

Prophecy Unveiled - Ezekiel 34

Sunday, January 9, 2022

Our ground rules for studying prophecy...

- **There is much we can learn from studying prophecy**
- **There is much that will still be unclear** (It is best for us to focus on what we can know rather than argue about what is still unclear)
- **By studying prophecy we can become more aware of the devils schemes and the world in which we live.**
- **Prophecy helps us be prepared**
- **We must keep in mind that prophecy must be examined from three different viewpoints** (The Past - prophecy that has already been fulfilled, The Present - Prophecy that is currently unfolding, and The Future - Prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled) In some cases a particular prophecy may have application to all three.

Remember that prophecy is like a multi-faceted diamond. We can view it from many different angles and see something new from each one but it also must be viewed as a whole

Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel 34:1-6

34 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? 3 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. 6 My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

The prophecy is first of all directed to the shepherds of Israel

There is a direct application here to the leaders of Israel both spiritual and governmental. The kings, priests and prophets all had a responsibility to take care of Hods flock. The majority of them had failed to lead them I. A godly way the result was that the nation of Israel and Judah both had been removed from the land that God had given them and scattered along the nations

We can also apply this to leaders of today both governmental and spiritual. Both have been appointed by God and have a responsibility to take care of his flock. (Everyone he has created) and more specifically believers to whom he has given shepherds (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) who should be taking care of them

Ephesians 4:11-13

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

What they do?

- They care more for themselves than others
- They don't take care of the weak, sick or injured
- They have no concern for those who have gone astray or the lost

What happens to the sheep?

- They are scattered (a reference to the exiles who had been taken away to other countries. It also refers to the Israelites as a whole who were scattered throughout the Seth after the time of Jesus. It refers to those now who have left the church or who have not been brought into the church

Mark 6:34 (ESV)

34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

- They are vulnerable to the attacks if the enemy. They have no one to protect them

Ezekiel 34:7-10

7 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: 8 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, 9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord : 10 This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

What happens to the shepherds?

- God will hold them accountable
- God will remove them
- God will take away the shepherds provision

Of course we see how this applies to the kings, priests and prophets of Ezekiel's day. But it also applies to pastors teachers evangelists as well as other secular leaders in our world today

Ezekiel 34:11-16

11 "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. 12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. 14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. 16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

God will be our shepherd (12 times in 6 verses God says "I will")

- He will search for us (Jesus said *"the son of man came to seek and save those who are lost"* - John 19:10)
- He will look after us
- He will rescue us from all places (on a day of clouds and darkness - sin and its results)
- He will restore Israel (bring them to their own land... He did this in Ezekiel's day and in our day)
- He will give us good pasture (the peace and strength of His presence and the truth, life and blessings of His Word)
- Physical, emotional and spiritual rest (lie down)

Matthew 11:28-30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- He will search for the lost, bring back the strays, bind up the injured, and strengthen the weak

Luke 4:18-19 (NKJ)

18 “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

- Destroy the "Sleek and Strong" (a reference to the fact that those who in pride think they don't need God will be destroyed because they refuse to submit to Him)
- Bring Justice

Ezekiel 34:17-22

17 “As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. 18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? 19 Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

20 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, 22 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another.

A Picture of Judgment within the flock

These verses speak of the judgement of God. I believe specifically as it applies to the church or those who claim (both truthfully and falsely) that they belong to the flock.

1 Peter 4:17

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Matthew 25:31-33

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

There is also a general sense in which this applies worldly leaders as well. They rule by force and bully people into doing what they want them to do. Their worldly leadership drives them away from the true flock of God

Verses 18 and 19 elaborate on the problem caused by false believers and worldly leaders who do not follow God. They trample down the good pasture (perhaps also a reference to those who take what they want from God's word - the easy and good things - but leave the weighty issues uneaten and ruin those things for everyone else too)

The same image is seen of the Muddy waters applying our feet (worldly wisdom to Godly truth) this reminds us of the mixture of the iron and the clay in Daniel Chapter 2. A people who mix the holy and the profane. Like Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron who offered unauthorized fire before the Lord. We have done so much to destroy the purity of God's Word and to mix the ways of the world with the ways of God.

Ezekiel 34:23-25

23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. 24 I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

25 “I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety.

A Messianic Prophecy about Jesus

David was already long gone, but the one who would rule on the throne of His father David forever and ever was yet to come into the world

Luke 1:32-33

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

John 10:11

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The covenant of peace refers to the peace that we have with God through the covenant of Jesus blood on the cross

Ezekiel 34:36-30

26 I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. 27 The trees will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. 28 They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. 29 I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. 30 Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord

Here we see several things

- The extended blessing of this covenant of peace (our relationship with God)
- The restoration of National Israel and the miraculous fruitfulness of their land
- The Millennial Reign of Christ

Isaiah 41:18-20

18 I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. 19 I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, 20 so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Ezekiel 34:31

31 You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

The overall promise of this prophecy for those who through faith in Jesus Christ come into God's flock.

John 10:7-10

7 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.