed an old grievance to harden into a settled, perpetual hostility, and what would it look like to lay it down?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Because you cherished perpetual enmity and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity (35:5).

Edom seized the day of Judah's distress to take vengeance, a brother turning on a brother in his hour of trouble.

Because you did not hate bloodshed, therefore blood shall pursue you (35:6). The LORD repays Edom's bloodthirstiness in kind.

I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation, and I will fill your mountains with the slain (35:7-8). The desolation will be perpetual (35:9).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Perpetual enmity, a hatred nursed and never released, is treated by God as a grave and judged sin.
- Edom exploited the day of Israel's calamity, and God marks those who take advantage of others in their weakness.
- The judgment fits the crime. Because Edom loved bloodshed, blood will pursue it, showing the justice of God's recompense.

Discussion Prompts

- How does perpetual enmity corrupt a person or a people over time?
- Why is it especially wicked to exploit another's day of calamity?
- How does the punishment fitting the crime display God's justice?

Question 3

Student Question:

Edom said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them (35:10), coveting the land even though the LORD was there. Why is such covetousness a sin against God Himself, and how does He answer it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Because you said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them, although the LORD was there (35:10).

Edom coveted the land of Israel and Judah, planning to seize it, forgetting that the LORD Himself laid claim to it.

I will deal with you according to the anger and envy that you showed because of your hatred against them (35:11).

As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so I will deal with you. You shall be desolate, Mount Seir (35:14–15).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- To covet what belongs to God's people, although the LORD was there, is to sin directly against God, not merely against a neighbor.
- Edom's anger, envy, and hatred are named openly, and God will repay them in measure.
- Rejoicing over the desolation of another invites the same desolation upon oneself, a sober warning against gloating greed.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is coveting the land a sin against God when the LORD was there?
- What does God's repaying anger and envy in measure teach about His justice?
- How does Edom's gloating warn us against rejoicing in another's loss?

Question 4

Student Question:

What do you find yourself coveting that belongs to another, and how does remembering that the LORD is present change the way you regard it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now the LORD turns to the mountains of Israel, which the enemy had said are ours and a possession (36:1–2).

Because the enemy made you desolate and the object of the slander and gossip of the people (36:3), the LORD speaks in defense of His land.

I have spoken in my hot jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave my land to themselves as a possession (36:5).

I have sworn that the nations around you shall themselves suffer reproach (36:7). God will turn back the scorn upon those who scorned His people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The LORD speaks tenderly to His own land, contrasting His care for Israel with His judgment on Edom.
- God's hot jealousy is His zeal for His people and His name, not a petty emotion but a holy commitment.
- The reproach the nations heaped on Israel will return on their own heads, for God defends His own.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the LORD now speak to the mountains of Israel?
- What does God's hot jealousy reveal about His care for His people?
- How will the nations' reproach come back upon themselves?

Question 5

Student Question:

The LORD speaks to the mountains of Israel with promises of return, rebuilding, and fruitfulness (36:8–12). What does this teach about God's faithfulness to restore and bless even after judgment?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon come home (36:8).

For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown (36:9).

I will multiply people upon you, the whole house of Israel, and the cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt (36:10).

I will cause people to walk on you, even my people Israel, and they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance (36:12).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- After judgment comes the promise of restoration, showing God's faithfulness to renew and bless His people.

- The pictures of tilling, sowing, and fruitfulness foreshadow the spiritual abundance God gives His people in the new covenant.
- I am for you declares the LORD's gracious turning toward those He had disciplined, a comfort to all who return to Him.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the promise of fruitfulness reveal about God after judgment?
- How does I am for you encourage those returning to the LORD?
- How do these earthly pictures point forward to spiritual blessing in Christ?

Question 6

Student Question:

When you have come through a season of ruin brought on by your own sin, how have you experienced or doubted God's willingness to restore you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The land had been slandered as one that devours people and bereaves its nation of children (36:13).

Therefore you shall no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children (36:14).

I will not let you hear anymore the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples (36:15).

The LORD removes the shame and reproach that had clung to His land and His people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God not only restores but removes the reproach, picturing how He takes away the shame of those He redeems.
- The removal of disgrace anticipates the cleansing and acceptance God gives in Christ.
- This tender attention to His people's shame shows the LORD's heart to lift up the lowly and the disgraced.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that God removes the reproach from His land?
- How does this point to the way Christ removes our shame?
- Why does God attend to the disgrace of His people?

Question 7

Student Question:

The LORD says plainly, It is not for your sake that I will act, but for the sake of my holy name (36:22, 32). Why does God stress that He acts for His name and not because Israel deserves it, and how does this guard against thinking we earn His favor?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The LORD recalls why Israel was scattered. They defiled the land by their ways and their deeds, like the uncleanness of one who is unclean (36:17).

So I poured out my wrath upon them and scattered them among the nations (36:18–19). The exile was just judgment for their sin.

But when they came to the nations, they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land (36:20).

But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations (36:21).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Israel's exile was deserved. They defiled the land, so no claim of merit can be made for their restoration.
- God's central concern is for His holy name, which His people had profaned among the nations.
- This sets the stage for the great declaration that follows, that God acts not for Israel's sake but for His name's sake.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the LORD recall that Israel defiled the land?
- How was God's name profaned among the nations?
- Why does God's concern for His name matter for understanding His grace?

Question 8**Student Question:**

How does it humble you and yet comfort you to know that God saves for the sake of His own name and not because of your worthiness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Thus says the Lord GOD, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name (36:22).

I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations (36:23).

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

The gathering and restoring flow from God's commitment to His own name, not from any worthiness in the people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Not for your sake guards against a merit-based reading. No one earns God's saving action, which springs from His grace and His name.
- It equally guards against a Calvinistic unconditional election, for God's choosing to act for His name is offered to a people called to respond, not an arbitrary decree saving some and damning others apart from response.
- God acts to vindicate His holiness, magnifying His name so that the nations may know that He is the LORD.

Discussion Prompts

- What does not for your sake teach about how we are saved?
- How does acting for His name guard against thinking we earn God's favor?
- Why does this passage not support an arbitrary, unconditional election?

Question 9

Student Question:

The LORD promises, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit. I will put my Spirit within you (36:25–27). Show from Acts 2:38, John 3:5, and Titus 3:5 how this cleansing and new heart are fulfilled in the new covenant in Christ and the church, received through faith, repentance, and baptism into Christ. Explain why this is not a promise of a future political restoration of national Israel, and how the words for my name's sake guard against both a merit-based reading and a Calvinistic unconditional-election reading. What does it mean for you to receive the new heart and the indwelling Spirit today?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you (36:25).

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (36:26).

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules (36:27).

These promises are fulfilled in the new covenant in Christ, in which we are washed, renewed, and given the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The sprinkling of clean water is fulfilled in baptism into Christ, by which we are cleansed and our hearts sprinkled clean (Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22).
- The new heart and new spirit are the inward renewal of the new covenant, received through faith, repentance, and baptism, not by physical descent or political restoration.
- The indwelling Spirit enables obedience, yet the promise is conditioned on response, for God says He will cause us to walk in His statutes as we yield to Him, not by an irresistible decree apart from faith.

Discussion Prompts

- How is the sprinkling of clean water fulfilled in baptism into Christ?
- What is the new heart and new spirit God promises to give?
- How does the indwelling Spirit help the believer walk in obedience?

Question 10

Student Question:

After studying these chapters, how should the promise of a new heart, a clean conscience, and the indwelling Spirit shape the way you live, repent, and walk before God each day?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God (36:28).

I will summon the grain and make it abundant, and the land that was desolate shall become like the garden of Eden (36:29–30, 35).

Then you will remember your evil ways, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities (36:31). Restoration leads to repentance, not pride.

Again the LORD says, It is not for your sake that I will act; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways (36:32). He will multiply His people like a flock (36:37–38).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The covenant formula, you shall be my people and I will be your God, is realized fully in the church, the people of God in Christ.

- True restoration produces self-loathing for sin and humble repentance, not boasting, for God acts not for our sake.
- The garden of Eden imagery and the multiplied flock picture the spiritual fruitfulness of God's people under the new covenant, not a guaranteed earthly nation-state.

Discussion Prompts

- How is you shall be my people fulfilled in the church?
- Why does true restoration lead to repentance rather than pride?
- What does the picture of a multiplied flock teach about God's people in Christ?