

## Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths Part 381 – Against The Shepherds Through The Lord’s Flock (Ezekiel 34:1-31)

### 1. Did the shepherds of Israel properly care for the flock of God?

No: *“(1) And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (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? (3) Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. (4) The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them” (Ezekiel 34:1-4).*

- The shepherds of Israel were failures and had been for some time (**Isaiah 3:12, Isaiah 9:16, Isaiah 56:10-12, Jeremiah 2:8, Jeremiah 10:21, Jeremiah 12:10-11, and Jeremiah 50:6**).
- Like Ezekiel, Jeremiah said: *“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:1-2).*
- They were selfish leaders, not seeking the well-being of the flock of God (**Zechariah 11:5**). What happened to “love thy neighbour” (**Leviticus 19:18**)? What’s that say of their “faith” (**James 2:14-17**)?
- They had cruelly oppressed the weak and afflicted among them (**Jeremiah 22:13-17, Matthew 23:14, and James 5:1-6**). This is why **James 1:21-27** was written to early Jewish Christians (**James 1:1**).
- Qualified elders (**I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9**) are the shepherds of today (**I Peter 5:1-3**), responsible for feeding and leading the congregation (**Acts 20:17-31, Hebrews 13:7, and Hebrews 13:17**), think about the applications to that throughout this chapter.

### 2. Why were the sheep scattered and wandering all over?

The cause of their being lost was that there was no shepherd: *“(5) And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. (6) My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them” (Ezekiel 34:5-6).*

- **Zechariah 10:1-3 and Matthew 9:36-38.**
- What would a good shepherd [more on that later] do if his sheep were lost, scattered, in need of being led to safety (**Matthew 12:9-14, Matthew 18:10-14, and Luke 15:1-7**)?

3. Who was the Lord holding responsible for the sheep being scattered?

The Shepherds: *“(7) Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; (8) As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; (9) Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; (10) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them” (Ezekiel 34:7-10).*

- Note, what we are about to discuss does not excuse people whom are led astray or not led at all (**Ezekiel 33:7-9**, **Matthew 15:1-14**, and **Ephesians 5:6**).
- Because of the transgressions of Israel, the people were being killed and left for the beasts to eat the flesh of (**Jeremiah 15:3-4**).
- Leaders are held responsible for the destruction of those that they lead (**Jeremiah 13:18-20**, **Hebrews 13:17**, and **James 3:1**).
- Think about this.... **Luke 17:1-2**

4. How was the flock of the Lord going to be returned to their own land?

The Lord was going to search them out and bring them back: *“(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. (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. (14) I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. (15) I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 34:11-15).*

- First, there was a physical restoration and Cyrus was the one whom the Lord appointed as a shepherd for this task (**II Chronicles 36:21-23** and **Isaiah 44:24-45:5**).
- After the physical restoration though.... There is another shepherd they [we too] had to look forward to (**John 10:1-18**).

5. As God was going to restore His presence in Israel, did He judge between the good and bad among His flock?

Yes, He was going to judge, and separate the good from the bad: *“(16) I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. (17) And as for*

*you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. (18) Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? (19) And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. (20) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. (21) Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; (22) Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. (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” (Ezekiel 34:16-24).*

- Don't read into this to be talking about the Judgment Day of all humanity. It is not. Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled prior to the New Covenant [which we'll be discussing next] being in place (**Matthew 5:17-19**).
- It was about God restoring the weak, sick, and and downtrodden to His fold (**Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 10:1-42, and Luke 19:1-10**).
- A key to all of this is “my servant David a prince among them” (**Jeremiah 23:1-8**). We know David, in actuality, is long dead. Yet, the person to sit on His throne is not and that is what this prophecy is looking forward to (**Ezekiel 37:21-28, Matthew 1:1, Matthew 1:21-23, Luke 1:31-32, Romans 1:3, and II Timothy 2:8**).

6. Under the Lord's promise of a New Covenant, did Israel have peace and safety to look forward to?

Yes, if they chose to be among His flock: *“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. (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. (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. (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” (Ezekiel 34:25-31).*

- The New Covenant promise (**Jeremiah 31:31-34** and **Hebrews 8:1-10:22**).
- The peace that was coming with that New Covenant brought those whom were their predators into this covenant of peace (**Ephesians 2:11-17** and **Hebrews 13:20**).
- Had they only been able to understand the promise being made to them at this point. They could not. It was written in a mysterious manner (**Ephesians 3:1-11** and **I Peter 1:3-12**).