

“Longing For the Spirit”

Ezekiel 36¹⁶⁻³⁰

Introductory Question

Q – What verse or verses have you learned & leaned on to give you hope when times are tough? Why?

Discussion Questions

Background – Today we’re going to look at some important words of hope in Ezekiel. Since many people are not very familiar with the life and times of Ezekiel I recommend you:

- a) **Read Ezekiel 1¹⁻³** to discover, “Where was he living and why (cf. 2 Kings 24¹⁰⁻¹⁴)? And
 - b) **Read Ezekiel 2³⁻⁸** - What job did the LORD give him? (briefly summarize his job)
- 2) **Read Ezekiel 36:16-30.** The “word” or “message” that came to Ezekiel is in the form of what has been described as “a sad tale”^{Lind,289}. Who are the three main actors/groups in this story and what do you know about them?
 - 3) This “sad tale” also has three movements. Where is Israel in Act 1 of this story (v.17)? What happens to Israel in Act 2 of this story and why (vv.17b-19; cf. Lev. 18²⁸)?
 - 4) What do “the nations” say happened to Israel in Act 2 (v.20), and how does their interpretation of why it happened compare or contrast with God’s interpretation of why it happened?¹
 - 5) What does the LORD promise to do in Act 3 of the story to prevent it from ending in a complete tragedy (vv.24ff.)?
 - 6) In verses 24-30, how many times does God say, “I will”? What specific things will He do in Act 3?
 - 7) In the Bible, the specific words *new heart* and *new spirit* occur only in the book of Ezekiel (18³¹; 36²⁶). How are Jesus words to Nicodemus about the need to be “born again” (John 3³) and “born of the Spirit” (3⁸), similar to those of Ezekiel?
 - 8) What impact will God’s actions have on the nations (see vv.22-23, 35-36, 38)?
 - 9) Where have you see/heard/experienced God turning a potential tragedy into a testimony like this?²

During your prayer time use the past experiences of the Spirit’s restorative powers as prayers of thanks *and* as prayers of intercession, inviting people to ask him to do this anew in specific situations & lives & circumstances where his renewing & restoring work is desperately needed.

¹ The nations assume the reason for Israel having to leave the land was divine powerlessness (their god was too weak) rather than divine holiness (they had become too wicked). The nations were right to ask “why” (see Deuteronomy 29²⁴), but the answer they needed to understand was that “it is because this people abandoned the covenant...” (Deut. 29²⁵⁻²⁸).

² Notice how the nation’s original statement of God’s powerlessness in Act 2 (v.20) becomes a statement of his miraculous regenerative & restorative power in Act 3 (v.35).