

The LORD uses Ezekiel to repeat a promise to His people Israel of the future day of restoration when He will care for them and give them a Shepherd Who, unlike their human leaders, will unselfishly protect them and provide for their well being. This Shepherd is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel was a priest who was among the first captives taken by the Babylonians during the reign of Jehoiachin over Judah. As a captive Ezekiel lived near the river Chebar in the land of the Chaldeans and it was during this time that the LORD called him into the prophetic ministry (see chapter 1).

The context of chapter 34 is that the LORD is speaking through Ezekiel a prophetic condemnation against the “shepherds of Israel” (v. 2 *“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”*). These “shepherds” refer to the leaders of His people, both spiritual and civil, that had the responsibility of leading and caring for His people. The LORD rebukes these leaders for using their positions to benefit themselves rather than for the welfare of those under their leadership. God holds people in leadership positions responsible for the welfare of those under their leadership. After rebuking Israel’s leaders for failing in their shepherding responsibilities, the LORD then promises a future day when He Himself will be the shepherd over His people and will feed and provide for them. This promise begins in v. 11.

¹¹ For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

“For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I” - The LORD Himself will set things into motion. He is not dependent on any human power for assistance or permission.

“will both search my sheep, and seek them out” - By saying He is going to “both search...and seek” for His people, the LORD is emphasizing the intensity and the certainty with which He will both search and find His people. He will not leave anyone behind.

“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep” - A shepherd who is with his sheep when they get scattered will immediately start working to gather his sheep back to the safety of the fold. The LORD is emphasizing that there will be no delay when He is ready to gather His people in that day.

“and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day” - The cloudy and dark day is the day of God’s judgment that scattered them into captivity because of their sin. Just as a cloudy and dark day (implying a stormy day) scatters the sheep, so the LORD’s people were scattered and He promises to gather and restore them to the land He gave them.

¹³ And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries” - Refers to the nations of the world where the Jews have been scattered.

“and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country” - The LORD promises to bring the Jews back to the land that He has always promised to them where He will provide for them with the resources of the land that He has provided.

²³ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

“And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David” - This is the promise of the Messiah Who will rule over them and care for and feed His people. Jesus was called the “Son of David” because He is a descendant (through both Mary and Joseph) of David.

“he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” - Human kings and priests have failed to properly shepherd the people of Israel, but Jesus Christ will care for them as a true Shepherd. He will lovingly feed and protect them, unlike human shepherds who are primarily interested in their own personal gain.

“And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them” - Israel will worship the LORD as their God and Jesus Christ will rule over them as the King of kings.

“I the LORD have spoken it.” - The LORD is emphasizing the certainty that He will do this by reminding us that He is the One Who is speaking. Ezekiel is not putting words in the LORD’s mouth but these promises are coming from the LORD Himself.

²⁵ And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. ²⁶ And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

“And I will make with them a covenant of peace” - At the time of Ezekiel’s prophesy, Israel was undergoing the initial stages of punishment for their sins and rebellion against Him. He had started exiling them to Babylon and no was no peace between them and Him. But the LORD is promising that He will make a covenant of peace between them that will be fulfilled when Christ returns to shepherd them.

“and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land” - The promise that wild animals will no longer be dangerous. The prophecies such as **Isa. 11:6-9** (“⁶ *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. ⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*”) will be fulfilled.

“and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods” - Wild animals will no longer be dangerous and so people will not have to take safeguards against things like poisonous snakes or carnivorous animals when out in the wilderness.

“And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing” - “My hill” refers to Mount Zion, from which Jesus Christ will rule the world. See Isa. 11:9, quoted above.

“and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing” - The LORD had used His control over the weather to punish His people when they rebelled against Him, causing droughts. In this future day He will use the weather to bless His people by giving them rain at the appropriate times to give them bountiful harvests.

²⁷ And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. ²⁸ And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.

“And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase” - The LORD will prosper Israel with plenty because He will cause their fields to produce a bountiful harvest.

“and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD” - Israel has never been completely safe in their land. There has always been a danger from surrounding nations wanting to conquer or enslave them. In this future day they will be under the protective hand of God and they will understand that He is the One protecting them.

“when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them” - They will realize that He is the One Who rescued them from their bondage and enslavement at the hands of other nations.

“And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them” - They will be safe from nations who would want to conquer them as well as wild beasts of the field.

“but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid” - Unlike their current situation with terrorist attacks and territorial skirmishes with surrounding nations, they will have no reason to fear residing in their land for the LORD will insure their safety.

²⁹ And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

“And I will raise up for them a plant [plantation; planting place] of renown [reputation; fame]” - Israel will gain a reputation throughout the whole world as a place of bountiful farms. They will be famous for their agricultural prosperity.

“and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land” - As a result there will be no lack of food in the land. No one will be hungry.

“neither bear the shame of the heathen any more” - Israel will be the focus of the admiration and envy of the nations instead of the focus of their hatred. Antisemitism will be a thing of the past.

³⁰ Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. ³¹ And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

“Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them” - Like no other time in Israel’s history, they will understand that God is with them and blessing them.

“and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD” - They will understand that they are the people of God. There will be no atheists among the Jews.

“And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men” - They will realize that they do not deserve the blessing that God is pouring out on them, for they are just “men” who are sinful and in need of grace. They can look back on their history as a nation and realize that they don’t deserve God’s love or blessings.

“and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD” - The only reason for receiving these blessings that they don’t deserve is because the LORD is their God. He has chosen to pour out His love on them because of Who He is, not for their worthiness or deserving.