

## Ezekiel Chapters 35 and 36a - John Karmelich

Title: God's specific real estate obsession, and why we should care!

One of the things that always fascinates me is the God who created billions of stars and everything that we can fathom still says in effect, "See that little piece of land over there (Israel)? That's mine so don't mess with it!" I realize most of us Christians accept that although it's a little strange to think about! So why should we care? The text of this section focuses on the nation of Edom (part of Jordan today) and the land of Israel. As of when Ezekiel wrote this, God was "ticked off" at Edom for being an enemy to the Israelites for centuries! It also shows how important the land of Israel is to Him! Contemplating it, I thought about the fact God is going to rule the world one day from Israel, so therefore He cares about that little piece of real estate! I am aware He could have picked anywhere in the world, but God picked that spot, so we must accept it! Yes, I've had the pleasure of traveling there, and there's nothing special in the sense of beauty versus a tropical paradise. I accept He picked it and He's in charge so that's that! I also like pointing out Israel's a "land bridge" to three continents, so it's a reason that location is where it is, so the Israelites could be a good witness for God for travelers through that area!

When Israel is at war, I'm thinking, "Those people have no idea who they're messing with!" I never say Israel is perfect and let's be honest, God has kicked them out of that land for disobedience. Just saying, it's necessary for us to respect the land itself because it's the spot God picked and He's going to literally rule the world from that place! The idea of being "holy" is to be separated for a purpose. Since God did separate that land for Himself, we must respect the land itself as Holy and associated with God! I don't think the modern Israelites are perfect and a large percentage of them are secular. I just know as one of multitudes of devout Christians, I want to honor what God honors and even hate what He hates. God is in charge, and I must accept that! The challenge for the rest of this lesson is to discuss how that affects our lives here and now! OK, enough stalling, let me begin:

Chapter 35 focuses on the land of Edom. (Today it's the southern part of the country of Jordan). We've already had many chapters in this book where He goes "all around the neighborhood" stating what's the future for those nations. A key point is that God cares about His reputation and since they all knew the God of Israel was "the true and living God", we had chapters of judgments on other nations. So why is there a "backtrack" to deal with this nation called Edom? First their origin is from the brother of Jacob, who is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Let's just say Edom has had it "in for Israel" for centuries as of that date. I also suspect it has to do with the fact while the Babylonians were on the warpath, Edom, a small nation wanted to take advantage of the Babylonians conquering Israel and "get stuff" while it is occurring! I realize Babylon's a foreign entity and was God's chosen instrument to end Israel as of that date. The problem's Edom didn't have that authority, so God wanted to make it clear, "This is My land, so if you "Cross go, to try to get \$200" (monopoly game reference), God put "His foot down" to say in effect, that is my land and there is no messing with it unless I say so!

The key point is Jesus will LITERALLY rule the world from that location. That's why the land is Holy and not to be messed with unless God says so. Yes, the Israelites were kicked out of it and they lost the control over it for millennia. One of the reasons they got to have it in 1948 was the world felt sorry for them after the holocaust. One of the neat things they did was plant certain types of trees to drain water from swamp areas. The point is they took horrible land and made it beautiful. Today Israel exports all sorts of fruits, vegetables and flowers as they took "bad real estate" and made it good, because God did give them the land, so He gets all the credit!

At the same time in effect, God was telling the Edomites through Ezekiel who gave this message while he was captive in the Babylon, that Ezekiel should look towards Edom (not sure how that worked), but if God says look there, who are we to argue? The fascinating thing to me is God said the two cities we most associate with the Edomites were destroyed. One of them is historically famous (Bozrah). (Home of the caves from Raiders of the Lost Ark!) There's nothing in effect there but ruins that tourists like to see, plus a hotel! Just saying what Ezekiel is predicting here came true for centuries/millennia as just as he states major parts of Edom never became active cities again. Again, just in the last century, much of the land of Israel went from being swampland, to productive land. God's land is God's land. He cursed the land directly across a river from the land He's blessed to this day! It's more evidence to realize God is God and there's no excuse to ignore that! Evidence such as Israel being rebuilt, Edom as a nation no longer exists is great support for Biblical accuracy! So you know, the last famous Edomite was Herod, who ruled in Jesus' time! In short, the Romans ended that nation!

I'm not here to give an ancient "Middle East history lesson". A key point here is a lot of what's stated in this lesson is what Ezekiel wrote about in Chapters 35 and 36A. In effect I've been covering both these chapters for the last page or so!

With that said, I want to switch topics to a related idea. One of the things I've been thinking about as I studied this section is why is God so obsessed with the eternal future of that land? We get God's going to rule the world one day from there! We have no idea when that day is! How does this "eternity stuff" affect our lives today? The key word to me is hope! Most of us have experienced hard times when all is falling apart and we're barely hanging in there, be it money, health or other issues! One thing God is doing is reminding us there is a better future waiting for us! To state it another way, all the suffering in this life for His sake is "worth it"! As the old joke goes, "Read the end of the Bible, we win!"

The next time we feel, "This is it! I might as well end my life as there's no hope for my future!" He will find ways to remind us He works on His timing, for great things for those who trust in Him. God plans to rule the world literally from the land of Jerusalem so being part of the "winning team" benefits us in this life and the next! God took people with "nothing" and despite their imperfections He picked us for being a living witness for Him. The other thing about being at the end of our ropes, is none of us know what tomorrow will bring! My life began when God created me. God and God alone decides when it's time to end it. Therefore, having hope about our eternal future keeps us going when life is falling apart all around us!

With that said, the next lesson focuses on what God has accomplished in the last 100 years in Israel. I am just saying if God's word has been accurate this far, imagine the great surprises we will witness as a member of His "winning team"!

Obviously, the key focus is on the land of Israel and the Israelites God will use in the future. To put all this another way if Jesus will rule the world from Israel, there must be an Israel to rule from! That is an underlying point of this geography lesson! God goes to incredible lengths to make it obvious He exists, and He will rule the world from that little piece of geography! The God who created billions of stars is the same God who manifests Himself in human form and created a world for us to make a difference to Honor Him as well as show the great eternal plans for the future of that land! Ezekiel already spent lots of chapters condemning the Israelites from turning from Him. Hopefully we learn from that as we use our lives to glorify Him!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on that link on the same page! It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful

for you reading this. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks for reading all this!