

**INTRODUCTION:**

Chapter 33:21-22 In the twelfth year of Israel's exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a man; a survivor from Jerusalem came to Ezekiel and said, *"The city has been struck down."* The Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem. It had taken this man about 6 months to bring the news. It was a long way to travel on foot. And he had to come into the country of the enemy. Now, in Ezekiel 3:25-27 for some years, Ezekiel had not been able to speak except as the Lord told him, so, now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel, and God opened Ezekiel's mouth, and he was able to speak freely; no longer dumb.

Chapter 33:23-29 The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, saying *"Son of man."*¹ God had promised to Abraham the country that became Israel (Genesis 13:14-15). The people who were still in the country were from the family of Abraham, therefore, they said that the country belonged to them, But for them to have the country, they must obey the agreement with Moses. They had done some evil things.

- They ate meat with the blood still in it (see Leviticus 17:10-14).
- They worshipped foreign gods (see Exodus 20:1-6)
- They killed people (see Exodus 20:13).
- They had sex with other men's wives (see Exodus 20:14).

Therefore, the remnant in the country would not live. They would die by the sword, by wild animals or by disease. Their proud attitudes had to end. God would empty the country. It would become like a desert. Then God says, *"then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed"*

Chapter 33:30-33 God tells the "Son of man" (Ezekiel) that the people from his nation talk about him. They talk together by the walls and openly in the doors of their houses, eager to hear the Lord, to hear what Ezekiel says, but won't obey him. They cared too much about their own wealth, possessions and money. With their mouths, they tell God that they love Him, but their hearts' desire is for their own profits. Ezekiel seemed to amuse them like a singer of love songs; with a beautiful voice who plays well on an instrument. And although they heard the words, but they would not obey them, so when the things that was told them came to pass (happened), God lets him know, *"then shall know that a prophet had been among them."*

LESSON:**I. EZEKIEL 34:1-6**

34:1 And the word of the lord came unto me saying, — The Lord spoke to Ezekiel again...

34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them,

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/ezekiel25-39-lbw.htm>
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>



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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 flock?— The LORD gave the Son of man, Ezekiel this message to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. The shepherds of Israel were her leaders, namely the prophets, priests, and kings. Among all three, there were those not true to their calling. The ruler/leader was called the ‘*shepherd*’ of the people in his nation. The ‘*sheep*’ were the people from Israel. The proud have been cruel to the weaker, but God will act on behalf of those weaker people. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who looks after His sheep. Pastors and ministers are ‘under-shepherds.’ Therefore, in this verse is a reprimand given to the shepherds for not caring for the sheep. Woe (great sorrow) to the shepherds who feed themselves. Should they not feed the flock? Yes, the leaders of Israel should have looked after the people as a good shepherd looks after the sheep. They were responsible to the Lord for His people. They were responsible to the people to lead them in the right manner. But in fact, they were like bad shepherds because they did not look after the people. All that they cared about was their own profit.

34:3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. Ye eat the fat meant the leaders made money by slaughtering the best sheep. There were taxes and tributes from the sale. Leviticus 7:23 *“Ye shall eat no manner of fat of ox, or of sheep, or of goat.”* They took from the sheep, and gave nothing for their care; you do not feed the sheep. *“You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve.”* They’re not being fed. Our church must grow us, but we must follow.

34:4 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. ²Some of us treat the church as if it is a hotel for saints, and not a hospital for sinners. Mark 2:17 says *“When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”* Ezekiel tells these shepherds/leaders: *“You have not made the weak sheep strong. You have not made the sick sheep well. You have not put bandages on the sheep that had injuries. You have not brought back the sheep that wandered away. You have not tried to find them. but you have ruled the sheep with cruel force.”* There are more sick than healthy sheep in the congregation, and have not been healed. Force and cruelty is not the ruling way, but it’s by God’s Spirit! The rulers of Israel were cruel. They took all they wanted for themselves, and no help given to the people. They did not defend the weak ones, neither cared about the sick. They killed the best sheep which were the people who could have been good leaders because they did not want anyone opposing them. They killed the strong ones, and they did not take care of the weaker ones. So, they were to blame because of the deaths of many people. ³A good shepherd keeps his sheep together with love, patience, and kindness, not by driving them.

34:5 And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. When the flock is divided, it is easy prey for the

² lovethelord.com/books/Ezekiel/36.html

³ lovethelord.com/books/Ezekiel/36.html

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





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wolves. In the church, together we stand, divided we fall. The wolf is not afraid of the sheep, but he is afraid of the shepherd! However, when the sheep are not cared for or protected, the sheep scatters because they have no shepherd to care for them; nobody to look after them. They become food for all the wild animals. Is that what's going on in our country? In our churches? — Division? Read your Word, so you won't be meat to the prey for what's in the field, or scattered because you have no pastor to shepherd you.

34:6 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. Now, we have wandering sheep all over the mountains and high hills. They're scattered all over the earth, and nobody searched for them or tried to find them. Like sheep that have wandered away, the people turned away from God. The leaders ought to have encouraged them to stay loyal to God. But the leaders themselves were not loyal to God. The people were responsible for their own sins, but the leaders were responsible for the wicked state of the nation. To be saved yourself is wonderful, but God called His workers to seek out the lost. They must hear the Word to be saved!

II. EZEKIEL 34:7-10

34:7 Therefore ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord;— The shepherds were to listen to the LORD's message.

34:8 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 the flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not the flock:— The LORD is really implementing verse 5. The LORD begins "**As I live**" meaning, I am the God who lives; the LORD your King. Surely my flock became prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field. (Wild animals have caught and have eaten my sheep). This happened because nobody was looking after the sheep, nor did they search for the sheep. Because the shepherds fed themselves; not God's sheep.

34:9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:— O shepherds, listen to the Lord's Words.

34:10 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. Therefore, the LORD your King says. *"I am against the shepherds, such as kings, priests, and prophets who should have led my sheep. I will hold them responsible because of what has happened to my sheep. It led to suffering and scattering of the people! I will not let them feed my sheep."* This signifies a divine judgment and removal of authority from the unfaithful leaders. This can be seen in the fall of Jerusalem and the exile, where the political and religious leaders lost their positions. *And neither those shepherds will not feed themselves again. The removal of their authority is also a removal of their ability to exploit the people. I will save my sheep from them, that they will not be food for them.* God's intervention ensures that His people

⁴ <https://biblehub.com/ezekiel/34-10.htm>
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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will no longer be preyed upon. And by means of the exile, the Lord would preserve His people.

III. EZEKIEL 34:11-16

34:11 For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and search them out. Since the rulers of the people in Judah did not care about sheep, the LORD will remove those leaders, and He will take their place. The LORD says: *"I myself will search for my sheep. And I will look after them."* ⁵The imagery of God as a shepherd is prevalent throughout the Bible, notably in Psalm 23 and John 10. Here, God promises personal involvement in seeking His people, contrasted from the negligent shepherds (leaders) criticized earlier in the chapter. This reflects God's intimate care and commitment to His covenant people, Israel, often depicted as His sheep. He will search Israel out and restore her to her homeland.

34:12 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 scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Shepherds were common in ancient Israel, and their role was crucial for the survival of the flock. A shepherd seeks after the flock, and when he's among the sheep that's scattered, he will personally look for the scattered sheep, and deliver them out of the places they've been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. They will feel safe and guided by the shepherd.

34:13 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. What the shepherds/leaders did not do, God took the assignment upon Himself and said **"I WILL"** bring them, gather them from, bring them to, feed them upon... God is really in the business of restoration. ⁶Babylon will be destroyed, and God's people will come home. But it will be God who frees them. They will once again be in their own country Israel because the Lord gave it to them, and He will make Israel a strong nation again, for with God's blessings upon it, it will flourish again. The imagery of God as a shepherd highlights His personal care and guidance. We can trust Him to lead us to places of safety and provision. He is the best Shepherd!

34:14 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. God promises to provide for His people with the care they needed. The land will produce good crops for the people to eat. And that that was desert will become good fields, for they will farm the land, and keep their animals. There the fold/sheep will lie down in fields of grass where God will feed them in a good pasture; the best fields, and upon the high parts of Israel's mountains. This is an imagery of Psalms 23:2.

34:15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. Unlike human leaders who may fail, God is the Ultimate Shepherd who provides, gives peace, and security.

⁵ <https://biblehub.com/ezekiel/34-11.htm>

⁶ lovetheLord.com/books/Ezekiel/36.html

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters...and then there's restoration."

34:16 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. What the shepherds/leaders didn't do for the sheep in verses 1-6, God's Word of Judgment came against them in verses 7-10, therefore God says **"I WILL"** do for my sheep! The LORD will search for the sheep that have wandered away; gotten lost, and will bring them back. He will put bandages on; bind up any brokenness of the sheep that have injuries. He's able to make the weak sheep strong. But will destroy the fat and the strong, meaning those bad rulers of the people, for His rule will be fair in all His decisions.

SUMMARY:

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. These shepherds 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, and were 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 sovereignty take over as Good Shepherd 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, and causes 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).