

Ezekiel 36 – The Mountains of Israel

By Holly Effiom

VV1-5

To whom is Ezekiel being directed to speak?

What are the mountains of Israel?

What do we know about “high places”? 1 Kings 3:2-4; 11:1-8

How does a wise man end up worshiping strange gods?

How then are the “mountains” of Israel distinguished from the high places? From the shepherds? Eze 28:14; Isa 14:13

What happened to the mountains of Israel?

In what way were the mountains of Israel harmed?

Who appointed them a possession? Eze 35:10

To whom were they appointed?

What is meant by the term “residue of the heathen”? Eze 7:24; 36:3, 4, 5

LESSON: We have discussed “high places” before in Ezekiel, and we understood that people have worshiped on mountain tops forever, but for the children of Israel, once the temple had been established, their sacrifice and worship was to take place at the temple alone (Lev 17:4). And we see from Solomon’s story, that high places had quickly become places of sacrifice and worship to multiple gods.

So, when the term “mountains of Israel” is used, understand that this is saying, “mountains of he whom *God rules*” (Gen 32:28) – it’s not just some *place* – these are the *mountains over which God rules!* The mountains that have existed forever, and who have stood in silent, *peaceful*, witness to the truth and justice of God – *God’s own habitation*.

Understanding *this*, Ezekiel is telling us that *strangers* were allowed to infiltrate God’s home! And *who* gave them *this access*? God’s very own “chosen” ones – *he whom God rules* – gave their enemies access, not some bunch named after Esau! And *how* did the “chosen” do this? Through their abominations!

In the end times, these abominations will manifest as a people intently watching the Brown and Black people at the border, while leaving their back-door open to their *true* enemies, people who resemble themselves and *say* they believe the same way (Eze 36:3, 4, 5), but whose *true* intent is to steal all the wealth and subjugate people, by taking away their ability to *choose* who will rule over themselves. Eze 7:24

Gen 3:14-15

When are these actions, in the story of Adam and Eve, taking place? What went before? Gen 3:1-6

What is happening in this section of scripture?

Was Adam punished first? Who was punished first? Why?

What was the first creature’s punishment? What did it include?

- Eat dust. What does this mean?
- Enemy of the woman. Why an enemy of only the woman?

LESSON: The act of disobedience was initiated by the serpent, and what was that act? Telling a lie about God *and* about the woman. 1) You will not die if you eat of the tree; 2) You will be like gods, knowing good and evil (i.e., God does NOT want you to BE gods); 3) Adam and Eve, *children* of God, were ALREADY gods – the very *first of their kind!*

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Gen 3:16

Who was next punished? What did the punishment include?

In what way will the woman's sorrows be multiplied?

- Conception. Is this only related to the conception of children?
- Childbirth. Is this only related to the birth of children?
- Desire for husband. What might this mean, in light of what is said in Gen 4:7?
- Husband will rule over you. Why would this particular punishment be directed toward the woman?

LESSON: Why did the serpent approach the woman with the temptation of being "...like gods..."? I've wondered at this, and it occurred to me that perhaps Eve was *feeling or was, or feared being*, subjugated by Adam, or perhaps, Eve *coveted* Adam's position. V16 makes me believe that such had been the case.

Rev 12 adds an interesting spin of how we understand conception, the development of an idea, and childbirth, the fruition of that idea into form and life. For example, a little girl somewhere the world "conceives" of an idea to become a doctor. We learn in this section of scripture that the process that even leads to *wanting* to become a doctor will be hard-fought, and will even require much more effort and pain to bring it to fruition. And such is definitely the case with children.

It is noteworthy that the phrase, "...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" is eerily similar to God's discussion with Cain on the nature of *sin*, "...sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Gen 4:7.

When studying Gen 4:7 before, I interpreted that section of scripture to be saying sin would be a source of temptation for Cain, over which God says he will rule. Is this the same interpretation that should be applied to Eve, in Gen 3:16? Eve is *not* sin (Gen 1:31), but rather created by God, taken from Adam's side. I believe Gen 3:16 expresses Eve's desire for a true partnership, *co-rule*, with her husband, which requires *subjection* to the other by each partner. While subjugation might have been a concern in her heart, she didn't covet Adam's position.

Subjection involves *choice*. Subjugation involves *force*. Eve's punishment was *subjugation* by her husband which ensured little peace in the household, as they were *both* made in the very *image of God*.

Gen 3:17-19

Is Adam cursed specifically? What did God curse in Adam's place?

In what way did the *ground* sin?

How is the ground being cursed, punishment for Adam then?

- Thorns and thistles among the herbs. What does this mean?
- In the sweat of the brow shall he eat. What does this mean exactly?
- Return to dust. What does this mean?

LESSON: Viewing the punishment meted out in this section reminds me of *Jesus*. Instead of God taking Adam's life, which was the actual punishment for his sin, the ground stood in for Adam – God extended mercy toward His son. This required a *substitution*.

Nowhere in the story of Adam's disobedience did the ground play any part. The ground was innocent – God *laid his hand on the ground* instead of Adam. NOTE: everything upon the earth was created from the ground (Gen 1:24-25). So, not only was Adam born out of the ground, but the ground is also his source and place of occupation and of nourishment, and recipient of all that is good and bad, or neither. The ground will also receive Adam's body again, when he has completed his course.

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But while Adam is alive, he has to work the ground in order to live, and move, and have his being. Acts 17:28

What a beautiful picture of all that is Jesus.

Could this substitutional nature of the ground in Adam's punishment be the reason the law of blood (Lev 17:13) requires that blood be returned to the earth? The *ground* receives the death meant for Adam? Is this the reason, Moses was punished for striking the rock multiple times, instead of *speaking* to the rock (Num 20:8-13)?

It seems to me that we should be thankful for the earth, and seek to preserve it, for everyone, not just ourselves and those like us.

The story of the water of Meribah (Num 20:8) teaches us that even as Moses put his own agenda before that of God's, when man does the same thing, he may accomplish his goal, but not without causing a great deal of harm, a great deal of unrighteousness or *injustice*.

Eze 36:6-15

How are mountains formed?

What does God want the mountains of Israel to know?

What was at the heart of His allowing the mountains of Israel to bear the shame of the heathen?

What exactly is the "shame of the heathen"? Ps 74:10; 129:1-4; Jer 25:9, 15, 29; Jer 26:6-9; 1 Sam 4:10-11

What does God mean when He says "...I have lifted up my hand..."?

What will happen to the heathen because He has lifted His hand? Jer 25:9-12

How is the lifting of His hand associated with the book of Revelation? Rev 6-19:17-19

What will happen to the mountains of Israel because He lifts His hand? Eze 35:5

- Your branches shoot forth and yield fruit, V8.
- You shall be tilled and sown, V9.
- Multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, and cities shall be inhabited and wastes shall be built, V10.
- 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, V11.

Is the land being prepared for those already there, or for those to come?

If "...my people of Israel..." are *still* to come, who is currently *inhabiting* the land? (Recall the meaning of the name Israel.)

Is God against the mountains of Israel? Who has God been against? Eze 26:3; 29:3; 30:22

What is significant about V9?

Is there repetition of the concept in V10 and 11? What does this mean?

How is the promise in these verses similar to what we learned in Eze 34:12-13? How is the *lesson* of Eze 7:24 proved true?

Remembering what was learned from the Gen 3 study, why does God, in this section, repeatedly mention multiplying men upon the earth, or having men walk upon the earth?

Do men "possess" the land right now?

How do men treat the land now? In what way has the earth bereaved the nations?

To whom is God speaking in this section of Ezekiel? What does this tell you about *God's* character?

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Do you get the sense that God is a *tree-hugger*?

LESSON: I asked God to show me what was meant by the sacrifice and oblation (Dan 9:27) that *the prince that shall come* will cause to cease. And, I understand that He has been showing it to me over the course of nearly a year (see the writings at <https://hollyelise.com/study-notes/> Interpretations, beginning about the 1,260th day from the first acquittal of the impeachment of the 45th US President).

From the time of the fall of Adam, a *substitution* has had to exist in order for righteousness (justice) to continue to manifest in the earth. The ground was the *substitution* to receive the punishment for Adam's sin – i.e., the ground made the sacrifice of himself, with the hope (oblation) that Adam will choose justice. Just as Adam grew up to become a family, the nature of his children still required a substitution for their sins – hence the story of Joseph. And as the family grew to become a nation, the nature of the nation still required a substitution, and hence the story of Israel. The abominations committed by Israel led to its fall and the extended rule of the Gentiles (sons of Japheth), the heathens, who had a *completely* different belief system.

And yet, despite Israel's choice to no longer be the substitute for the nations (Isa 22:24), the nations *still* required a substitute, i.e., one like the ground, who stood in the gap for Adam, until he was able to stand on his own, that is, handle his punishment himself. God Himself provided the ultimate substitution in Jesus Christ (the *ground*) who manifested Himself, once and for all, through His church. Isa 42:1-7

We also learned in this section of scripture that the earth was being prepared for those who were "...at hand to come..." or *soon* to come. The people currently inhabiting the mountains weren't necessarily the inheritors of it. God called those who would possess the land under discussion "...my people of Israel..." translated, my people whom God rules.

"God's people" are those who *allow* themselves to be ruled by God. And we know that that condition is not determined by race or heritage or national origin, but rather by the decision or vow to submit oneself to the *authority* of God Almighty. So, when God is speaking to the mountain of Israel, or to the *ground*, He is speaking to those who have *chosen* the path of the *substitute* in life, in their homes, among their families, among the nations. They are the *kings* and *priests* to the world. Rev 1:6

One cannot be a king or priest (or walk among the mountains or high places) in the world and *not* choose to be a substitute (sacrifice and oblation). Hallelujah!

So, when God is speaking to the mountains of Israel, imagine that He is speaking to the ground, as we have come to understand it (for mountains are dust *created* under pressure). And He is promising restoral for the earth, to its *original* intent and purpose and *more*, in fact, to bless it *exceedingly* for its *choice* and *willingness* to be the substitute until God *lifted his hand*, until Adam was able to stand on his own two feet, and handle the consequences of his own sin. Rev 19:17-21

VV16-23

How did the house of Israel treat their *own* land? How did the Gentile power treat its land?

Did they follow the commandments, or live according to the example of Jesus Christ?

Did the house of Israel do this while residing in the presence of God? What about the Gentile power?

What were the house of Israel and even the Gentile power, in its time, doing that brought God's wrath?

How did God manifest his fury upon the house of Israel? What about the Gentile power, according to Eze 7:20-24?

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When the house of Israel was exiled from their land, how did they describe themselves in the various nations to which they went? How do you know?

How does the very same concept manifest in the time of the Gentile power?

(NOTE: Consider the “Crusades” and exploration of the “New World” and “Line of Demarcation”. The violence perpetrated upon societies and people who looked, sounded, and believed differently, was done *in conjunction with* the church of Jesus Christ and in *God’s name*. And, when those very same people arrive seeking the blessing of good government and peace, *God’s name* is, once again, being invoked to perpetrate even *more* violence upon them.)

Were the house of Israel and even Gentiles, during their time, speaking the truth of God?

How did their attitude and actions profane the name of God?

When God takes action, is it for the sake of upholding the words of His *chosen*?

How did God feel about what the house of Israel and even the Gentiles did? How do you know?

What is the heathen learning from God’s judgment upon the whole house of Israel?

LESSON: 1 Kings 21. Looking at how the inhabitants of the Gentile power treat the land, gives us an idea of how the house of Israel treated its land, during their time and place of dominance. The story of king Ahab, king of Samaria, exemplifies the greed and disrespect with which those with wealth and power treated their neighbors.

Now, expand the understanding of this story between neighbors in 1 Kings 21 to the level of nations, and arrive at a view of the history of European *expansionism*, through the *conquest* of the old world (Africa and the Middle East, into parts of Asia) and invasion of the “New World”, i.e., the conquest of the Americas.

Would the *theft* of a neighbor’s inheritance and then his *murder* be any more acceptable to God than Ahab’s theft of Naboth’s inheritance and his murder? Does calling it expansionism or conquest, make it any *less* a theft and murder?

Another concept to take away from 1 Kings 21 is the understanding that it is kings (possessors of *so much*) sitting in their houses, coveting what little or *much* their neighbor has, not the other way around. The neighbor, who is maintaining and growing his father’s inheritance for the next generation, is not thinking up ways to steal what is in the king’s possession.

VV24-38

Who is God speaking of in this section of scripture? The king or the neighbor?

What is God’s promise to this one?

Why must God sprinkle water on this one? Is bathing acknowledgment that one is dirty?

What does it mean, then, to be sprinkled with water?

What does God promise regarding this one’s heart and spirit?

Why is a heart of flesh needed?

Who’s spirit will be placed within this one?

Why must cleansing take place *prior* to the introduction of God’s spirit? How do you know?

What will happen once this spirit is added?

Will this one live in some foreign land?

What will be possible once order is restored to the land?

In what way will people be “God’s people”?

In what way will God be God?

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Will there be a time when God's people will acknowledge the error of their ways? Why is this necessary?

Is the *acknowledgement of sin* then the model of being *sprinkled with water*? Or vice versa, being sprinkled with water is a metaphor for the acknowledgment of sin?

Once one is cleansed, what is possible? How do you know?

In what ways are the sacrifices of the Old Testament a metaphor for this concept?

What will happen to the land? Cities? Wastelands? Deserts?

What will be said regarding the places that had been destroyed by war?

Will the Gentiles no longer exist?

What will be learned by the Gentiles? Will they still be *heathen*?

What about the literal house of Israel, will they return to God? What will they ask God to do for them?

What is God's impetus for doing this?

LESSON: In this section of scripture, God is showing us what is meant by certain concepts and phrases used, such as sprinkle with clean water, which *is* the acknowledgment that one is dirty, and being given a new heart and a new spirit, which *is* repentance. But even further, God is giving us an understanding of what is possible with a heart of flesh and His very own spirit, "...with God all things are possible." Matt 19:26

Repentance unleashes the power of God in our world – Adam is able to rebuild cities, and till the ground in deserts and produce what he needs to live, such that it becomes like a garden of Eden. The devastated and ruined cities can become inhabited again. Those of the Gentiles that are left will learn of the God, *in all His glory*, that the children of Israel had the privilege of knowing; the God who can build up what Adam had ruined and grow food in the desolate places.

Seeing what He does among the Gentiles, will prompt *even* the children of Israel to cry, "*Me, too! Me, too!*" And God will do it! He will increase their number in the world, and these will be *holy* people, not like those that went before.

Repentance allows Adam to be Adam and unleashes God to be God!