

MEETING OUR DEEPEST NEED Sunday School- August 26, 2012

Unifying Topic: GOD PROMISED TO BE WITH US

Lesson Text

I. The Good Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23-24)

II. The Guaranteed Peace Covenant (Ezekiel 34:25-31)

The Main Thought: 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. (Ezekiel 34:23, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People are searching for tranquility and wholeness in their search. Where can these things be found? A lasting relationship with God and an assurance that God is with us meets our deepest need.

Lesson Aim: To learn God would restore order and justice to His people through His anointed Shepherd—Jesus Christ.

Life Aim: To understand that regardless of how long one has been down or how deeply one has been hurt, God can still rescue His people from all suffering.

34:23 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.

34:24 And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

34:25 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.

34:26 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.

34:27 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.

34:28 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.

34:29 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.

34:30 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.

34:31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.

HISTORY:

The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel to prophesy against shepherds, leaders who were accused of taking care of themselves rather than taking care of the people; they are the rulers of Israel. Their pronouncement of sin was "*Woe be to the shepherds of Israel...*" (34:1-2):

- that feed and water themselves and ignore their flocks (34:3).
- that refuse to care for the weak, sick, and injured sheep. They rule with force and cruelty (34:4).
- that allow wild animals to devour the sheep because they scattered because of no shepherd (34:5-6).
- that didn't listen to the voice of God and allowed the flock to become prey (34:7-8).

Judgment was pronounced on the shepherds. "*Hear the word of the Lord...*" He comes against them by holding them responsible and removes them from feeding the flock (34: 9-10). The Lord God will search for His sheep wherever they have scattered (34:11-12) and will sovereignly take over as pastor of the scattered flock.

- He will deliver them from those places (34:12b-13).
- He will feed them upon the high mountains of Israel; in a good pasture as a good shepherd would (34:13b-14).
- Their fold will be upon the high mountains of Israel (34:14b).
- He feeds them to lie down (34:15).
- He seeks those that are lost so He can bind wounds and strengthen the sick. But He will destroy the fat and the strong by feeding them with judgment. After a re-gathering of Israel from among the nations, a judgment of separation will take place between those in the ranks of the sheep that were scattered and lost. God does not allow any to get away (34:16).

The "you" or "my flock" as He now addresses, gives encouragement as to what He will do to those He will judge — cattle and cattle; rams and goats —between the smaller and weaker cattle; the larger and stronger cattle, the rams and he goats. There were some that overpowered the flock within the ranks; they took advantage of the flock.

¹Some good, others bad; some that behaved well, and others ill; some were cattle (fat and lean cattle (v.20b) and others, goats. The shepherds whom Ezekiel addressed in verse 1, he now point to other false controlling leaders (false pastors) that followed the path or were under the shepherds or kings of Israel that were also bringing harm to the flock (34:17).

²God would not only judge the rulers (the shepherds/kings), but also the big, bad, bully sheep of the flock (under-shepherds/controlling leaders). The false shepherds, leaders or bullies ate the best food and drank the best water, but trampled and ruined what was left for others. These ³great men not only by extortion and oppression made and kept their neighbours poor, and scarcely left them enough to subsist on, but were so vexatious to them that what little coarse they had was embittered to them (34:17). A minister who muddles the waters for others by raising unnecessary doubts, teaching false ideas, and acting sinfully is destroying his flock's spiritual nourishment. And this seemed a small thing to them; they thought there was no harm in it, as if it were the privilege of their quality to be injurious to all their neighbours. Their behavior with the flock is condemned. A bad shepherd is not only selfish but destructive (34:18-19). God Himself will judge the fat cattle and the lean cattle. The ungodly are known because they trample the poor therefore, consequences comes by divine intervention and the flock shall no longer be prey to those leaders that have pushed the defenseless aside, for God brings judgment to save His flock (34:20-22).

LESSON:

Ezekiel 34:23-24 The Good Shepherd

34:23 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. Ezekiel's announcement of a Davidic shepherd is similar to Jeremiah's (Jer.23:5-6). God will send one perfect shepherd to feed His sheep. This is none other than the Messiah who will be Israel's ultimate King/Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (37:22b). "*Even His servant David*" means just like David, the under-shepherd of Israel, this one shepherd will even be over David and all other earthly kings in eternity, and even all resurrected kings and priests. The Messiah is the one Good Shepherd who is set over to feed His sheep!

34:24 And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. Even though the Lord will be God over the flock, David, who was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel, is still a prince in the midst of the people (37:25d; Ps.89:3).

Ezekiel 34:25-31 The Guaranteed Peace Covenant

34:25 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. God announces a covenant of peace (37:26; Ps.89:3-4) to be established that will cause those harmful and evil beasts (*those that devour the people; nations that prey on Israel* 34:8) or (*it could include wild and dangerous animals* (Lev.26:6) to cease. This covenant will cause the flock (*His people*) to dwell safely in the wilderness and even sleep in the woods and not be fearful (Jer.23:6). The Messiah will make the covenant of peace with Israel when He comes at His 2nd Advent.

34:26 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. "*...my hill*" is a reference to Jerusalem and Zion, in particular where the Jews will come to worship the Lord. God will not only make the flock to have physical security but also blessings of weather (*literal rain*) in their season. The desert will even blossom as a rose, waters will spring forth in the wilderness,

¹ <http://bible.cc/ezekiel/34-17.htm>

² <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/index.htm>

³ http://www.studylight.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=eze&chapter=034&verse=018#Eze34_1

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

and there will be showers of abundant blessings for all men coming from God.

34:27 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. Notice two things in this verse that will happen: 1) increase and safety; and 2) broken bands and deliverance. The former is the result of the latter. Once the bands are broken and you're delivered, there will surely be an increase in your life that leads to a safe life.

34:28 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. The time will come that Israel will become what God intended them to be—no prey or beast to devour them—they will dwell in safety and no longer be afraid. ⁴The enemy will not come against them now, because the enemy is afraid of Israel's God. The only time the beasts, or the heathen, could attack them before, was when God took His protection away. His protection is back now. They are His people, and He is their God.

34:29 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. This "*plant of renown*" could have been speaking of Jesus as the "*Branch*." It could, also, be speaking of the abundant food supply they would have, now that they are back in good graces with God. Many had starved during the famine, when Babylon attacked them. Now, there will be plenty to eat. The heathen nations would not be able to taunt them or shame them because famine would be a thing of the past. A "*plant of renown*" is raised up for their sake.

34:30 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. The Lord keeps His promise to His people. Through His covenant, the "*plant of renown*"; the "*Branch*" will show them that "He" will never leave nor forsake them; "He" is their God; "He" is with them, even with the house of Israel. The sheep may stray but God always keeps His eyes upon them to bring them back. "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*" Jh.10:27.

34:31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God. The idea of this verse is that even though the word "sheep"/"flock" was used as a metaphor, still the Lord is speaking of men and not merely just sheep/flock, but there is here also a deeper meaning. Helpless, sinful men could never do such marvels, only the God who is Adonai-Jehovah (*The Expositor's Study Bible*). ⁵They are men that have the Lord for their God, and are in covenant with Him.

SUMMARY:

In contrast to the present evil shepherds (leaders) of God's people, God will send a perfect shepherd, the Messiah, who will take care of every need that was not allotted to His people. One shepherd will feed the flock; bring a covenant of peace for their safety; bring showers of blessings; bring deliverance from chains of slavery, and yield increase for they will never again be hungry or ashamed. As all of this is done for God's people, they will know that God was always for them, never left them, and never forsook them. He calls them the flock of His pasture, but they are men, His people.

APPLICATION:

Things that come against us are temporary, but God is found to be committed till eternity to meet our deepest need!

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ezekiel/36.html>

⁵ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1488&commInfo=5&topic=Ezekiel
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>