

Earth's Ultimate Comfort - God's Kingdom Restored to Ultimate Rest

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[0 : 00] I'll see our Bible readings and you'll see those Bibles available, Vista Bibles at the side at the back, so do please grab a Bible if you don't have one with you.

And we are in the middle of the book of Ezekiel and chapter 35 this morning, Ezekiel 35, and we're reading through to 36 and verse 15.

Ezekiel 35, and beginning there at verse 1. The word of the Lord came to me, Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say to it, thus says the Lord God, behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you, and I will make you a desolation and a waste.

I will lay your city's waste, and you shall become a desolation, and you shall know that I am the Lord. Because you cherished perpetual enmity and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of their final punishment, therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you.

Because you did not hate bloodshed, therefore, blood shall pursue you. I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation, and I will cut off from it all who come and go, and I will fill its mountains with the slain.

[1 : 50] On your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines, those slain with the sword shall fall. I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your city shall not be inhabited.

Then you will know that I am the Lord. Because you said, these two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them, although the Lord was there, therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, I will deal with you according to the anger and envy that you showed because of your hatred against them.

And I will make myself known among them when I judge you, and you shall know that I am the Lord. I have heard all the revilings that you uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, they are laid desolate, they are given us to devour.

And you magnified yourselves against me with your mouth, and multiplied your words against me. I heard it. Thus says the Lord God, while the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate.

As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will deal with you. You shall be desolate, Mount Seir, and all Edom, and all of it.

[3 : 10] Then they will know that I am the Lord. And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God, because the enemy said of you, Aha! And the ancient heights have become our possession, therefore prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God, precisely because they made you desolate and crushed you from all sides, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became the talk and evil gossip of the people.

Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills, the ravines and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted cities, which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of all the nations around.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Surely I have spoken in my hot jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave my land to themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, that they might make it a pasture lands and pray.

Therefore, prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys. Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I have spoken in my jealous wrath, because you have suffered the reproach of the nations.

[4 : 45] Therefore, thus says the Lord God, I swear that the nations that are all around you shall themselves suffer reproach. But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon come home.

For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply people on you, the whole house of Israel, all of it.

The cities shall be inhabited, and the waste places rebuilt. And I will multiply on you man and beast, and they shall multiply and be fruitful. And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times. And you will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I will let people walk on you, even my people Israel.

And they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance. And you shall no longer be bereaved them of their children. Thus says the Lord God, because they say to you, you devour people, and you bereave your nation of children.

[6 : 03] Therefore, you shall no longer devour people, and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the Lord God. And I will not let you hear any more of the reproach of the nations.

And you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples, and no longer cause your nation to stumble, declares the Lord God. Well, may the Lord bless his word to us this morning.

Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Ezekiel chapter 35 and 36. Excuse my very croaky throat this morning.

I hope my voice will get us through to the end. Well, now, back before Easter, we were seeing in Ezekiel chapter 34 the beginning of Ezekiel's promise of restoration, of renewal for God's glory.

To come back to his people, presence himself with his people again, beyond the coming judgment of which he's spoken so much. And we saw that though that word was clearly to them about their own coming experience in history, Ezekiel's message still lifted people's eyes much, much higher above that which is merely earthly, merely temporary, to the real scope of God's covenant promise, which from the very beginning, right back to Abraham, has been cosmic, has been eternal.

[7 : 40] And the language of chapter 34, we saw it transcends anything that has yet been seen in this world. He talked about the permanent removal of all merely human rulers, the permanent reign of one who would be a prince of peace.

God himself reigning on the earth. I will be the shepherd. I will be the king over my own people, gathered from all the nations of the earth. And yet at the same time, that one shepherd, one king, would be his own servant David, he says, the promised Messiah.

And he alone it would be who would usher in this eternal covenant of peace, this heaven on earth. That's so wonderfully pictured, as we saw at the end of chapter 34.

Remember those wonderful words, showers of blessing, raining down on God's people. They would no more be prey. They would reign securely. No one making them afraid.

Only when the true prince of peace rules will true peace reign in this world. It's the restoration of God's rule alone that can bring the restoration of God's rest.

[9 : 02] And that rest in God's land of rest was the great promise of his covenant from the beginning. Again and again, Moses spoke to the people in the wilderness, remember, about the day when the Lord would give them rest from all their enemies.

And so they would live in safety. You can read it all through the book of Deuteronomy and other places. After Joshua's conquest of the land, we read, And the land had rest from war.

Again, all the way through the judges. When we had faithful judges ruling God's people, we have the refrain, So the land had rest. And then under the great zenith of the kingship of David and Solomon, There was the defeat of all his enemies.

Peace on every side. And it was that that opened up the way for God to say to David, Now your son can build the temple, the sanctuary of the Lord God. So God can dwell in the midst of his people.

At rest from all their enemies. God's people in his kingdom of rest, Under his rule, And enjoying his presence. But of course, The curse of exile for sin banished Israel from that place of rest and security.

[10 : 21] Just as at the very beginning, It was the curse of sin that banished man from the place of rest and security in God's garden, In Eden, where God dwelled. And left humanity instead insecure, afraid, The prey to enemies.

And of course, behind all of that, The great enemy. The ancient serpent, Satan himself, And all his earthly accomplices. The seed of the serpent. And so for God's people to be restored to true rest,

To dwell securely, To be no more afraid, To be no more a prey to enemies.
 All the threats, All the hindrances, To that rest have to be removed. Just as we saw at the end of chapter 34.

The human rulers must be removed, And divine rule must be restored. And that's what these two oracles in chapter 35 and chapter 36, The first part of it that we read, That's what they show us. For God's land to be restored to a place of true rest for his people, Where none shall make them afraid, No enemies, Then all enemies and all enmity towards God and his people must be removed. [11:34] And that is what's promised so very clearly in these chapters. And again, as in chapter 34, And as in all the rest of the chapters of Ezekiel, He is pointing to something clearly beyond that which is just immediate and local.

Although he is speaking about that, of course. He is speaking about a coming historical retribution on Edom, And a coming historical restoration for Israel.

But he's pointing beyond that. He's pointing to something ultimate, To a climactic reversal for this whole wide world. And just as chapter 34 was talking ultimately about earth's ultimate coronation, So these chapters here today are pointing beyond mere history, To talk about earth's ultimate comfort.

The comfort of God's kingdom restored to his divine rest forever and ever. The section ends, doesn't it, in verse 15 of chapter 36.

Look, it's wonderful permanence. Disgrace, no longer. Stumbling, no longer. No reproach anymore. [12:47] When everything that Edom represents in this world is no more. Perpetual enmity against God and his people and God's person. When Edom is no more, Eden will be restored.

And God's people will come home to possess their true inheritance. To share in the place of God's own eternal rest. And that's what this is ultimately all about.

So let's look at Ezekiel's message in a bit more detail. Let's see, first of all, the immediate encouragement and hope That it meant for these exiles in Babylon. And then the far greater hope for them, But also, of course, for all of us.

So first of all, look at chapter 35. The oracle here speaks about a coming retribution for Edom. God will repay the powerful enemies of his people And remove the perpetual enmity against his land. And he will do so for the sake of his great name And to the praise of his glorious justice. Verse 3. Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir.

[14:00] And I will stretch out my hand against you And I will make you a desolation and a waste. And Mount Seir is in Edom.

And it represents that enemy nation In contrast to, well, in chapter 36, It's the mountains of Israel. Mount Seir and Mount Zion. Now there's a short oracle against Edom Back in chapter 25, Among all these oracles of the nations.

But it appears again here to epitomize All Israel's inveterate enemies Throughout her history. Going all the way back to ancient times. Go back to Genesis chapter 36.

It tells us about the generations of Esau. Esau who left the land of promise. Who defied and hated the covenant And God's covenant people. And here, Edom, the descendants of Esau, Verse 5, They cherished a perpetual enmity Against God's covenant people.

And the calamity of the exile, you see, Was that it gave opportunity For these ancient animosities To flourish again. Not only had the Edomites Joined in with the Babylonians In slaughtering the Israelites As they tried to escape from the fray When Babylon attacked Jerusalem, They also looted all of their belongings.

[15:22] You can read in the little prophecy of Obadiah All about the terrible things that Edom did. You read the end of Psalm 137. It expresses the sheer invective Of Edom against God's people in Jerusalem.

And here, look at verse 5. You see, they engaged in bloodshed and slaughter. But now, not only that, Verse 10 says, They were colonizing the land themselves And calling it their own.

And it really must have seemed To these Israelites in exile Like the whole of history Was unraveling and going backwards Right to the beginning. That God himself was being defeated And his land fell right back into the hands Of all of his ancient enemies.

But not so. Because the Edomites hadn't reckoned On the God of Israel, On the living God, Who unlike their nation's idols and the others, Is a real God.

Who's really present. Look at verse 10. The Lord was there To hear their boasts. And he will always be there In the heart of his kingdom To assert his ownership, To assert his rule Over his kingdom and his people.

[16:37] The very last words Of Ezekiel's vision In chapter 38 Are describing that The Lord is there. The Lord is the living God And doesn't just get airbrushed Out of history.

And he will make his presence felt Against all Edom's usurpers. And he will do so In judgment. And then he says You shall know That I am the Lord.

That's the emphatic assurance Of this chapter. It's repeated in verse 4 And verse 9 Verses 11 and 12 And verse 15. When I judge you You will know That I am the Lord.

And note the two reasons For God's judgment on Edom. First of all, verse 5. Hatred and persecution For God's people Because you cherished Perpetual enmity against them.

And verse 10. Hubris and pride Towards God's place. Because you said These two countries will be mine. We will take possession of them.

[17:45] You see, if you assault God's people And you assault God's place Well, you're assaulting God's person. Touch God's kin And you're touching God's crown.

Touch God's real estate And you usurp God's reign. Indeed, the land of Israel Belonged never To just the people of Israel.

The land belonged to God. He was only ever on loan to his people. They were to steward it for him. That's very clear in the law of Moses. That's why every Jubilee year Every 50th year All land transactions were reversed And everything reverted back To God's allotted inheritances.

It was a reminder That as we sang in Psalm 34 The whole earth is the Lord's And everything in it The world and all who dwell therein Belong to God. And so Edom will be judged.

And the tables will be turned With precise justice. Verse 6. Therefore, blood shall pursue you. The enmity you meted out Will be returned on your head.

[18:52] Therefore, verse 11. The anger and the envy And the hatred that you showed them Will come back on you In judgment. Verse 13.

Because you magnified yourself against me With boasting songs So you will be devastated Amidst universal songs of rejoicing. You see, the punishment Exactly fits the crime.

They will reap exactly What they have sowed. And the judge of all the earth Will judge justly.

Ordaining them to dishonor and wrath For their sin To the praise Of his glorious justice As the Westminster Confession of Faith Puts it And they can have no complaint Whatsoever, can they?

This judgment is fully deserved. And thus In their just and righteous Desolation Verse 15 The perpetual enmity Of all these enemies Of God's land And his people Will be removed And they will know That the Lord Is the true sovereign Over his kingdom And no other.

And there's a warning there I think, isn't there? To all who usurp God's sovereign claim Over his land Which is This whole earth As the psalmist says And as the whole Bible asserts There isn't a square inch Over which Christ Is not sovereign over all And does not cry mine Said Abraham Kuiper Quite rightly of the world.

[20:30] I read an article this week Some of you may have seen it In Unheard And it was entitled Britain's future is pagan And it was claiming That the real religion Of these islands Is ancient paganism Woden worship And that that should be reclaimed.

And we're seeing a lot Of those kind of things Around the world today The natural National identity Claiming that This territory Belongs to our Particular religion India For the Hindus Muslim lands For Islam An ever expanding Territory it seems The modern state of Israel For the Jews Many parts of the west It's our Cultural Marxist ideology That's saying These countries These countries Should be ours And we will take Possession of them Just as the Edomites were saying But no This earth Belongs to the Lord This world It's people It's wealth Everything in it And he is here And he will make His ownership known And he will Perhaps especially Do that To those Who think That they can Usurp his church As though the church Of Christ Was theirs to possess

It's a striking fact A sobering fact That Edom This perpetual Enemy Full of enmity Against the seed Of promise Edom emerged From within The covenant family He was the brother Of Jacob The son of Isaac Esau And we so often Find that still today Don't we We see the same pattern Some of the most Vociferous enemies Of the true gospel And of true gospel People are those Who are still within The institutions Of what outwardly Seems to be A Christian church In the west We see it in the Pervasive liberalism Don't we Of so many of the Mainline denominations In the east We see it

still In traditional Orthodoxy That still persecutes All who are outside That state Sponsored Religion That takes the name Of Christianity Where God Is not absent God is there And God sees And he will judge And he is already

Judging in history Isn't he We certainly see that In these islands You shall be desolate God said to Edom Well that fairly Accurately describes Doesn't it The state of our National church In Scotland Today South of the border It's not very far Behind God will repay Enmity And remove Enemies of his People and his Kingdom now As he did then And he will bring Restoration To reverse The reproach Of his own Now as he does Then And that's what Chapter 36 Verses 1 to 15 Describe A coming restoration For Israel God will reverse The painful reproach Of his curse And restore The promised rest Of his covenant To his people And to his land And he will do it Also for the sake Of his great name To the praise Of his glorious Grace And mercy For look at

Verse 9 Behold I am For you And will turn To you Says the Lord To his people And the message Is quite clear Hatred and violence Against God's People And hubris And vanity Against God's Person Will lead to Vengeance on his Enemies And vindication For his Kingdom And in verses 1 to 7 Here in chapter 36 He speaks again To his own people This time Assuring them again Of the judgment On his enemies And these verses Essentially repeat The promised judgment Of chapter 35 But here That judgment Is framed as a word Of great comfort The mountains of Israel Will rejoice At the demise Of Mount Seir On the day Of God's great reversal Bringing both his Retribution And his restoration What that means For you Will all depend

[24 : 50] Won't it On which mountain You are sitting on Calamity for Mount Seir Will bring comfort For Mount Zion And we know that ourselves Don't we In all manner of situations Think of a guilty verdict That pronounces A just and a right sentence On a murderer That brings great comfort Doesn't it To the family Of the murder victim It goes some way To assuaging their pain It doesn't take away The pain of their loss But it does assuage The pain of the injustice That the perpetrator Has not yet been Truly punished And there is comfort Here you see For God's people Because as again He makes clear The reason for his judgment Verse 3 Edom's Contempt For his subjects They made you Desolate And crushed you And Edom's contempt

For God's own sovereignty Verse 2 They said Aha These ancient heights Have become our possession That word heights there Is the word for the high places The pagan shrines They think they've taken back The pagan shrines Of their own gods Verse 5 They've taken my land To themselves To prey on its fruit And therefore Verse 6 God swears to his people I swear that the nations All around you Shall themselves Suffer reproach They will be put to shame That is a word of great comfort To God's people Israel Notice that Israel Has suffered the reproach Of the nations It's brought shame It's brought humbling disgrace Upon them The effect of their own sin Their own unfaithfulness To God Isn't just That they're guilty In God's sight But it brings shame It brings reproach In the sight of the whole world Remember how back in chapter 5

God speaks about Jerusalem As being set as a light In the midst of the nations To radiate God's glory to the world And yet her rebellion Had made her more wicked And worse Than all the nations round about So dreadful was their sin And God said to them then Do you remember?

Behold I Even I am against you And I will execute judgments In the sight of all the nations And so indeed The calamity of Invasion and exile They suffered Shame Reproach In the sight of the world But now Look at verse 9 What a great reversal I am for you Says the Lord And I will turn to you Not away from you And that means You see That the reproach The shame The humiliation Will finally Fall squarely On the nations The ones who showed contempt And hatred For God's people Expressing their score And expressing their hatred For God himself And that great reversal The retribution The removal of their enemies Is what will bring Restoration And God's promised rest In his land As is described In verses 8 to 15 But you O mountains of Israel Shall shoot forth Your branches And yield your fruit

To my people Israel For they will soon Come home For behold I am for you God is now For his people You see His covenant Has not been forgotten And these verses Echo those Those promises Of his covenant To Abraham Right back at the beginning Look at verse 10 Remember God promised to Abraham To multiply his seed I will multiply people On you He says here Verse 12 They shall possess you And you The land Shall be Their inheritance The great covenant words That God promised To Abraham And Isaac And Jacob That he repeated Again and again Through Moses After God's Diatribe Against Israel's Failures Back in Ezekiel Chapter 5 Remember After that Came the terrible Prophecies of judgment Against the mountains Of Israel Promising devastation

To the land And to the people Thus I will

[29 : 16] Spend my fury On them Do you remember Those dreadful words But even in that Terrifying tirade There were glimmers Of hope Do you remember Yet I will leave Some alive Said the Lord Some would remember The Lord In penitence Not for Edom Not for all Who harbor Perpetual enmity Against the Lord And his seed But for those Who turn In penitence Who trust In God's Covenant mercy Which is their Only hope In the face of sin For those There is hope From a God Who is for His own Who will turn To all Who turn back To him And as the end Of verse 11 Says here Do you see He will do More good To them Even than Ever before So that they May know That he is the Lord That he is the God who remembers His covenant Promise forever Even in the face Of the most Dreadful sin And rebellion Of his people There is hope For the penitent And not just For Israelites Long ago But there is hope For all humanity Remember Ezekiel's Message again And again From God The nations Will know That he is the Lord I will set my Glory among The nations He says I will show My greatness And my holiness And make myself Known in the eyes Of many nations And remember That personal Plea of the Lord That we have seen Chapter 18 Chapter 23 I have no Pleasure In the death Of anyone Declares the Lord So turn And live The covenant's Not forgotten You see That's the Wonderful comfort That's here In chapter 36 And from the Very beginning That covenant Of God Has been to Bring blessing To all the Nations The seed of Promise The offspring Of Abraham Was the vehicle Of God's blessing To a whole Fallen world Under the curse That's the Clear promise Isn't it Right back In Genesis Chapter 12 Remember we saw it When we studied Genesis It's so evidently Echoed here In verses 10 To 12 But it goes Back even Further Doesn't it Than that promise In Genesis 12 Because in verses 10 to 12 Here there are So many echoes Of Genesis Chapter 1 About God's Command to Multiply And be fruitful On the earth To reign over The whole world To bring the Image of God To the very Ends of the earth To bring the Harmony of God's Eden His place of rest To the whole cosmos And fill it with glory That was the command To man at the beginning The removal of Edom Here Is what opens up The way to the Restoration of Eden That's the language That Ezekiel uses here And so you see Although he is Speaking First of all About a coming Historical retribution On the nation Of Edom And a coming Historical Restoration Of the nation Of Israel In that day Clearly As we saw In chapter 34 Clearly His words Also convey A far greater Message About ultimate Salvation Ultimate judgment And so we will Miss the most Important message Of all Unless we see Also And this is The third thing That he is Speaking about A climactic Reversal For the whole World What these Chapters speak Of most Fully Is the message That God Will remove The reproach Of sin's Curse And restore The rest Of his Saving covenant And all To all his People Over all The earth And he will Do so Forever and Ever And he will Do that For the sake Of his Great name And to the Praise Not only Of his Glorious Justice But of his Own Greater And even More Glorious Grace And mercy See Ezekiel's Words here Are clearly Something more Than just Something historical And immediate And you see Indications of that Right here In the immediate Context Look at Verse 14 Of chapter 35 God says The whole earth Rejoices In these Judgments In chapter 36 Verses 8 to 12 You can see The language Is ultimate Speaks about Coming home The whole Of Israel All of it Now he's saying That despite The fact That a hundred Years before All the ten Tribes of the Northern kingdom Had been utterly Dispersed To the four Winds No longer Existed anywhere As a Recognizable Entity But God Says here He will Restore Former Times And yet In such a Way As supersedes Anything That's ever Been seen Before Far more Than the glory And the Splendor Even of David and Solomon's Kingdom It's the Same kind Of superlative Language That we Saw in Chapter 34

[34 : 21] Speaking of Earth's Ultimate Coronation Of this Prince of Peace And this Covenant of Peace His Shalom His Rest Forevermore It's the Same language As we'll See next Time In chapter 36 And 37 About the Ultimate Cleansing Of God's People The Ultimate Congregation Of God's People Regathered From Throughout The Earth Through Resurrection Of their Bodies From the Dust And that's The kind Of ultimate Language That's here In verses 8 to 15 Look at Verse 15 God's People Restore To Possess Their Inheritance They Come Home And I Will Not Let You Hear Any More The Approach Of the Nations And you Shall No Longer Bear The Disgrace Of The People And no Longer Cause Your Nation To No Longer No Longer Not Anymore That's Something Much More Than Just Local And Historical And it Was Fulfilled In part Historically There Was A Return A Pretty Bedraggled Bunch Of Exiles Under Israel And Zerubbabel And Nehemiah And so On And yes Edom Was Literally Destroyed As a Nation Within A Hundred Years

Never To Rise Again But if You Read Those Books Of Ezra Nehemiah And so On If you Read The History Beyond That Nothing Resembles The Picture Of Peace And Of Rest That These Verses Promise And For Those Who Want To Insist That The Founding Of The Modern State Of Israel In 1948 Is The Fulfillment Of These Words Well I Think There's A lot Of Difficulty There Isn't There Because Quite Plainly And Obviously Right Now You Can't Say That Israel Dwells Securely You Can't Say That None Will Make Them Afraid It's In A Constant State Of Turmoil But Most Importantly Of All We Have The Words Don't We Of The Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who Tells Us Plainly That

All The Scriptures Of The Old Testament All The Prophets And The Law Find Their Ultimate Fulfillment In Him And In His Person And In His Work And That All The Prophets And All The Law Prophesied Until John The Baptist Announcement Of Jesus Ministry And Since Then Says Jesus That Kingdom Has Arrived And Is Advancing And It Will Continue To Do So Until He Returns To Reign Until He Returns To Usher In His Ultimate Kingdom Of Peace To Rest The True Rest Of God To This World To The Whole World Forever And Ever So I Want us To Think Clearly About How It Is That In And Through Jesus Christ God Servant David The Messiah King That Chapter 34 Promised Who Would Come As A Prince Of Peace That How Through Him Comes This Climactic Reversal For The World The Ultimate Fulfillment Of Ezekiel's Words Here And

First The Truth Is That In Jesus Edom Has Been Punished And It Will Be Destroyed Forever Edom Here Represents We're Told Plainly The Perpetual Enmity Of Every Enemy Against God And His People From The Very Beginning Of History Till The Very End It's The Enmity That Goes All The Way Back To Genesis Three Between The Seed Of The Serpent And The Seed Of Woman God's People The People Of Promise Esau ■■■ Edom God It whoa King Edom Indeed Esau posed Right From the Womb If You Remember he hated his brother Jacob he despised God's covenant he despised the land of promise he left it and as I said chapter 36 of Genesis gives his genealogy and it's fascinating to to see the names in that genealogy and read it right through the story of the Old Testament and it is a story of unremitting rancor and enmity and at key moments all through the story of God's people so often it is descendants of Esau Edom who are opposing God's people and his purposes Edom hounded Israel during the exodus not wanting them to get through to the promised land Edomite kings fought against

Saul fought against David fought against Solomon Agag one of the Edomites was one of those kings one of his descendants was another than Haman in the book of Esther who tried to annihilate every single Jew on the planet he goes all the way down to Herod the great of Edomite descent who was the one who massacred the innocents in Bethlehem and tried to destroy the Christ child you couldn't find a more appropriate example to epitomize the perpetual enmity of all the enemies against God's people than Edom but Jesus Christ the son of David the prince of peace came at last to deliver his people from all their enemies remember Zechariah John the Baptist father remember his song Luke chapter 1 the Lord the God of Israel has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he spoke through the mouth of the prophets of old that we should be saved from our enemies delivered from the hand of our enemies to serve him without fear no more afraid note the language none shall make them afraid Edom defeated and disarmed because behind every earthly enemy of God's people is the enemy that ancient serpent the devil who has power to enslave and bring fear the fear of death as the apostle says in Hebrews chapter 2 but Jesus through his death for our sins destroyed the devil delivered those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery he says Paul disarmed rulers and authorities and put them to open shame triumphing over them by his death on the cross for our sins darkness defeated and yes Eden restored because death defeated in the death of Jesus Christ Jesus Christ resurrection is the evidence of that as Paul says in 1st Corinthians 15 by man has come also the resurrection of the dead and Christ is the first fruits he says but then at his coming at his coming all those who belong to him because that last enemy to be destroyed is death itself but make no mistake he's telling us in Jesus every enemy has been disarmed and the day is coming when the Lord Jesus will lead this whole restored earth in rejoicing at the final destruction of Edom or in the language of revelation that we'll be looking at this evening the destruction of Babylon the city of man the place of enmity perpetually against God and his kingdom and his people and hallelujah will be the great chorus on that day the whole earth will rejoice as Ezekiel says here hallelujah the smoke goes up from her forever and ever because all Christ's people then will know that they will suffer no reproach no longer no disgrace not anymore forever because in Jesus Edom is punished and will be destroyed forever and secondly in Jesus Eden has been perfected and will be fully delivered forever from the

very beginning God's promise to Abraham and for all his spiritual seed was a promise of rest it was to live at rest in the presence of the Lord the Lord will give you rest from all your enemies around so that you live in safety that was the promise and in measure that was experienced as we've said when Israel obeyed God when they kept covenant with him when good shepherds led God's flock faithful Joshua faithful judges

[42 : 41] David Solomon and so on but we saw it in me in chapter 34 all the rest of Israel's shepherds their kings all human rulers fail so disastrously and took the people down with them and so the land lost its rest and God's righteousness and his peace was shattered by wickedness by war by corruption just like the world today human nature hasn't changed and it won't change will it without it's by itself without a divine miracle but that is what God promises here a divine miracle restoration completely for the world that he created a return to Eden verse 11 both man and beast multiplying being fruitful abundant fruitful agriculture verse 9 verse 10 waste places being rebuilt once again gloriously it's a picture isn't it of recreation but notice verse 11 better better than ever before better even than the world of Eden that's something far more isn't it than just local you're not just talking there about the land of Canaan this is a picture of the whole earth being renewed and this is the future for our world and by the way notice that the signs of God's ultimate blessing on earth is that it will be full of human beings and full of animals not the perverse vision of some people today notably some of this earth's wealthiest the ultra billionaires and so on they're on a crusade aren't they to depopulate the world of people and of animals they want the exact opposite of God's vision for the world

I was reading the other day an article from the Times newspaper you can look it up about 15 years ago and it was entitled Billionaire Club in Bed in a Bid to Curb Overpopulation and it was a report about a meeting of some of the wealthiest financiers of media moguls and tech giants and so on who want to use their wealth to get around governments to control governments and to promote the depopulation of this world and billions and billions of their money floods into pro-abortion measures all over the world pro-euthanasia measures all over the world pro-sterilization of young girls in many parts of the world where undesirable populations seem to be growing it's really quite shocking how much power some of the wealthiest people in our world have over elected governments and that agenda is anti-God it is demonic it is devilish it's utterly opposed to the purpose of God the command of God the vision of God for the future of this world

God's purpose for this world will never be thwarted whether you're a billionaire or a trillionaire or a zillionaire God is determined to fill his new creation with multitudes of people that no man can number restored to life through Jesus Christ and his great salvation bringing them home verse 10 home the whole of his house of Israel all of it and Jesus himself tells us doesn't he that will involve people gathered in from every tribe every language every nation of this earth home to his wonderful rest with all shame all sin all disgrace banished forever and can you believe this even former Edomites will be included in that number so great is God's grace and mercy if you read later the last verse of the prophet

Obadiah he's the one who excoriates Edom who pronounces judgment after judgment on her nevertheless in his very last verse he says this about the great day of the Lord saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau and the kingdom shall be the Lord's and you find the same thing actually the end of Amos chapter 9 when he also pronounced judgment on Edom he says there'll be a remnant even of Edom who are called by the name of the Lord isn't that astonishing those who were once perpetual enemies finding a place in God's kingdom coming out of Edom and into Eden isn't that astonishing but we should be very very glad about that shouldn't we because every one of us is an Edomite by nature Paul says that doesn't he we're by nature children of wrath belonging to the evil one enemies of God but while we were still enemies

Edomites we were reconciled to God by the death of his son and called to belong to come home to belong to God's people to know his rest to know his real joy in Jesus Christ Eden has been perfected and it will be delivered fully and finally when Jesus comes again and so you see finally the wonderful truth of the Christian gospel is that in Jesus Christ Edom's rest can be secured and can be entered into right now come to me says Jesus all you who labor and are heavily and all who are burdened with the reproach the struggle the dis-ease of life in this world under the curse of sin the curse of weakness and of wickedness and of frailty and of many fears come to me says Jesus and I will give you rest rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me let me be your lord and master obey my commands over your life and you will find rest for your souls he says that's the

offer of Jesus Christ the son of God the prince of peace who came to remove the reproach of sin's curse from this whole world to restore the true rest of his saving covenant that is his offer to men and women and boys and girls today but it's also his command he's the lord he's the judge of all the earth he says come come to me now so that on that great day of his return to judge the world so you will also hear on that day his voice saying to you come come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world come to me now or else alas on that day you must instead hear me say depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels see it's the same message isn't it the same gospel wherever you open this book our bible ezekiel says there's only two mountains that you can stake your future on you're either staking it on mount esau or on mount zion and if it's mount zion if you come to the lord's mountain by coming to jesus christ who calls you to come to him then the verdict is clear and it's wonderful it's right here behold i am for you says the lord i will turn to you in wonderful mercy and grace and reproach and sin will be washed away forever not anymore no longer no longer to stain you if that is the lord's offer why would anybody want to stand instead on mount esau and to hear the other terrible words i am against you i will make you a desolation and a waste depart from me into the eternal fire the god of all grace holds out his rest he offers a return home a return to eden and yet one that's even more wonderful than the first eden more wonderful than ever before restoration recreation an eternal divine rest forever don't refuse him don't cherish in your heart perpetual enmity towards him don't stand on

[51 : 59] mount seer don't insist on eden's fate i will make you desolate the lord says why why will you die turn turn back and live come home he says come to the one who promises his rest to everyone who will take his yoke and will learn of him do that he says and he will do you more good than you could ever imagine and you will know then that he jesus christ is the savior he's the lord and that he is for you and friends if he the prince of peace is for you then it matters not a whit who or what in this whole world is ever against you amen let's pray the god who has prepared for them that love thee such good things as past man's understanding pour into our hearts such love toward thee that we loving thee above all things may obtain thy promises which exceed all that we can desire through jesus christ our lord amen do in uh and in m do in