

Chapter 35: Prophecies against Mount Seir (the mountainous region south of the Dead Sea, essentially equivalent to **Moab**). The basic warning is not to triumph over the desolation of Israel but to recognize God's hand in judging His people. *"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, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the Lord"* (Ezekiel 35:15).

Chapters 36 and 37: Here we look forward to the restoration of Israel, with these blessings:

- The land itself will be restored (36:1-15)
- The people will be gathered back to the land (36:24)
- The Lord will cleanse them and give them a new heart and spirit (36:25-28, 37:1-15)
- The land will become abundantly fruitful (36:29-36)
- People will fill the land (36:37-38)
- Israel and Judah will be reunited (37:15-23)

- The Lord's servant David will rule over them (37:24-25)
- The Lord Himself will dwell with them (37:27-28)

When will these events take place? Some say the prophecies were fulfilled with the return from captivity to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. But the sparse settlements of that time, still under the thumb of Babylon, cannot fit the description. And if Israel had been given a new heart and spirit, it was hardly evident when the Lord Jesus came to them.

Others say the prophecies have found their fulfillment in the church of Christ. In this view, spiritual blessings have taken the place of physical ones; for example, bearing spiritual fruit instead of ordinary grain of 36:30. This proposal, however, requires assigning symbolic meanings to hundreds of very specific prophecies. It's difficult, for instance to find any application to the church of the vision of the sticks as the reunification of the two houses of Israel.

It seems best to simply take the prophecies at their word and look forward to a rebirth of an earthly nation, under its Messiah, during the thousand years of the millennium (Revelation 20:3-7).

Questions:

1. Why will the Lord strike Mount Seir (chapter 35)?
2. Why did the Lord bring the people of Israel into judgment? Why will He restore them?
3. Will Israel be rebuilt exactly the same as before?

4. What will give the Israelites the ability to follow God's rules this time?
5. What is symbolized by the valley of dry bones?
6. What is symbolized by the two sticks in 37:16-22?
7. What is the ideal form of government, according to this passage?
8. What conditions, if any, are there for the people of Israel to be restored? What does this say about our salvation?