

Ezekiel 36:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

Analysis

This verse points toward God's gracious purposes of restoration despite Israel's persistent unfaithfulness. The Reformed emphasis on sovereign grace shines through—restoration doesn't depend on Israel's merit or ability but on God's covenant faithfulness and irrevocable purposes (Romans 11:29). This anticipates new covenant promises where God gives a new heart and His Spirit to enable obedience (Ezekiel 36:26-27). The pattern of judgment followed by grace-based restoration prefigures the gospel: humanity deserves condemnation but receives mercy through Christ's atoning work. God's restoration demonstrates His glory by showing grace triumphs over judgment.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

בְּ אֹ	אַל	הָגָ	אֲשֶׁר	בְּ אֹ
And when they entered	H413	unto the heathen	H834	And when they entered
	H935		H1471	
בְּ אֹ	אַת	קָדֵשׁ	בְּאָמֵר	לְקָרְבָּן
they profaned	H2490	name	H6944	H0
	H8033		H8034	
בְּאֹ	יְמִינָה	וְשָׁמֶן	כִּי	וְ
to them These are the people	H5971	of the LORD	H428	out of his land
	H3068		H776	
וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ
and are gone forth	H3318			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:5 (References Lord): Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

Romans 2:24 (Parallel theme): For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Jeremiah 33:24 (References Lord): Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

Daniel 3:15 (Parallel theme): Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org