

## Hope in God's Holiness. Ezekiel 36:16-38

### Returning to Ezekiel at Christmas

It doesn't feel like it after such an unusual year, but there are only five Sundays to go before Christmas -

And in the lead up to Christmas we are returning to Ezekiel

Why? You might especially ask that if you think Ezekiel is all judgment and gloom and baby Jesus is all sweetness and light, think of them like oil and water.

Its because if you are going to understand all the fuzz about Jesus' birth – about who Jesus is and what He does, and if you are going to understand why people are looking forward to Jesus' return

You need books like Ezekiel

You need the big picture of God's purposes and promises as the living God has revealed them in His prophets

Seeing the big picture of God's promises you can see the wonder and greatness and goodness of what Jesus has already done, and the wonder and greatness and goodness of what believers are looking forward to on Jesus' return

Ezekiel 36:16 is a good place to get back into Ezekiel because it starts with a summary of God's dealings with Israel in Ezekiel up to this point before it speaks of what God promises to do.

And it highlights a problem

A problem not so much for Israel – but for the living God

### Judgment Misunderstood

*Ezekiel*<sup>16</sup> *The word of the LORD came to me:*<sup>17</sup> *"Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity.*<sup>18</sup> *So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it.*<sup>19</sup> *I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.*

### Summary vv. 17-19

The image Ezekiel uses in v. 17 to picture the effect of Israel's sin may not be one we would choose. It is drawn from the Lord's instruction on what is clean and unclean in Leviticus [15], where both men and women are made unclean by bodily discharges.

But the point is clear. Israel by its behaviour had defiled, made unclean, the land and so it an unfit place for the LORD to be for the LORD is holy, and the holy and the unclean cannot come in contact with each other. He highlights two morally defiling acts – bloodshed and idolatry – both blatant rejections of the LORD as Israel's King, clear expressions of Israel's disowning their covenant relationship with Him. They sum up Israel's detestable behaviour of which Ezekiel has already given many examples.

While the LORD had been very patient over centuries with Israel's unfaithfulness He has now poured out His just anger on them. As Ezekiel's audience, the exiles in Babylon know only too well, He has acted by destroying Jerusalem and scattering the survivors, including them, throughout the nations.

God's judgment was their lived experience, and they knew it was just v. 19

*In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them*

The judgment they experienced, the wrath they endured, was exactly what the Lord had said in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-32 would happen when they abandoned the covenant.

God had acted justly and righteously, in sovereign power – bringing the nations like Babylon to do his will, to execute His judgement

Doing exactly what He had said He would do.

Such justice and righteousness, such faithfulness to His word, such might seen in His judgement of them – should have caused the people who witnessed it to be in awe of God, just as His judgments should cause us to be in awe of Him

But God's just action had done the opposite amongst the surrounding nations, had created a problem for God's reputation among them. V. 20

#### **The problem of the nation's response**

<sup>20</sup> *But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.'* <sup>21</sup> *But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.*

Israel's coming as exiles to the nations 'profaned my holy name'

God's name is His revelation of Himself – what God had said of Himself. Whether that is speaking of Himself to Abraham as God almighty [Gen 17], or revealing Himself to Israel at the Exodus as the LORD, the great I am [Ex. 3], or to Moses on the mountain as merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, forgiving but also a just judge.

His name here also has the sense of His reputation, how He is known amongst the nations, in His creation.

God says His name is holy – distinct, separate, different from all the names of the other gods, different from every other name of created beings.

His name is holy because He is holy, the only God, different from all that is created

He is – uncreated, having life in Himself, sovereign – accountable only to Himself, dependent on no-one, unchanging, immortal, almighty

To profane what is holy is to make what is holy into a common thing, in this case to make God out to be like all the other gods – with no difference from the idols, even lesser than the idols of the surrounding nations. To profane God's name is to cause people to think the LORD is not the God He has revealed Himself to be

How had Israel's going into exile profaned God's name, for Israel's exile was a testimony to God's faithfulness and power

It was because the nations interpreted what God had done through their own ignorant and defective understanding of reality

They were saying *'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.'*

And in saying that they were saying the Lord was either not powerful or not good.

The nations saw the gods as local powers.

There was a relationship between god and land and people. The god of the land was meant to keep his people safe and give them victory against their enemies. That was how he increased his prestige, his reputation, exalted his name

So if the LORD's people had to go out of their land it could only mean one of two things

He was not powerful. The gods of Babylon, like Dagon, were more powerful. The LORD was just some lesser deity, easily dispossessed of his property

Or Not good. A god who would accept his people's sacrifices but then cruelly abandon them in their time of need

That profaning of His name, that blackening of His reputation was both offensive to God, and was a disservice to the nations

It is offensive for the Creator, God of gods, Lord of lords – to be compared to, thought of, like some dumb idol

And if the Nations believe that about the LORD - How will they ever come to know the true and living God, the God who will judge them, from whom they need to find mercy, the God who alone can give them life

vv. 17-20 tell us Israel's sin and God's just judgment of it had created a problem for God's reputation

IN a sense all sin does

If God does not judge it – He appears powerless to uphold His rule, unconcerned with justice and righteousness, indifferent to the harm and destruction it brings, to the wrong done to His creatures

And when He acts in judgment – if there is judgment alone – it makes it look like God is the God of death, not life; of curse, not blessing – the exact opposite of God's reality

The nation's response to God's just judgment of Israel, the people to whom He had revealed Himself, saved, entered into a committed relationship with – raise the bigger question

Will human sin always cause God's reputation to be maligned, cause Him to be seen as not the God He is, a lesser god?

Will human sin always cause God's purpose of life and blessing for His creation to be frustrated?

The LORD says vv. 21-23 that He is not content to let His reputation be trashed, not content to let human rebellion dictate who He is seen to be in His world

God has concern for His holy name, and the wonderful thing we will see is that God's right concern for His holy name, His determination to be known as the God He is, will mean life and blessing – for sinners

That God's concern for His glory – is our hope, our only hope.

## What the Lord will do vv. 22-38

### Why He will act vv. 22-23

*Ezekiel 36:<sup>22</sup> "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.<sup>23</sup> And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.*

God is resolved to act, to vindicate the holiness of His great name. He will show to all He is the God He says He is

And He makes clear why He will act as He does, the motive for His action – He acts for the sake of His holy name. God will act because He wants the truth about Himself known, and known clearly

It is not for Israel's sake. As rebels, covenant breakers, they have no hold or call upon God. There is no reason why God should have any more dealings with them at all, for they have shown themselves persistently faithless and ungrateful

We need to hear that

Humanity flatters itself, we flatter ourselves, by believing

That there is something intrinsically valuable about us that obligates God to act for our sake

Somehow He owes us, or we are essential to His plan, or there must be something good He sees in us

We are determined to keep ourselves at the centre, and even God's actions should revolve around us

God doesn't need us. He could create a thousand universes teeming with intelligent life in a moment

What is to be seen in us is rebellion, ingratitude, wrath provoking sin that defiles His good creation

IN ourselves we are as attractive as corpses

If He loves us, and the Scripture says He does – He so loved the world

It is because He is love, not that we are lovable

God will act for the sake of His name, His reputation

And He Tells us the outcome of His action - nations will know the truth, know that He is who He says He is, the LORD, the living God, not an idol – 36, 38

And He tells us the means through which He will vindicate His name

Amazingly He says He will do it through sinful Israel – v. 23 “when through you I vindicate my holiness’.

God’s concern for His holy name means Israel will continue where they deserve to be finished with entirely, they will have life where they deserve death,

But what will God do in the face of their persistent rebellion, persistent sin to vindicate His name?

He won’t start to tolerate their sin, He won’t change who He is to accept they will never be perfect. Sinners have been wanting God to change for them all along but He has already shown in His judging Israel He will be the holy, just and righteous God He is

So if He won’t change what will He do through this sinful people to let the world know He is the God He says He is?

### **What He will do vv. 24-38**

He tells us in vv. 24-30. Note the repeated I – 7 times in vv 24-27 in English, more in Hebrew. This is something God commits Himself to, something that He personally and alone will do.

There is no conditionality – no if ... then...; If you ... then I ....

He doesn’t let it depend on them and their response at all. He says it will all depend on Him

It is just I, I, I

### **Faithful covenant partners vv. 24-30**

And in these verses God promises to personally reverse both the cause and effects of their covenant unfaithfulness, to vindicate His holy Name through making them fit to live in His presence in His land.

He will v. 24 gather them and bring them back into their own land, a land they will possess as His people.

*Ezekiel 36: <sup>24</sup> I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.*

He will v. 25 deal with the offence of their sin. He will cleanse them – and particularly from the offence of their idolatry, a cleansing they could never achieve under the law of Moses.

*<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.*

Cleansed they would no more be defiled – unfit for God’s presence; and they would no more make the land unfit for God’s presence

And God v. 26 commits Himself to make them into covenant keepers, people who could continue to enjoy relationship with the holy God, enjoy all the blessings of that relationship

*<sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

v. 26 Heart and spirit together embrace the whole inner person – will, emotion, thought

Sin is so ingrained that for Israel to become covenant keepers they need a whole new person, a whole new life

Think about that, for if that is true for Israel who had God's good law, who knew the true God, it is true for us all.

If we are going to not continually disobey God and provoke His judgement, going to be able to live at peace with God, enjoying His blessing,

We need a new heart and spirit

Our problem is not on the outside, in our environment. It is in the core of our being – our heart, our will, is the source of the problem

That is what Jesus said

*Matthew 15: <sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."*

To live with God it is not enough for some superficial change, not changing this or that behaviour

Giving up this, starting that

Stopping getting drunk, starting going to church

Stopping watching porn and starting to treat your wife or husband well

Stopping lying and starting to tell the truth

All good, and we may be able to keep them going – for a while, or longer

But there always be another sin, maybe less obvious

Pride

Greed

Covetousness

We need a new heart and a new spirit, change from the inside out

More than change – a whole new source of life

That is true for all of us – including those of us who have Christian parents

Being born into a Christian home doesn't make you a Christian, any more than being born in a garage makes you a car

Being taught the bible does not make you a Christian – it just makes you a well informed sinner

Every one of us needs that new heart from God, needs His Spirit, if we are going to be His people

Without that new heart we will always be trying, and always missing the mark – and either become hypocrites – outwardly conforming but full of secret sin, or give up entirely as we feel we can never make the grade

Ezekiel has a picture to bring home how desperate is our need v.36

Their present heart is a heart of stone – dead, unresponsive, completely incapable, incapable of loving God, willing to do His will. Israel's painful history demonstrated that over and over

*And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

So God promises a Heart transplant. A stony heart replaced by a heart of flesh – that is a living, responsive heart; a will that can respond to God, will to do His will

And that New life will have a different source

God's Spirit within

This life is sustained by God. It doesn't come, can't come, from any human source.

Only God, for only God can direct and give His Spirit

And that Spirit will move Israel and us to live God's way

From God its orientation is to God, its yearning is for God.

What will be the outcome of this great work of God, this giving of new life to dead people, a life that can do God's will

The outcome of God's work will be the relationship between God and His people God always intended

<sup>28</sup> *You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

God's people in God's place in His presence at peace with Him.

This is what God had said would be the chief blessing of the covenant with Israel would be realised

*Leviticus 26: <sup>11</sup> I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. <sup>13</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.*

More, this is what God had promised Abraham and his descendants

*Genesis 17: <sup>7</sup> And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup> And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."*

Because God is committed to demonstrating the holiness of His great name the promise He made to Abraham will be fulfilled, fulfilled by God alone

That's a promise that looks to the blessing of all nations

A promise that is God's response to the spread of human sin from Adam

And we get a picture, a picture especially powerful for an agricultural people who had no food security beyond the annual harvest, of the goodness of that relationship, of having God as your God

*<sup>29</sup> And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. <sup>30</sup> I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.*

They will vv. 29-30 be secure, enjoy abundance – peace in their land.

The LORD, the God who has revealed Himself to Abraham and His descendants, is the creator, the Lord of nature, the God of heaven and earth. All creation serves Him.

### **Hints of Eden 33-38**

In fact the LORD goes on to speak of that time of restoration and cleansing in terms that speak of new creation - its fruitfulness will cause it to be compared to Eden v. 35, and in vv. 37-38, as was commanded in Genesis 1, the people will be fruitful and multiply.

The land will be full of life, life at peace with God, expressing the blessing of God on His creation. It is pointing to a new creation when God acts to vindicate the holiness of His name through saving His people – saving them from their own sinful heart.

*Ezekiel 36: <sup>33</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. <sup>34</sup> And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. <sup>35</sup> 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 now fortified and inhabited.' <sup>36</sup> Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.*

*<sup>37</sup> "Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. <sup>38</sup> Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*

These are great promises, comprehensively addressing all that needs to happen for God to have a people of His own, all that needs to happen for Israel, for humans, to be in a relationship of peace with God where we are secure, where we can flourish in His presence

When they are fulfilled, what will be the impact on Israel and the nations?

### **Impact on the Israelites vv. 31-32**

*Ezekiel 36: <sup>31</sup> Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. <sup>32</sup> It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.*

The fulfilment of these promises will humble Israel

They will see how good God is



They will see how good God's way is – with a new heart that is what they will want to do

And seeing this – they will see how wrong they were not to trust Him, and how vile and unjustified their disobedience

See how perverse their heart that would not listen, that consistently turned from right to wrong, good to evil, life to death – and be ashamed

That won't interfere with their enjoyment of God's work in and for them – only heighten their gratitude and wonder

But it will end their boasting in themselves as they boast in and rely on God alone

Grace does that – and when God acts to vindicate His holy name through them that is what they will have experienced.

Grace – getting the new life they did not deserve in place of the death they did

### **Impact on the nations vv. 36, 38**

<sup>36</sup> *Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.*

<sup>38</sup> *Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*

And what will be their impact on the nations? They will know vv. 36 and 38 He is the LORD, the living, the only God

Their fulfilment would demonstrate comprehensively that the LORD is no dead idol

He speaks and fulfills His promises.

He judged His people, and He can save His people, save them so completely that they would never fear His judgement again

The nations would see the LORD is Almighty, the life giver

He is for life, not death

Blessing, not curse

Merciful and gracious

They will know He is the LORD and that will mean the certainty of judgment if they continue to oppose Him and oppress His people, and the hope of life if they turn to Him

These are Great promises God speaks in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, promises that embrace all peoples and all creation.

Has the Lord kept them?

**What has the Lord done?**

Israel did go back to their land at the end of 70 years of exile as God had promised through Jeremiah.

But sin was still a problem and they still lived under pagan rule

So were these promises all hype?

Is God just a God of PR, and not of reality; spin, not substance

[like the gods, the ideologies of the nations – as Orwell pointed out in Animal Farm]

Doing a little, and making it sound great

No. These prophecies were always looking beyond the return of the people to the land of Judah at the end of their exile, always looking for more

The language of new creation, of the gift of God's Spirit, of a new heart tells us that

And this will be true of all Ezekiel's prophecies that we will look at in the coming weeks.

They are looking for more

The Lord Jesus expected Israel's teacher Nicodemus to know that when He spoke with him that night of new birth

*John 3: <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

*<sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.*

Then in verse 12 Jesus said talk of being born again of water and Spirit, of the necessity of that new birth, was talk of earthly things – that is, things already revealed and accessible to everyone.

How could Jesus say that?

Because He is talking to Nicodemus about what God had already promised in Ezekiel 36

That God must cleanse, and God must give new life – if anyone is to live in God's eternal kingdom, in His presence, at peace with Him

Just as Jesus taught like Ezekiel that the heart was the problem, so He taught that we must have new life from God, a new heart and a new Spirit

You must be born again

But Jesus taught and did more.

He said He was the one who would give that new birth, He was the one who would give the Spirit to all who trusted Him, and in giving the Spirit give him or her the life of the age to come, eternal life

*John 7: <sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Jesus in His gospel tells us He is God come amongst us to do what God says He alone will do – give us new hearts and a new spirit, His spirit – that is, give us eternal life, the life in relationship with God that starts now and will endure forever.

Big, but even more stunning is how He will do it

How?

*<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*

He will do it by His death on the cross. It is those who believe He is God's King dying for our sin on the cross who receive eternal life

In Jesus death for sin there is cleansing

And that cleansing that must happen if the holy God is not just going to dwell with us, but in us by His Spirit

Jesus, through His death fulfills these promises

Jesus, the Son of God, sent by the Father, is in His life, death and resurrection the LORD vindicating His holiness in the sight of all the nations

And telling us that the nations coming to know that He is the LORD – will mean life, not death; forgiveness, not judgment

*John 3:<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

In Christ these promises in Ezekiel come to include us

You and I

Big thought, and if it is unfamiliar to you, get in touch with me, or another Christian you know

God's determination to vindicate His name means you and I can be saved!

The promises of God in Ezekiel are no hype

God speaks them, and God is wholly committed to fulfilling them for His holy names sake, and He does through the coming of Jesus, and HE will fulfill all He has promised when the Lord Jesus comes again in glory – for it is not yet Eden

Some questions

### **Do you have that new heart?**

Do you have that new heart God says we must have if we are to live in relationship with God

You can't be God's person, belong to God's saved people, any other way

Have you been born again – by water and the Spirit?

Been cleansed by Jesus and given the Spirit by the living Lord Jesus

The Lord Jesus will do that for all who repent and believe, all who will confess Jesus is Lord – and they are not, and believe He has died for their sins

Trusting Him, believing He has been raised from the dead – you confess your sin to Him and ask Him for forgiveness and His Spirit

Those who repent and believe – need not doubt

Sometimes when we grow up in Christian families we know we have repented and believed – know that Jesus is our Lord and live trusting Him

But still doubt that we have that new birth.

Let me give you a good promise

*Luke 11:<sup>11</sup> What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup> or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

But if you know you are a believer let me ask you two questions

**Are you grateful God is zealous for His holy name?**

Glad to be humbled, to hear God has acted in sending Christ 'not for your sake'. You should be

If God's love and grace to us depended on us – something in us that obligated God to act for us – some goodness, potential or real; some usefulness, potential or real – we could never be secure

Could lose that goodness, or fail in that work

And then we could not feel we could rely on God

But God has said He acts for His sake, for the sake of His reputation, to be known as the God He has said He is, acts to save sinners for His glory

He has made our salvation dependent on Him, on Him being the God He is

And in the cross and resurrection we see nothing stops Him from being the God He says He is

Not satan, not death, not our sinfulness

SO God making it depend on Him means we Can rely on Grace – totally, even as we feel more and more the shame of our sin

And We can know death and curse will not be the last word in the universe, or in our lives

Are you grateful God is zealous for His holy name?

Have to ask, for sometimes Christian salvation can be presented as if it is all about you

Your life, your fulfillment, your good home, your happiness

Thankfully that is not the case

It is all about God, His glory

And because God is the God He says He is, we are saved

let your thinking and your life be about God – focus on Him for He is your life and hope

And if God saying “it is not for your sake I am about to act but for the sake of my holy name” is a strange thought to you, Grapple with it until you rejoice to hear God say ‘it is not for your sake, but for the sake of my holy name’

For your security and joy is there

### **Are you zealous for the holiness of His Name?**

Leads me to my final question – believer, are you zealous for the holiness of God’s name

If you love God and love people you should be concerned for the holiness of God’s name, for His reputation amongst the nations

Jesus said that is what we should pray for, our first request

*Matthew 6:9 Pray then like this:*

*“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.*

Hallowed be your name is ‘sanctify your name’, and that is taken from Ezekiel 36:23 where God says ‘I will sanctify my name’

Jesus is teaching us to pray for God to act to vindicate His name as He has promised, for us to pray that people would come to know the truth of God through knowing the truth of Jesus.

And we are included in that prayer – that we would relate to God fully convinced of the truth of His revelation of Himself.

Zeal for God’s holiness should dictate the way we live. We should want to live holy lives as His holy people. The purpose of what God promises in Ezekiel is that He would have a people who do His will from the heart

And the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians, speaking of similar promises,

*2 Corinthians 7: Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*

So we should not tolerate sin in our lives, and its presence should grieve us, for we are profaning God’s holy name by associating Him with our sin, suggesting that He tolerates or is indifferent to sin, and that the power of His Spirit is not enough to put to death sin and put on righteousness

And zeal for His holy name should make us speak often and clearly of Jesus

For it is in Jesus that God has vindicated His holiness in the sight of all

It is in knowing the truth of the gospel that people really know the truth of God, know for sure that He is no idol but the God He says He is, living, almighty, just and righteous, merciful and gracious

The God who keeps His promises

Is for life, not death, blessing, not curse

The God worth all our trust, all our obedience, and all our praise.