

Sunday, November 17

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Ezekiel 35:1 - 36:38

35 **1** Again a message came to me from the LORD : **2** “Son of man, turn and face Mount Seir, and prophesy against its people. **3** Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD : “I am your enemy, O Mount Seir, and I will raise my fist against you to destroy you completely. **4** I will demolish your cities and make you desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD . **5** “Your eternal hatred for the people of Israel led you to butcher them when they were helpless, when I had already punished them for all their sins. **6** As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, since you show no distaste for blood, I will give you a bloodbath of your own. Your turn has come! **7** I will make Mount Seir utterly desolate, killing off all who try to escape and any who return. **8** I will fill your mountains with the dead. Your hills, your valleys, and your ravines will be filled with people slaughtered by the sword. **9** I will make you desolate forever. Your cities will never be rebuilt. Then you will know that I am the LORD . **10** “For you said, ‘The lands of Israel and Judah will be ours. We will take possession of them. What do we care that the LORD is there!’ **11** Therefore, as surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will pay back your angry deeds with my own. I will punish you for all your acts of anger, envy, and hatred. And I will make myself known to Israel by what I do to you. **12** Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard every contemptuous word you spoke against the mountains of Israel. For you said, ‘They are desolate; they have been given to us as food to eat!’ **13** In saying that, you boasted proudly against me, and I have heard it all! **14** “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The whole world will rejoice when I make you desolate. **15** You rejoiced at the desolation of Israel’s territory. Now I will rejoice at yours! You will be wiped out, you people of Mount Seir and all who live in Edom! Then you will know that I am the LORD .

36 **1** “Son of man, prophesy to Israel’s mountains. Give them this message: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD ! **2** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Your enemies have taunted you, saying, ‘Aha! Now the ancient heights belong to us!’ **3** Therefore, son of man, give the mountains of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD : Your enemies have attacked you from all directions, making you the property of many nations and the object of much mocking and slander. **4** Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD . He speaks to the hills and mountains, ravines and valleys, and to ruined wastes and long-deserted cities that have been destroyed and mocked by the surrounding nations. **5** This is

what the Sovereign LORD says: My jealous anger burns against these nations, especially Edom, because they have shown utter contempt for me by gleefully taking my land for themselves as plunder. **6** “Therefore, prophesy to the hills and mountains, the ravines and valleys of Israel. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am furious that you have suffered shame before the surrounding nations. **7** Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I have taken a solemn oath that those nations will soon have their own shame to endure. **8** “But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit for my people—for they will be coming home again soon! **9** See, I care about you, and I will pay attention to you. Your ground will be plowed and your crops planted. **10** I will greatly increase the population of Israel, and the ruined cities will be rebuilt and filled with people. **11** I will increase not only the people, but also your animals. O mountains of Israel, I will bring people to live on you once again. I will make you even more prosperous than you were before. Then you will know that I am the LORD . **12** I will cause my people to walk on you once again, and you will be their territory. You will never again rob them of their children. **13** “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The other nations taunt you, saying, ‘Israel is a land that devours its own people and robs them of their children!’ **14** But you will never again devour your people or rob them of their children, says the Sovereign LORD . **15** I will not let you hear those other nations insult you, and you will no longer be mocked by them. You will not be a land that causes its nation to fall, says the Sovereign LORD .” **16** Then this further message came to me from the LORD : **17** “Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by the evil way they lived. To me their conduct was as unclean as a woman’s menstrual cloth. **18** They polluted the land with murder and the worship of idols, so I poured out my fury on them. **19** I scattered them to many lands to punish them for the evil way they had lived. **20** But when they were scattered among the nations, they brought shame on my holy name. For the nations said, ‘These are the people of the LORD, but he couldn’t keep them safe in his own land!’ **21** Then I was concerned for my holy name, on which my people brought shame among the nations. **22** “Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD : I am bringing you back, but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. **23** I will show how holy my great name is—the name on which you brought shame among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD . **24** For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. **25** “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. **26** And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. **27** And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey

my regulations. **28** “And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. **29** I will cleanse you of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops of grain, and I will send no more famines on the land. **30** I will give you great harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its famines. **31** Then you will remember your past sins and despise yourselves for all the detestable things you did. **32** But remember, says the Sovereign LORD, I am not doing this because you deserve it. O my people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have done! **33** “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I cleanse you from your sins, I will repopulate your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt. **34** The fields that used to lie empty and desolate in plain view of everyone will again be farmed. **35** And when I bring you back, people will say, ‘This former wasteland is now like the Garden of Eden! The abandoned and ruined cities now have strong walls and are filled with people!’ **36** Then the surrounding nations that survive will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted the wasteland. For I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I say. **37** “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am ready to hear Israel’s prayers and to increase their numbers like a flock. **38** They will be as numerous as the sacred flocks that fill Jerusalem’s streets at the time of her festivals. The ruined cities will be crowded with people once more, and everyone will know that I am the LORD .”

James1:1 - 18

1 This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! **2** Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. **3** For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. **4** So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. **5** If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. **6** But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. **7** Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. **8** Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. **9** Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. **10** And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. **11** The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements. **12** God

blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. **13** And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. **14** Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. **15** These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. **16** So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. **17** Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. **18** He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

Psalms 116:1 - 19

116 1 I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. **2** Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath! **3** Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow. **4** Then I called on the name of the LORD : “Please, LORD, save me!” **5** How kind the LORD is! How good he is! So merciful, this God of ours! **6** The LORD protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and he saved me. **7** Let my soul be at rest again, for the LORD has been good to me. **8** He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. **9** And so I walk in the LORD ’s presence as I live here on earth! **10** I believed in you, so I said, “I am deeply troubled, LORD .” **11** In my anxiety I cried out to you, “These people are all liars!” **12** What can I offer the LORD for all he has done for me? **13** I will lift up the cup of salvation and praise the LORD ’s name for saving me. **14** I will keep my promises to the LORD in the presence of all his people. **15** The LORD cares deeply when his loved ones die. **16** O LORD, I am your servant; yes, I am your servant, born into your household; you have freed me from my chains. **17** I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD . **18** I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people— **19** in the house of the LORD in the heart of Jerusalem. Praise the LORD !

Proverbs 27:23 - 27

27 23 Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds, **24** for riches don’t last forever, and the crown might not be passed to the next generation. **25** After the hay is harvested and the new crop appears and the mountain grasses are gathered in, **26** your sheep

will provide wool for clothing, and your goats will provide the price of a field. **27** And you will have enough goats' milk for yourself, your family, and your servant girls.