

23. Jesus in Ezekiel - Part 2

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We should not lose the main point of this prophecy and the rest of the prophecies in the Bible. J. Barton Payne's Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament, for a total of 1,817. These encompass 8,352 verses. God uses all these biblical prophecies to prove that He Himself alone is the Lord, while none of those so-called gods could not even do one.

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

A. THE LIST OF THINGS THAT UNFIT SHEPHERDS DO

Ezekiel 34:1-6 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them."

In the OT, Kings and officers in government often were referred to as "shepherds". It was their responsibility to care for the people, protect them, and see to it that their needs were met. But the selfish leaders of the kingdom of Judah had abused and exploited the people because they thought only of themselves.

The spiritual side of 'shepherd' is 'pastor'. The origin of the word 'pastor' comes from Latin which means 'shepherd,' literally, 'feeder.' The root word is 'pasture.'

From v2 to v5, the Lord lists the things these unfit shepherds do to their flocks. When you read them, you can understand how this list fits perfectly with the unfit pastors of our days.

- 1) You do not feed the flock
- 2) You have not strengthened
- 3) You have not healed those who were sick
- 4) You have not bound up the broken
- 5) You have not brought back what was driven away
- 6) You have not sought what was lost
- 7) You have ruled them with force and cruelty
- 8) You are not their caring shepherd, so they were scattered

Did you notice something in this list? There is only one thing they do – ruling the flock with force and cruelty. In the rest of the list, they show what they don't do as shepherds. If the leaders' sins of commission were bad, their sins of omission were even worse.

It is sad, but it is so true that many pastors in the ministry today who are only fulfilling psychological need and became nothing more than motivational speakers, not spiritual leaders who lead their congregation with examples of their lives. I love the way apostle Paul showed the way in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My flock" in John 21:15. The most important need in the church today is that the Christians be fed properly from the Word of God, not from anywhere else. Many pastors become lazy and complacent. Instead of digging into the Word of God and dividing it properly and studying and delivering spiritual food to their congregation, they'd rather rely on the latest fad psychology mumbo jumbos.

If that is not bad enough, many of them are into money making, their own empire building, and power grabbing mode. Many of the Word of Faith Movement teachers are in this category.

You remember what the sons of Eli did in Book of 1 Samuel:

1 Samuel 2:12-17 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." 17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

Eli's sons had horrible attitudes toward God and His service. As priests they should have known better, but they could care less and their corruption was really affecting the people that people even abhorred the offering of the Lord. They were fleecing the flock of God rather than feeding them.

This still happens. A couple of years ago, the pastor and founder of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea of the largest Pentecostal church in the world, David Yonggi Cho, has been sentenced to three years in prison for embezzling \$12 million in church funds. At the press conference, the elders revealed the findings of an internal investigation into Cho's financial dealings, including millions of dollars in church money that was borrowed by Cho and never returned.

My biggest fear is not death or cancer or anything like that, rather I might sin against the Lord that my sin gives great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

B. THE TRUE SHEPHERD

Let's compare what these unfit shepherds do with the True Shepherd our Lord does:

Ezekiel 34:11-16 'For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the coun-

tries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God. 16 I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

In Ezekiel's time, the Lord brought His people back from Babylon; but the picture here is certainly much broader than that, because the Lord spoke about "countries" in v13. Ezekiel promises that in the end times, the Lord will gather His flock "from all the places where they were scattered" and bring them back to their own land where He will be their Shepherd.

It's difficult to apply this prophecy to the return of the remnant after their exile in Babylon, and even more difficult to spiritualize it and apply it to the church today. That's why the Replacement Theology is so wrong. The followers of the Replacement Theology take Scriptures out of context. But in here the prophet is speaking about a literal future regathering of Israel, a topic that is mentioned frequently in the Book of Ezekiel in chapters 11, 20, 28, 36, 37, and 38.

C. ONE SHEPHERD

Ezekiel 34:23-24 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and 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.

This is definitely a prophecy of future events. When Israel is regathered to her land in the end times, the Messiah will rule over them and be their Shepherd-King. The "prince" in v24 will not be king David, resurrected and enthroned again, but the Lord Jesus Christ whom Israel will receive and trust when they see Him.

Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.

D. ONE NATION UNDER ONE KING

Ezekiel 37:15-17 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 16 "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17 Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

Ezekiel 37:22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 24 "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in

My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 The nations also will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.'"

It is almost laughable and it is so ridiculous and idiotic for Joseph Smith, the Mormon founder to claim that his name is in the Bible and he was prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel for the stick of Joseph was to be the Book of Mormon that God would give to him and joined together with the Bible would be the continuation of the Bible and God's Word for man in these last days. That is so completely farfetched.

The Lord clearly tells us what He meant in v22. Two kingdoms – Judah Southern Kingdom and Israel Northern Kingdom will be united together as one. And He will be their King.

Once you spiritualize the interpretation of the Bible, there is no limit what you can come up with. Before 1948, the Bible commentators struggled with Ezekiel 37, 38, and 39, because there was no picture of Israel coming back as a nation. So they spiritualized Israel of this portion of the Bible as the church. The result was the Replacement Theology.

At this time in Israel, the majority of the Israelis are secular. They go through religious motions for the sake of custom, tradition, and ritual, but they do not believe in God. There will come a day, the Israelis will come to worship Jesus whom they crucified as their Messiah and Lord.

Isaiah 59:20-21 "The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the Lord. 21 "As for Me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore."