

Small Group Guide: Ezekiel 35-37 - God's Restoration of Israel



Summary:

This sermon explores Ezekiel chapters 35-37, focusing on God's judgment against Edom and His promise to restore Israel—not because of Israel's righteousness, but because of His holy name and faithful character. The message emphasizes that God will gather the scattered descendants of Jacob back to their land, cleanse them spiritually, and establish His everlasting kingdom through the Messiah. The sermon highlights the principle that God keeps His promises based on who He is, not on human merit. It connects these ancient prophecies to modern history, including the reestablishment of Israel in 1948, while pointing toward ultimate fulfillment in Christ's millennial reign. The pastor draws parallels between the Antichrist's counterfeit kingdom and Christ's true eternal kingdom, showing how the enemy perverts God's good plans.

Key Takeaways

1. God judges those who rejoice over His people's suffering - Edom was judged for their bloodlust and opportunism during Israel's judgment (Ezekiel 35)
2. God keeps His promises because of who He is, not who we are - "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake" (Ezekiel 36:22)
3. God gathers His people first, then cleanses them - Israel will be regathered in unbelief but will receive spiritual renewal when they recognize the Messiah
4. The valley of dry bones illustrates impossible restoration - Only God can bring life from death, both physically and spiritually
5. Future fulfillment points to Christ's millennial reign - The ultimate restoration involves Jesus reigning from Jerusalem with a united Israel

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Why was Edom (Mount Seir) judged so harshly in Ezekiel 35? What does this teach us about how God views those who take advantage of His people during times of discipline?
2. In Ezekiel 36:22-23, God says He will restore Israel "for my holy name's sake." What does this reveal about God's character and His motivation for keeping promises?
3. What is the significance of the order in Ezekiel 36—that Israel will be gathered first, then cleansed? How does this connect to Zechariah 12:10?

Personal Reflection

4. Ezekiel's response to God's question "Can these bones live?" was "O Lord, You know." When have you faced a situation that seemed impossible? How does Ezekiel's response challenge your faith in God's ability?

5. The pastor mentioned that we shouldn't judge who is "too far gone" because God is bigger than our imagination. Is there someone in your life you've written off spiritually? How might God be calling you to reconsider?

6. God restored Israel not because they deserved it, but because of His faithfulness. How does understanding God's grace toward undeserving people change how you view your own salvation?

Application and Action

7. The sermon emphasized that God keeps His promises because of who He is, not because of who we are. How should this truth affect:

- Your confidence in prayer?
- Your assurance of salvation?
- Your hope for the future?

8. Edom was judged for lacking compassion toward their "relatives" during judgment. How can we show compassion to others who are experiencing consequences for their choices, without enabling sin?

9. The two sticks (Judah and Ephraim) becoming one represents future unity. What divisions in the body of Christ concern you most? What practical steps can you take to promote unity in your sphere of influence?

Deeper Dive: Prophecy and Modern Application

10. The message mentioned potential connections between the Holocaust and Israel's rebirth in 1948 as possible foreshadowing of these prophecies. How do we balance:

- Taking prophecy seriously without becoming date-setters?
- Watching current events through a biblical lens without becoming distracted from the Great Commission?

11. How does understanding that the Antichrist will imitate Christ's future reign (temple, covenant, rule from Jerusalem) help you recognize potential deception?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to put into practice this week:

*****Option 1: Prayer for Israel*****

Spend time this week praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and for the Jewish people to recognize their Messiah.

*****Option 2: Examine Your Heart*****

Reflect on whether you've ever taken satisfaction in someone else's downfall or struggles (like Edom did). Confess this to God and ask Him to give you His heart of compassion.

*****Option 3: Share the Hope*****

Think of someone you've considered "too far gone" spiritually. Pray for them daily and look for an opportunity to share God's love with them.

****Option 4: Study God's Faithfulness****

Read through Romans 11 this week and journal about how God's faithfulness to Israel demonstrates His faithfulness to you.

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

Closing Reflection

God's restoration of Israel demonstrates that He is in the business of bringing life from death, hope from despair, and unity from division. Just as He promised to restore Israel not because of their merit but because of His holy name, He has saved us not because we deserved it but because of His grace and faithfulness.

The same God who can animate dry bones can breathe new life into:

- Your dead relationships
- Your seemingly impossible circumstances
- Your spiritually dry seasons
- People you've given up on

****Question for the week:**** Where do you need to trust God's ability to do the impossible?

Closing Prayer

Close by praying:

- For faith to believe God can do the impossible
- For the peace of Jerusalem and for Jewish people to recognize their Messiah

- For hearts of compassion rather than judgment toward others
- For renewed confidence in God's faithfulness to keep His promises
- For any specific needs mentioned during your discussion

For Next Week

Read Ezekiel 38-39 in preparation for next week's study on the prophecy of Gog and Magog.

5-Day Devotional: God's Unfailing Promises to Israel



Day 1: The Holiness of God's Name

Reading: Ezekiel 36:16-23

Devotional:

God's motivation for restoring Israel wasn't based on their worthiness, but on the holiness of His name. When Israel was scattered among the nations, they profaned God's reputation—people looked at them and questioned whether God could keep His promises. Yet God declared, "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake."

This reveals something profound about God's character: He is faithful not because we deserve it, but because He cannot be otherwise. His promises stand firm regardless of our performance. When we fail, when we wander, when we make God look bad through our choices, He remains committed to His word—not to validate us, but to vindicate His character.

Reflection:

Are there areas in your life where you've given up hope because you feel unworthy of God's blessing? Remember, God's promises rest on His character, not yours.

Application: Today, thank God for one promise He's kept in your life that you didn't deserve. Let that fuel your confidence in His future faithfulness.

Day 2: Gathered in Unbelief, Saved by Grace

Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Zechariah 12:8-11

Devotional:

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones presents a startling sequence: first the bones come together, then flesh covers them, but there is no breath—no spirit—in them yet. Only after they're assembled does God breathe life into them.

This prophetic picture reveals that God would gather the Jewish people back to their land before their spiritual awakening. They would return as a nation in unbelief, but later would "look on Him whom they have pierced" and mourn with recognition and repentance.

This is the pattern of God's grace: He pursues us before we're ready. He positions us before we understand. He gathers us before we believe. The Christian life begins not with our seeking, but with God's sovereign movement toward us while we were yet dead in our sins.

Reflection:

When did God begin working in your life before you recognized Him? How does knowing God initiates restoration change your view of evangelism?

Application:

Pray for someone who seems spiritually dead. Ask God to begin the work of gathering and assembling before they even recognize what's happening.

Day 3: The Heart Transplant

Reading: Ezekiel 36:24-28

Devotional:

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

God doesn't just reform our behavior—He performs heart surgery. The problem isn't that we need to try harder; it's that we need a different heart entirely. A heart of stone

cannot love God, no matter how religious it becomes. A heart of stone can follow rules but cannot worship authentically.

God's solution is radical: removal and replacement. He takes out the unresponsive heart and gives us one that's alive, sensitive, and capable of loving Him. This is the promise of the New Covenant—not just forgiveness of sins, but transformation of nature.

Notice the order: God cleanses us, gives us a new heart, puts His Spirit in us, and THEN we walk in His statutes. Obedience flows from transformation, not the other way around.

Reflection:

Are you trying to change your behavior with a heart that hasn't been transformed? Have you asked God for the heart transplant, or are you just trying to train your stone heart to act differently?

Application:

Identify one area of persistent struggle. Instead of resolving to try harder, ask God to change your heart's desires in that area.

Day 4: One Stick, One Kingdom

Reading: Ezekiel 37:15-28

Devotional:

God instructed Ezekiel to take two sticks—one labeled Judah, one labeled Ephraim (representing the divided northern and southern kingdoms)—and join them together as one. This symbolic act proclaimed that God would reunite what human sin had divided.

The division of Israel's kingdom was a consequence of Solomon's idolatry and Rehoboam's foolishness. For centuries, the nation remained fractured, sometimes even warring against itself. But God's plan has always been unity under one King—the Messiah from David's line.

This speaks to the nature of God's kingdom. Where sin divides, God unifies. Where human failure fragments, God restores wholeness. The ultimate fulfillment comes when

Christ reigns, and all of God's people—from every tribe, tongue, and nation—are gathered as one under His lordship.

****Reflection:**** What divisions in your life or relationships does God want to heal? Are there "sticks" He's calling you to join together?

****Application:**** Reach out to someone from whom you've been divided. Take one practical step toward reconciliation today.

Day 5: The Sanctuary in Their Midst

Reading: Ezekiel 37:24-28; Revelation 21:1-4

Devotional:

God's ultimate promise to Israel—and through them, to all who believe—is this: "My tabernacle also shall be with them. Indeed, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

From the Garden of Eden, through the Tabernacle, the Temple, the Incarnation of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and finally the New Jerusalem, the entire biblical story is about God dwelling with His people. Every promise, every covenant, every prophetic vision points toward this: God WITH us.

The enemy tries to counterfeit this. The Antichrist will attempt to rule from Jerusalem with a temple in his honor, demanding worship. But he can only create a temporary, perverted imitation. God's presence is eternal, authentic, and transformative.

When Christ returns to reign, He won't just visit occasionally or send messages through prophets. He will dwell among His people forever. This is the hope that anchors us through every trial—not just that we'll go to heaven someday, but that heaven will come to earth, and God Himself will make His home with us.

Reflection:

How does knowing God's ultimate plan is to dwell WITH you forever change your perspective on current struggles? What does it mean that God doesn't just want to bless you from a distance, but to live in intimate relationship with you?

Application:

Practice God's presence today. Set reminders on your phone every few hours with the simple message: "God is with me right now." Let this truth reshape your day.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, Your faithfulness endures forever. Not because of our worthiness, but because of Your holy name, You keep Your promises. Thank You for gathering us when we were scattered, for giving us new hearts when ours were stone, for uniting what was divided, and for promising to dwell with us forever. Help us to live today in light of Your eternal promises. In Jesus' name, Amen.