

WEEK 12 —OUTLINE

The Inward Recovery by Life for the Carrying Out of God's Economy

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 36:21-38

<< DAY 1 >>

I. "Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it" (Ezek. 35:2):

A. That the judgment on Edom is repeated here (cf. 25:12-14) indicates that in the process of God's recovery by life, there is still the need of God's judgment, particularly on Edom, who typifies the old man (see footnote 1 on v. 12):

1. The old man refers to the natural life in our soul; the old man is our very being, which was created by God but became fallen through sin, and it is the same as the first "I" in Galatians 2:20.

2. Formerly, our soul acted as an independent person, with the old man as its life and personality; now, since the old man has been crucified (Rom. 6:6), our soul should act only as an organ of Christ and should be under the control of our spirit, having Christ as its life.

3. Because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment on the old man must be repeated again and again, until the day of the redemption of our body (Eph. 4:30).

B. In order to recover us and make us the new man, God must judge our old man, our old creation (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-11).

<< DAY 2 >>

II. For the inward recovery of His people, God acts on behalf of His holy name (Ezek. 36:21-23; Matt. 6:9; Isa. 29:23):

A. In His recovery God acts on behalf of His holy name (cf. Eph. 1:4; Rev. 21:2).

B. We have been recovered and revived not because of any merit in ourselves but because God did something in us for His own name (cf. 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:15).

III. For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His judicial redemption to them for their being cleansed with the precious blood of Christ (Ezek. 36:25; 1 Pet. 1:18-19):

A. The clean water in Ezekiel 36:25 refers to the redeeming and cleansing blood, which is a cleansing and opened fountain for sin and for impurity (Zech. 13:1; cf.

Num. 19:2-10).

B.The Lord washes us from all our filthiness, including all kinds of sinful things, unjust things, unrighteous things, and dark things (1 John 1:7, 9; cf. Eph. 5:8-9).

C.The Lord cleanses us from all our idols (Ezek. 14:3; 1 John 5:21; Col. 1:18b).

« DAY 3 »

IV. For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His organic salvation to them to give them a new heart and a new spirit so that they may be deified to become a new creation, the New Jerusalem (Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:2; Psa. 51:10; 78:8; 1 Pet. 3:4):

A.While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened (Eph. 2:1; 4:18):

1.When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, making our stony heart a heart of flesh, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3).

2.Furthermore, He enlivens and renews our spirit with His divine life (Col. 2:13).

3.As a result, we love the Lord and desire Him with our renewed heart, and we can contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him by exercising our renewed spirit.

B.The Lord gives us a new heart to love Him (Mark 12:30):

1.Our heart represents us with regard to our inclination, affection, delight, and desire (cf. Matt. 15:8).

2.Our heart is our representative in action, our acting agent (cf. Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34-35; 15:18-19).

3.God gives us a new heart because He wants us to incline toward Him, adore Him, desire Him, and love Him (1 Cor. 16:22; 2:9).

4.In order to maintain the newness of our heart, we must keep our heart turned to the Lord and seek purity, loving Him with our whole heart (Mark 12:30; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Prov. 4:20-23; Psa. 119:2, 11):

a.Our heart needs to be soft (Ezek. 36:26; cf. Matt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 5:10-11a; Isa. 11:2; Rom. 8:28).

b.Our heart needs to be pure (Matt. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:22).

c. Our heart needs to be loving (Eph. 3:17, 19; 2 Cor. 5:14).

d.Our heart needs to be at peace (Acts 24:16).

« DAY 4 »

C. The Lord gives us a new spirit to receive and contact Him (John 4:24):

1. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit so that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, and be one with God (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17).
2. For us to have a new spirit means that our old, deadened spirit has been enlivened through regeneration (Eph. 2:1; John 3:6).
3. In his subtlety Satan has hidden the matter of the human spirit from most Christians; the spirit is an overlooked part of man (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; Zech. 12:1; John 4:24; 1 Thes. 5:23; cf. Jude 19-21).
4. In order to maintain the newness of our spirit, we must continually exercise our spirit to contact the Lord so that we may walk, live, and have our being in and according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4; 6:4; 7:6; 1 Cor. 6:17):
 - a. We must call on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:12).
 - b. We must pray-read His word as the Spirit (Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18).
 - c. We must rejoice always, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything (1 Thes. 5:16-18).
 - d. We must fan our spirit into flame, not quenching the Spirit (2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Thes. 5:19).
 - e. We must practice prophesying for the building up of the church, not despising prophesying (v. 20; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31-32).

« DAY 5 »

V. "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do" (Ezek. 36:27):

- A. For the inward recovery of His people, God not only gives us a new heart and a new spirit (v. 26) but also puts His Spirit within us, in our spirit, making the two spirits one mingled spirit (Rom. 8:9, 16) and causing us to be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).
- B. God's Spirit within us contains God's nature, and God's nature corresponds to God's law; because we have God's nature within us (2 Pet. 1:4), we are able to keep His law spontaneously by walking according to our regenerated spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 22-23, 25).
- C. The Lord's causing us to walk in His statutes refers to the law (the automatic principle; the innate, automatic function) of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2); this is the Lord's guiding us to walk on the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Psa. 23:3).

D. The righteous requirement of the law is spontaneously and automatically fulfilled in those who walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4, 2).

E. The Spirit with our spirit is the key, the secret, to God's organic salvation (v. 16; 5:10).

« DAY 6 »

VI. As a result of the inward recovery by life, the desolate and waste places will become like the garden of Eden (Ezek. 36:34-36):

A. The Lord's recovery should come to the point where it is like the garden of Eden.

B. In "the garden of Eden" we have Christ as the plant of renown (34:29), Christ as the tree of life with the rich food supply (Rev. 2:7; 22:14).

VII. In His recovery by life, the Lord desires to increase us "with men like a flock" (Ezek. 36:37-38):

A. The Lord has promised to increase us, filling the waste cities "with flocks of men" (v. 38), but we still need to inquire of Him, asking Him to do what He desires to do (Luke 10:2).

B. We should not say that numbers do not mean anything and that we do not care for numbers; we need to pray for the increase, claiming the Lord's promise in Ezekiel 36; we need to remember that quality comes out of quantity.

C. We need to pray that the Lord will give us the increase and that He will bring in flocks of men (cf. John 4:4-8, 28-30, 39-42; Luke 19:1-10).

« WEEK 12 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 35:2 Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it.

Rom. 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves.

The recovery by life begins in Ezekiel 33...Following this, in chapter 35 the Lord reminds us of the need to condemn our old man, which is signified by Edom. This is the reason that after chapter 30 there is another word concerning the judgment upon Edom. For the most part, God waits until judgment has been executed before He begins His work of recovery. However, in the process of recovery, there is still the need of God's judgment. This is true, in particular, regarding Edom. Edom was judged in the previous section, but because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment upon the old man must be repeated. Yesterday you might have condemned your old man and experienced judgment upon him. But today your old man may return to pay you a visit, perhaps in a nice way or in a subtle way. You have been recovered and you have been brought back to Christ as the good land and have entered into the rich enjoyment of Christ. You might have thought that your old man had been fully condemned and judged, but you did not realize that he has come back without giving you any notice and without asking for permission to visit you. Now as you are enjoying Christ, he is with you, hating your enjoyment of Christ and your enjoyment of the church life. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 187-188)

Today's Reading

[In Romans 6:6 old man refers] to the natural life in our soul. The old man is our very being, which was created by God but became fallen through sin, and it is the same as the "I" in Galatians 2:20. It is not the soul itself but the life of the soul, which has been counted by God as hopeless and has been put on the cross and crucified with Christ. Formerly, our soul acted as an independent person, with the old man as its life and personality; now, since the old man has been crucified, our soul should act only as an organ of Christ and should be under the control of our spirit, having Christ as its life. (Rom. 6:6, footnote 2)

Ezekiel 35 says that Edom and his company were happy to see that Israel was desolate (vv. 12, 15). Edom was also waiting to possess the two nations of Israel and Judah, claiming them as belonging to Edom. To the Lord Edom was speaking nonsense, for He intended to exercise His judgment upon Edom once again.

We need to learn the lesson of judging Edom. While we are being recovered, we have to judge our old man again and again. The judgment upon Ammon, Moab, Tyrus, Zidon, and Egypt may be once for all, but the judgment upon Edom cannot be once for all. On the contrary, Edom, our old man, must be judged repeatedly until the day of the redemption of our body. This is the reason that between Ezekiel 34 and 36, which are wonderful chapters, there is a very negative chapter regarding the judgment upon Edom. Because Edom returns, the judgment upon him must be repeated. Although we have condemned him, judged him, and chased him away, he comes back. Therefore, we need to cooperate with the Lord to exercise once again His judgment upon the old man.

The genuine recovery of the Lord is not simply a matter of repenting, turning to the Lord, and enjoying the blessing of the Lord. There also needs to be a change in our life and nature. In His recovery, God needs to touch our heart and our spirit and thereby touch our life directly and change us in life and nature. Therefore, we need both the outward recovery described in Ezekiel 34 and the inward recovery described in Ezekiel 36. Because the recovery in Ezekiel 36 concerns our life and our nature and involves our heart and our spirit, chapter 35 is inserted to show the importance of judging our old man. In order to recover us and make us a new man, God must judge our old man, our old creation. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 188)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 17

« WEEK 12 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:21 But I had regard for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

25 And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

Ezekiel 36:21-23 says, “But I had regard for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, I am not doing this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations will know that I am Jehovah, declares the Lord Jehovah, when I am sanctified in you in their sight.” Here we see that in recovering His people, God acts on behalf of His holy name. The inward recovery of life is carried out by God for the sake of His name. Many of us can testify that we have been recovered and revived not because of any merit in ourselves but because God did something in us for His own name. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 189)

Today’s Reading

The clean water in Ezekiel 36:25 refers to the Lord’s redeeming and cleansing blood, which is a cleansing fountain (Zech. 13:1). In recovering us, the Lord washes us from two categories of dirty things—from filthiness, including all kinds of sinful things, unjust things, unrighteous things, and dark things, and from idols. (Ezek. 36:25, footnote 1)

Zechariah 13:1 says that the Lord’s blood is a washing fountain....The Lord Jesus washes us with His cleansing blood not only when we are saved but also every time we are revived and brought back to Him.

The Lord washes us from two categories of dirty things—from filthiness and from idols....[Filthiness] also includes hating others, doing wrong to others, and indulging in worldly amusements. When we were saved, we felt ashamed of these filthy things. When we are revived, we also have such a feeling of shame, not wanting to recall the sinful and worldly things that we were once involved with. The Lord’s blood as the clean water washes us from all our filthiness. Perhaps today we need to be washed from gossip, rumors, jealousy, criticism, and unkindness. We praise the Lord that no matter how filthy we were, the Lord’s blood is the clean water that washes us and cleanses us.

Before we were saved,...we also had many idols. This also might have been our situation after we became backslidden and before we were revived. Consider how many idols you had before you were saved or revived. For some, an article of clothing is an idol....Once while Brother Watchman Nee was ministering in Shanghai, he suddenly pointed to a certain sister and asked, “How many chapters are there in Matthew?” She answered, “Twenty-six.” Then Brother Nee asked her how many buttons were on her long gown, and without hesitation she told him the correct number. Brother Nee went on to say, “You know your long gown so well. You even remember how many buttons it has. But you do not remember how many chapters there are in Matthew.” This simple illustration shows us that we may love an article of clothing more than we love the Lord Jesus. Anything that we love more than the Lord is an idol.

Some Christians have never shed a single tear for the Lord Jesus, but they have shed many tears for their clothing. This proves that they love clothing more than the Lord Jesus. Others may care for things such as a doctoral degree or a high position. Still others may desire fame or may want to make a name for themselves. All these things are idols. We need the Lord’s redeeming blood to cleanse us not only from all our filthiness but also from all our idols. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 190-191)

Further Reading: Living a Life according to the High Peak of God’s Revelation, chs. 4-5

« WEEK 12 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

2 Tim. 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

In His recovery by life the Lord gives us a new heart and a new spirit. Our heart is our loving organ, and our spirit is our receiving organ. While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened (Eph. 2:1; 4:18). When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, making our stony heart a heart of flesh, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3). Furthermore, He enlivens and renews our spirit with His divine life (Col. 2:13). As a result, we love the Lord and desire Him with our renewed heart, and we can contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him by exercising our renewed spirit. (Ezek. 36:26, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action. This means that whenever you act, you act by your heart. Therefore, we may say that our heart is our representative in action, [our acting agent]. We have something in our inner being that represents us, and this representative is our heart. When a brother says to his wife, "Dear, I love you," this means that his heart loves her...Whenever we enjoy something or dislike something, it is our heart that enjoys or dislikes. Thus, our heart is our representative, the acting commissioner or ambassador, of our inner being.

God in His salvation promises to give us a new heart...The new heart in Ezekiel 36:26 does not refer to another heart; it refers to a renewed heart. The first characteristic of this renewed heart is that it turns to God. The turning of our heart to God is a very healthy sign that He has renewed it.

The second characteristic of a renewed heart is that it seeks purity. First Timothy 1:5 speaks of love out of a pure heart. In 2 Timothy 2:22 Paul encourages Timothy to be "with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart..."According to the Bible, to have a pure heart is to have a heart with a single motive. Purity, therefore, is a matter of motive. If we do something with a double motive, our heart is not pure. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, pp. 182-184)

Since the heart is so vitally related to life, God has no other alternative but to deal with our heart that His life might be regulated out from us. Toward God, our heart has four great problems: hardness, impurity, unlovingness, and unpeacefulness. Hardness is a matter of the will, impurity is a matter not only of the mind but also of the emotion, unlovingness is a matter of the emotion, and unpeacefulness is a matter of the conscience. When God deals with our heart, He deals with these four aspects so that our heart may be soft, pure, loving, and at peace.

First, God wants our heart to be soft. To be soft means that the will of the heart toward God is submissive and yielding, not stiff-necked and rebellious. When God deals with our heart...He softens our hard, stony heart so that it becomes a soft heart of flesh.

Second, God wants our heart to be pure. A pure heart means a heart that sets its mind specifically on God. It is also a heart in which the emotion is exceedingly pure and simple toward God....It only loves God and wants God; besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire.

Third, God wants our heart to be loving. A loving heart means a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, yearns for God, and has affection toward God.

Fourth, God wants our heart to be at peace. A heart at peace means a heart in which the conscience has no offense (Acts 24:16), no condemnation or reproach; it is safe and secure. (The Knowledge of Life, pp. 126-128)

Further Reading: The Knowledge of Life, ch. 10; CWWL, 1964, vol. 3, "The Economy of God," chs. 7-8; Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, msgs. 21-22

« WEEK 12 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Zech. 12:1 ...Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him.

2 Tim. 1:6-7 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God...For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

In the eyes of God, our human spirit is ranked with the heavens and the earth...Zechariah 12:1 says clearly that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. The heavens are for the earth; the earth is for man; and man has a spirit to contact God.

Our human spirit is important in our contacting God, and our contacting God is our worship to God. We cannot contact God without worshipping Him...John 4:24 [says] that God is Spirit and that we must worship Him in our spirit. We worship Him by exercising our spirit. If we are going to live a meaningful life, we should contact God. He is our source, and our spirit is our spiritual organ for us to contact Him.

In our Christian walk, we need to walk according to our spirit (Rom. 8:4b). When you ask me a question, I should not answer you from my soul. I should answer you from my spirit...We are spiritual men who walk, live, and have our being according to our spirit. (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 72, 74)

Today's Reading

We also need to exercise our spirit. A loving heart is not sufficient. In addition to a loving heart, we need a renewed, receiving spirit. We had a human spirit before we were saved, but it was deadened. In Ephesians 2:1 Paul says that we were dead in offenses and sins...We were dead not in our body or in our soul but in our spirit. While we were living in our body, we were deadened in our spirit. When we were saved, the Lord Jesus enlivened our spirit. Thus, we now have an enlivened and renewed spirit.

One of the best ways to use our spirit to contact the Lord is to call, "O Lord Jesus!" When we exercise our spirit in this way, we have the sense of something moving deep within our being. That something is our spirit.

In his subtlety, Satan has hidden this matter of the human spirit from most Christians. When many believers read the Bible, they do not exercise their spirit but exercise only their mind. When we read the Bible, we need to exercise our spirit as well as our mind. We should never neglect our spirit. If we do not exercise our spirit, we cannot be proper Christians.

We should learn to exercise our spirit to be one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). This means that we need to realize that, in His inward recovery by life, He has given us a new spirit. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 193-195)

Second Timothy 1:6-7 indicates that we need to fan our spirit into flame...Our God-given spirit is what we must fan into flame...If you want to fan your spirit into flame, you need to open up your mouth, open up your heart, and open up your spirit. You need to open these three layers of your being. You have to use your mouth to say, "O Lord Jesus." But then you have to go deeper by using your mouth with your heart to say, "O Lord Jesus." Then you need to go even deeper by using your mouth with your heart and with your spirit to say, "O Lord Jesus." This is to open up your spirit from deep within. Then the fire burns.

The spirit given to us by God is of power, of love, and of sobermindedness. Power belongs to our will. Love belongs to our emotion. Sobermindedness belongs to our mind. God has given us a spirit of these three things. Our will should be strong, full of power; our emotion should be loving, full of love; and our mind should be sober, full of sobermindedness...We can do things because we have the capacity of power. We should not say that we do not love people, because we have the capacity of love. We should not say that we are in darkness, because we have the capacity of sobermindedness with a clear sky. (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 80-83)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 1, "Life Messages, Volume 2," ch. 71; The Spirit with Our Spirit, ch. 7

« WEEK 12 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

[In Ezekiel 36:27] we see that the Lord said not only that He will give us a new heart and a new spirit but that He will put His Spirit within us, putting His Spirit into our spirit. We should not neglect our spirit, because our spirit is the vessel which contains the divine Spirit. When believers hear the word spirit, they usually think of the Holy Spirit. They seldom consider that they have a human spirit. Yes, we need the Holy Spirit, but we need to realize that the Holy Spirit is in our regenerated human spirit. "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit" (Rom. 8:16). Praise the Lord that we have a new heart and a new spirit and that we have the Holy Spirit within our spirit strengthening us all the time. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 195)

Today's Reading

God's commandments are according to His nature, and we have the nature of God within us because we have His Spirit within us. Now there is something within us that corresponds to God's law. God's Spirit within us contains God's nature, and God's nature corresponds to God's law. Because we have God's nature within us, it is easy for us to keep His law. Formerly it was difficult for us to love others, but now it is easy to love others and difficult to hate them because we have a new nature, God's nature, within us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 196)

The law of the Spirit of life is the subject of Romans 8....Life is the content and issue of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the ultimate and consummate manifestation of the Triune God after His being processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and becoming the indwelling, life-giving Spirit, who is life to all the believers in Christ. The law that has freed us from the law of sin [Rom. 8:2], which is of Satan, who dwells in the members of our fallen body (7:23, 17), is of this Spirit of life. It is this law, not God nor the Spirit, that works in us to deliver us from the working of the law of sin in our flesh and to enable us to know God and gain God and thereby live Him out. This law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life. Such a spontaneous law works automatically under the condition that fulfills its requirements. (Rom. 8:2, footnote 1)

The Spirit of life is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ corresponds with the law of God. This Spirit within us spontaneously fulfills all the righteous requirements of the law through us when we walk according to Him. (Rom. 8:4, footnote 1)

Our human spirit is important because it is in this spirit that Christ and the Spirit indwell us, taking our spirit as God's habitation (2 Tim. 4:22a; Rom. 8:11; Eph. 2:22). If you do not have God in your spirit, your soul will also be empty. The soul was made to be a vessel to contain God as the contents. Romans 9 tells us clearly that we human beings are vessels to God, containers to contain God as our contents (vv. 21, 23). Today the Triune God is embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit.

As Christians, our spirit has been regenerated. To be regenerated is to be reinforced. Something stronger and richer has been added into our being....God has given us justification, reconciliation, and His full salvation. All these were given in addition to God's life and God's Spirit. Actually, all these heavenly things are included in God's life and God's Spirit, which have been added into our spirit. We have a regenerated and reinforced spirit, a very strong spirit, with a companion. This companion is the Triune God. The Triune God becomes our companion in our spirit. What an enriched spirit we have! (The Spirit with Our Spirit, pp. 73, 79)

Further Reading: The Spirit with Our Spirit, ch. 8

« WEEK 12 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 36:35 And they will say, This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.

37-38 Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock....So will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they will know that I am Jehovah.

A major point in Ezekiel 36 is the recovery of the good land, that is, the restoration of the full enjoyment of the riches of Christ (vv. 8-15, 33-36). Whenever we backslide and become fallen, we lose the rich enjoyment of Christ. Christ Himself is rich, but we may lose the enjoyment of His riches. We praise the Lord that in His recovery there is the restoration of the enjoyment of the riches of Christ.

Verse 24 says, "I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land." In His recovery, God brings us out from the world and brings us back to our own place. He returns us to Christ as our land.

In the Lord's recovery there are two aspects...the outward recovery and the inward recovery. Suppose that you have fallen away from Christ, from the church life, and from the fellowship with the saints and have become involved with sinful, worldly things. But one day the Lord seeks you out and brings you back to Himself, to the church life, and to the fellowship with the saints. This is...an outward recovery...[to bring] you back to the good land....You still need the inward aspect of the Lord's recovery, which is covered in 36:22-30. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 188-190, 189)

Today's Reading

In Ezekiel 36:34-36 the Lord promised that the desolate and waste places would become like the garden of Eden. There...Christ as the tree of life, would be their rich supply. The local churches need to reach such a high condition that they are like the garden of Eden. Even today, often in the church meetings we have the sense that we are in the garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:37-38 says, "Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Moreover for this I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. Like the holy flock for sacrifices, like the flock of Jerusalem in her appointed feasts..." Here the Lord promised that He would bring in flocks of people. Although He has promised to do this, we still need to inquire of Him. This means that we need to pray for the increase, saying, "O Lord, flock people in. You promised this to us."

In the past, whenever we prayed for an increase of number, the Lord answered. I feel that we need to pray more. The Lord promised, yet He needs our inquiring. He promised that He will increase our number by flocks of men, but we need to pray for this and ask Him to do it. I hope that the saints in all the local churches will pray definitely and specifically for the increase of numbers. We should never be content with our present number. Rather, we should all aspire to be doubled within a period of time. Thus, we need to pray, "Lord, flock people in."

In 1963 in Los Angeles, we had only twenty to thirty people, but after we prayed for six months, the number was greatly increased. In Elden Hall we also prayed that the Lord would flock people in. We prayed, "Lord, bring flocks of men to us," and the Lord heard this prayer. I feel that today we need to pray even more, standing upon and claiming Ezekiel 36:37-38 concerning the increase of numbers.

We should not say that numbers do not mean anything and that we do not care for numbers. We should not comfort ourselves with any failure in the matter of increase. We surely need the increase in numbers. We need to pray for the increase, claiming the Lord's promise in Ezekiel 36. When some hear this, they may say that they care not for quantity but for quality. However, quality comes out of quantity. Therefore, we need to pray that the Lord will give us the increase and that He will bring in flocks of men. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 196-197)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 17

« WEEK 12 —HYMN

Hymns, #743

God created us His vessels

Various Aspects of the Inner Life — The New Heart and the New Spirit

743

1. God cre - at - ed us His ves - sels His ex - pres - sion to a - chieve;
Thus He made a heart to love Him And a spir - it to re - ceive.

2. With our heart we have to love Him,
With our spirit Him possess
As our life, of Him partaking,
That Himself we may express.
3. Satan has our heart corrupted,
To our spirit death did give,
That the Lord we should not contact
But by self attempt to live.
4. Thus the Lord in His salvation
Heart and spirit has renewed
To recover our receiving
And our loving aptitude.
5. It is by our heart's renewal
We may God in love pursue,
And in newness of the spirit
We may contact God anew.
6. Ever true and pure and single
To the Lord our heart must be,
Poor in spirit, ever seeking
God to contact constantly.
7. Keep our heart, Lord, in love's freshness,
And our spirit strengthen more,
That in newness of the spirit
We may touch Thee o'er and o'er.