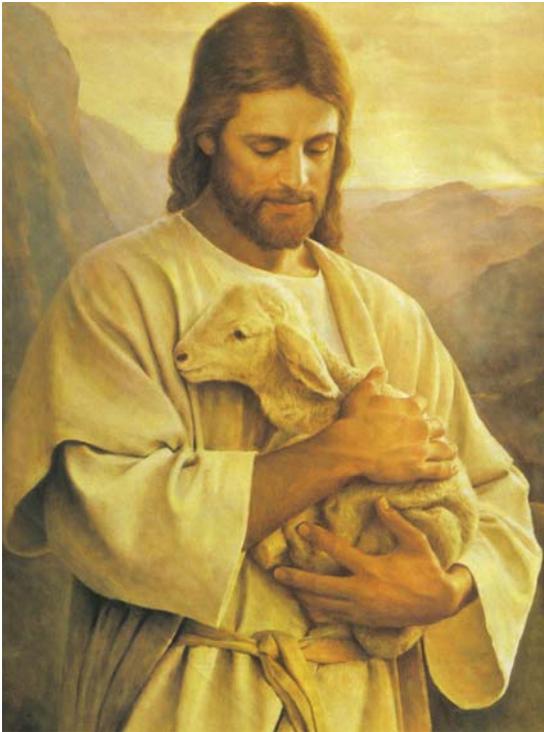


## THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

**34:11-15** *“For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD.”*



**I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out** - To this point in Israel’s history, only promises of a future kingdom of glory that is everlasting under the rule of an almighty king have been made. Not even David or Solomon were able to deliver on such predictions. So whether it is a man after God’s own heart or the self-indulgent false shepherds, it would seem as though the promises are only a dream without substance if the promises were left up to man to fulfill.

But the Lord declares that He himself will, as the Great Shepherd (Ps 22,23,24), seek out and gather His sheep. Israel is here and through history depicted as sheep scattered throughout the earth all as part of God’s judgement upon false teachers and their willingness to follow them and depart from the Lord. Jesus proclaimed who He is to Israel:

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming,*

*and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” (John 10:11-15 NASB)*

All of the unconditional promises given to Israel were in need of the Good Shepherd to come and lay down His life in order for them to be ratified. While Israel had no deliverers, Jesus is that deliverance. Jesus says that His own sheep will hear His voice and listen to Him. *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:44).* He said these things while speaking to the Jews, but in the same passage in John 10 He goes on to say *“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.” (John 10:16)*

While the gathering that God is speaking of through Ezekiel is addressing the national regathering of Israel for

the millennial kingdom, the kingdom blessings were always intended to include Gentiles as stated to Abraham in Gen 12:3 “all the nations of the earth will be blessed”. Simeon spoke of Jesus being “ a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel” recorded by Luke (2:32).

God declared through Paul exactly what Jesus meant by “other sheep not of this fold” in his letter to the Ephesians. He speaks of it as a mystery that has been revealed in the church:

*“By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.” (Eph 3: 4-7 NASB)*

So by the grace of God Gentiles who were once “excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise” (Eph 2:12) are now the sheep of other folds that God will gather to Himself through Jesus who saves His people from their sins. In either case, both Jews and Gentiles need the Good Shepherd to seek them and save them from being lost.

Israel’s scattering from the Assyrian and Babylonian times through the Roman times was a very literal scattering and so understanding the language here would include a literal regathering of Jews from all nations back to their own pastures which will be fertile and lush, full of bounty when the Shepherd returns to gather them and lead them into this future state of rest. It will be a rest that Israel has not yet experienced in history. The Lord then goes on to link this future period of rest and bounty with His return and judgement.

**34:16-22** *“I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment. As for you, My flock, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats. Is it too slight a thing for you that you should feed in the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pastures? Or that you should drink of the clear waters, that you must foul the rest with your feet? As for My flock, they must eat what you tread down with your feet and drink what you foul with your feet!’” Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them, “Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and with shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns until you have scattered them abroad, therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another.”*

The Lord will judge those who, as false shepherds, have trampled the sheep. They are those who care about being fed themselves. They feed on popularity, large churches with large income and they stamp out those who would get in their way through mockery and name calling. Matthew 25:31-46 is a parallel passage which speaks of the Lord separating the sheep from the goats in judgement. It’s easy to see who is abusing the sheep, but the Lord is also able to separate those non - sheep who blend in with them. This idea is expressed in the kingdom parables of Matthew 13. All of this is associated with the coming of Messiah, the Lord’s servant.

**34:23-24** *“Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.”*

David is seen in the Old Testament as a prototype of Christ. In defeating Goliath, David depicted the salvation that Jesus would bring in conquering the bigger Goliath of sin and rebellion. David wrote of his own suffering in the Psalms that depict the sufferings of Christ for His people. In defining more clearly the unconditional covenants, God promised David of his future descendant that would have an eternal throne:

*“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My loving kindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.” (2Sam 7:12-16 NASB)*

In David’s loins was the seed of Jesus. Unlike Saul whose sin and disbelief caused him to be cut off by the Lord having no dynasty, David’s house would be established by the Lord as the dynasty through which the Messiah would come. Solomon built the physical temple but Jesus is the chief cornerstone of the house of God. So while Solomon and subsequent descendants in David’s line would be disciplined by God for their sin, he did not cut off David’s line. Jesus would be the Son who needs no discipline and would ultimately be the forever aspect to David’s throne.

Mary, a blood descendant of David, was told by Gabriel that the child she would bear by the Holy Spirit was to be named Jesus and that He would rule on David’s throne (Luke 1:32,33) when there was no true throne at that time. While Jesus is reigning in heaven there is a throne on earth yet to be established and reigned on by Him. There is a view that teaches that David will be a “vice regent” with Christ in the Millennial kingdom and even into eternity, but Ezekiel is told that God will put “one shepherd” over them. Jesus is called David here to invoke the promises made to David and specifically his Descendant. Only Jesus can feed His people. David as a mere man can maybe offer physical bread, but Jesus who is not just a man, but the living Son of God feeds with eternal bread:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:47-51 NASB)*

Jesus came to do the will of the Father and takes on an eternal role as the servant of His Father in the purest sense of the word even though He will be installed as King (Ps 2) on Zion by the Father. Another point of argument for the view that David will be vice regent is the use of the term “prince” tied to My servant David. But there are other times that the term prince describes a king (37:24,25; 28:2,12). Additionally Isaiah 9:6 gives Jesus the title “Prince of Peace” and since the promises made here identify Israel’s future restoration as accompanied by a true and lasting peace then prince would be a fitting title for Jesus.

**34:25** *“I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.”*

**A covenant of peace** - refers to the New Covenant in Jer 31:31-34. It is the unconditional covenant that was given to make all of the other unconditional covenants possible to be fulfilled. The New Covenant was not ratified until Jesus shed His blood on the cross (Matt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20). The ultimate peace that is offered to all believers is reconciliation with God, but there is also a time in history yet to be experienced when there will be peace from all war. Israel will be free from the threat of all her enemies.

Luke records the words of Zacharias:

*“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant—as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old— Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, and FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.”*  
(Luke 1:67-75 NASB)

Here Zacharias links all of the promises God made to the fathers of Israel with the New Covenant where God declares that Israel will be righteous when sin is removed from them. Additionally Ezekiel speaks of the conditions of the land under the New Covenant which include wild animals that become tame (Isa 11:6-9; 35:9; Hos 2:18).

**34:26** *“I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing.”*

**My Hill** - is speaking of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the capitol of the world and the throne upon which Jesus will reign over the nations when He returns will be in Jerusalem. During the reign of Christ the promise land will experience the abundance of God’s blessing to bring about the optimum fertility in the land. Peter calls this the “times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19,20) when curses are lifted.

**34:27-28** *“Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid.”*

The Lord did provide for Israel’s return from Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, but until Jesus returns Israel will always face an abundance of enemies who hate them. Modern days have made this fact perfectly clear and so while they may not be actual slaves to any nation, they do live with the reality that they are constantly hated

# EZEKIEL

## “Strengthened by God”

## Session 25 - Ezekiel 34:11-35

and under threat. Israel not only has tens of thousands of rockets aimed at them, but they also face the ongoing threat of Iran’s nuclear program as well as internal terroristic threats. Ezekiel will go on to describe a future major war campaign launched against Israel that will really cause them to tremble.

**34:29-31** *“I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people,” declares the Lord GOD. As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God,” declares the Lord GOD.”*

Not only will the land be blessed with fertile bounty but the nations will no longer be able to cast insults upon God’s people. While these insults are clearly an historical reality throughout the Old Testament times, it is clearly true of the political scene of modern times. The insults, threats and attacks will continue to escalate leading up to the return of Jesus.

### PROPHECY AGAINST SEIR

**35: 1-4** *“Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it and say to it, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out My hand against you and make you a desolation and a waste. I will lay waste your cities and you will become a desolation. Then you will know that I am the LORD.””*



Seir is another name for Edom (Ge 32:3; 38:6). This is a second time that the Lord utters judgement against Edom (see 25:12-14). Edom was one of Israel’s most hostile enemies (Ps 137:7; Mal 1:2-5)) and was located East of the Arabah, from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Arabah. Teman and Petra were the two main cities which today are in ruins. Jeremiah also predicted this (18,49).

Edom was first subjugated by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and then by the Medo-Persian empire. Later in 126 BC. John Hyrcanus of the Hasmoneans compelled them to convert to Judaism and they became known as Idumeans and “false Jews” to the people of Israel. The Herods were Idumean and served as vassal kings and were hated by the Jews.

**35: 5-9** *“Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end, therefore as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you. I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation and I will cut off from it the one who passes through and returns. I will fill its mountains with its slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those slain by the sword will fall. I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”*

**Because you have had everlasting enmity** - This hatred goes back to Esau (Gen 25-28) from whom the Edomites are descended. Historically the Jews have been hurt by the Edomites more than any of their enemies. Edom celebrated when Israel was attacked and Jerusalem sieged and the Jews killed. They assisted out of spite the bloodshed of the Jews and mocked their ruin. The name Edom means “red” and the Lord talks about bloodshed 4 times here. They have not hated bloodshed and therefore they will perish the same way. It is interesting today that the people who are the descendants of Edom and those who occupy that region still have the same attitude toward the bloodshed of Jews.

**35: 10-12** *“Because you have said, ‘These two nations and these two lands will be mine, and we will possess them,’ although the LORD was there, therefore as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “I will deal with you according to your anger and according to your envy which you showed because of your hatred against them; so I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all your revilings which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel saying, ‘They are laid desolate; they are given to us for food.’”*

**These two nations and these two lands** - Edom saw the destruction of the Israel and Judah as an opportunity for them to cash in and take the land. While the Lord withdrew His presence from the land (10:18; 11:22,23) He did not withdraw His right to the land (36:5). Besides the joy and celebration that is expressed by the descendants of Esau today over the death of Jews they also clearly feel the same about possession of the land. The constant claim rings out that the Jews today are “occupiers” and that they do not have a right to be in their land.

**35: 13-15** *“And you have spoken arrogantly against Me and have multiplied your words against Me; I have heard it.” Thus says the Lord GOD, “As all the earth rejoices, I will make you a desolation. As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be a desolation, O Mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”*

While the cities of Edom were destroyed in the past as the Lord had predicted, the descendants of Edom today are implied here as the ultimate destruction of them will be fulfilled when Jesus returns to restore Israel. He will go and fight the Edomites and their blood will be on His garments according to Isaiah 34:2-5 and 63:1-4. Additionally they are symbolic of all the nations that will gather to make war against Israel and Jesus at His return and He will utterly destroy them by Himself.