

We Need a New Spirit

Ezekiel 36:24-30

God's creation continues to be tainted by chaos but that's not the end:

- God's Spirit empowers the prophet Ezekiel to see what's happening from God's point of view.
- That's not the end of the story as Ezekiel sees it.
- The Spirit will act again, but this time to transform the human heart, to empower people to truly love God and others.

Ezekiel 36:24-30 NASB

²⁴ For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the lands; and I will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances. ²⁸ And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. ³⁰ Instead, I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

Consider how it started...

- After delivering the Israelites from Egypt, God establishes a covenant with them, giving instructions designed to bring loving order and flourishing life (Exod. 19:3-8).
 - Instead, the people choose violence and injustice, unleashing chaos throughout their land.
 - So, they end up in Babylonian exile because they do not honor the terms of their agreement with God.

Consider what is coming...

- Thankfully, God doesn't give up on them because exile isn't the end.
 - Through the prophet Ezekiel, God promises to bring his people back from exile and give them a “new heart” and a “new spirit.”
 - Here's what that mean:
 - God says he will replace their stony hearts with soft, fleshy hearts that will respond to his voice.
 - And the new spirit he will give them is *His* Spirit.

Consider this impact on us...

- The Spirit of God will no longer empower only certain people for specific tasks.
 - Now the Spirit will empower all kinds of people to understand and follow his teaching.
 - The Spirit will transform the human heart so that people can truly love God and others.

Reflect

Imagine yourself as a hurting Israelite in exile. The Babylonian army has destroyed the temple where you encounter God. You've been torn from your homeland and forced to live under enemy control in a distant land. How do you think you would feel when you hear the promise from God in Ezekiel 36:24-30?

More Relevant Scripture References

- Isaiah 32:14-18
- Isaiah 44:1-5
- Isaiah 59:20-21
- Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Ezekiel 39:28-29