

The King and the Characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom

Chapter 34 of the book of Ezekiel is unique. It is unique for several reasons. The first reason is that chapter 34 uses the words shepherd and shepherds fifteen times. No other chapter in the book of Ezekiel uses the word shepherd or shepherds that many times. In fact, no other chapter in the Bible uses those two words that many times. That means chapter 34 is special in the Bible. It is devoted to telling us that Yahweh is the good shepherd.

Chapter 34 is an unique chapter for a second reason. It contains three very unique topics. The first topic occurs in verses 1-10 where we were told that the old kings, prophets, and priests of Israel who were exiled near the ancient city of Babylon were not really shepherds, for they were unfaithful, wicked, and self-centered. Yahweh said they did not search for the scattered sheep of Israel, nor did they try to bring them back. That is, they did not care about the people of Israel. They were a disgrace. The second topic is in verses 11-22. Yahweh declared that He was a good shepherd because He cared for the sheep of Israel. Therefore, after the second coming of Christ,

which will occur at the end of the tribulation, He will regather the scattered sheep of Israel to the land of Palestine. Then He will judge between the sheep and goats. He will only allow the saved sheep of Israel and all the saints of the

ages to enter His millennial kingdom. That was the end of our last study. The third topic is given to us in verses of 23-31 and that is what this study is about.

The third topic is a unique feature of chapter 34. The chapter is a transition chapter that reveals Yahweh is finished with the old human shepherds of Israel. He will give Israel a new and eternal shepherd. He will give us the good Shepherd of John 10 in the future.

One Shepherd Over Israel. Verses 23-31 can be outlined in three sections. The first section introduces us to the good Shepherd, the Messiah. Verses 23-24 say,

“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.”
Ezekiel 34:23-24 (NASB)



King and His Kingdom

I love these two verses. There are three things to notice. First, when Yahweh said, “I will set over them one

shepherd,” He revealed that He loves Israel. He is finished with the old human shepherds of Israel. You may recall from chapter 17 of Ezekiel that when the Babylonian army

invaded Judah, their last king, King Jehoiachin, was taken captive to the city of Babylon. He was eighteen years old at the time. He had only reigned for three months. He was the last legitimate king of Judah, and he was childless. He was removed from the throne before he had children. So, who would continue the line of David? How would Yahweh solve the problem of an heir in the messianic line? Then we discovered in Ezekiel 17:22-24 that Yahweh had a plan. He promised the line of David would continue. Matthew 1:11-12 reveals to us that King Jehoiachin did have children. In that passage he is called Jeconiah. He was also called Coniah. So, the line of David did continue, and Matthew 1:16 reveals that the line of David continued to Jesus Christ. Matthew called Jesus the Messiah.

Now we are told in verse 23 of Ezekiel 34 that Yahweh promised, "I will set over them one shepherd." He will regather His sheep (Ezekiel 34:11-22). Again, Yahweh says, "I will." He says, "I will" seven times in verses 23-31. My point is that He gave a promise, and He is in control. He is sovereign. The reason that Israel will have a royal king in the line of David is that Yahweh will make it happen. He made that promise in Ezekiel 17:22-24 and now He repeats His promise again.

My Servant David (v 23-24). The second section begins in verse 23 when Yahweh said, "I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David." There are two views about the identity of "My servant David." Who is this person?

First View of My servant David. The first view is that this person will be King David himself. The proponents understand that after the tribulation, all the saints of all the ages will be resurrected and stand before Christ at the Sheep and Goat judgment. If you missed the last study, that will be a judgment where Christ decides who will be allowed into the millennial kingdom. Only believers since Adam and Eve will be allowed into the kingdom. So, David will be resurrected at the end of the tribulation too! Therefore, this view claims that the resurrected David will become the Messiah's administrator in the millennial kingdom.

They reach this conclusion by noticing that My servant David is called a prince in verse 24. Then they point out that the word "prince" occurs repeatedly from Ezekiel 44:3

through 48:22. I should add quickly that we will discover in future studies that chapters 40-48 are about the millennial kingdom. In these chapters the temple in the millennial kingdom is described.

Then this view correctly points out that Ezekiel 45:22 says the prince will be offering a sin offering for himself and all the people in the millennial kingdom. So, they conclude the prince in Ezekiel 34:23-24 cannot be Christ, the Messiah, for Christ never sinned and will not need to offer sacrifices for a sin offering. That seems to be a convincing argument.

But notice now that Ezekiel 37:24 also refers to My servant David as a king.

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them."
Ezekiel 37:24 (NASB)

Then, if we keep reading to the last part of verse 25 we discover that David My servant is also called a prince.

". . . and David My servant will be their prince forever."
Ezekiel 37:25 (NASB)

So in Ezekiel 37:24-25, My servant David is called both a king and a prince. This creates a problem for this view because My servant David is called both a king and a prince. He is not necessarily just a prince. He is not necessarily the prince of chapters 40-48. The point is there are two different individuals who are called prince.

Now I want to introduce a very special point about My servant David. In Ezekiel 37:24 when My servant David is called king, the Hebrew word *melekh* is used for king. It is the normal word for king in the Hebrew.

The Hebrew word for prince in verse 25 is *nasi*. It seems to refer to a humble ruler of royal power. That is, it emphasizes the character of the king as a humble king. For example, King Solomon was called a king or *melekh* and also a prince or *nasi* in 1 Kings 11:34. King Solomon was both.

So, Ezekiel 37:24 calls My servant David a king or *melekh*

and in verse 25 he is called a prince or nasi. That is, My servant David is the king, but He will be a humble, royal king. That is a characteristic of My servant David. That reminds me of Jesus' Triumphal Entry as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. He rode in as a humble king. Jesus is our humble, royal, Messiah-King.

Later, we will learn that the prince in Ezekiel 44:3-48:22 will be a humble administrator to the humble Messiah in the millennial kingdom. The shepherds of the millennial kingdom will be humble. Imagine a truly humble leader of a kingdom—not like the proud leaders of our countries today. So, we reject the first view that My servant David does not refer to the Messiah-King.

Second View of My servant David. The second view of My servant David is that it refers to the Messiah. I believe this is the correct view. He is the humble, royal king of Ezekiel 37:24-25 (Jeremiah 30:9; Hosea 3:5; and Zechariah 14:9). In Jeremiah 23:4-6 we read this,

**“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“When I will raise up for David a righteous
Branch;
And He will reign as king and act wisely
And do justice and righteousness in the land.
In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell securely;
And this is His name by which He will be called,
“The LORD our righteousness.””**
Jeremiah 23:4-6 (NASB)

The “righteous branch” in this passage refers to a descendant of King David. We are told that He will reign as king. Then in verse 6 we are told He will be the LORD our righteousness. That is, He will be the Messiah. He is called My servant David in Ezekiel 34:23-24 and Ezekiel 37:24-25.

Risto Santala quotes two very famous Jewish rabbis who believe and have stated that My servant David in Ezekiel 34:23 refers to the Messiah. He wrote,

RaDaK says regarding chapter 34 [of Ezekiel] that “my

shepherd David” is the Messiah, as does RasSHI.¹

RaDaK is an acronym for Rabbi David Kimchi (A.D. 1160-1235), and the acronym RaSHI refers to Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (A.D. 1040 - 1105). Then Risto Santala adds,

The Metsudat David says, “He is the Messiah-King, who is to come from the seed of David; he will tend them and will become their shepherd.” RaDaK states of the prophecy in chapter 37 that, “My shepherd David means the Messiah-King. He is called David, because he is of David’s seed” and “there is a reference here to the resurrection from the dead.”²

So, the ancient rabbis agree with Christians today that My servant David in Ezekiel 34:23-24 refers to the Messiah, and He will be the Shepherd of Israel.

Now back to Ezekiel 34 and, notice that verse 23 says that the LORD or God the Father is Israel’s God. This means that God the Father will set the Messiah over Israel as the humble king. Matthew 25:34 tells us that God the Father has prepared His kingdom from the foundation of the world. Now He is waiting for the right day to send the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to rule as king, prince, and shepherd over Israel. His kingdom will be worldwide. This reminds me of John 10:11,14, and 16.

**“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down
His life for the sheep.” John 10:11 (NASB)**

**“I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My
own know Me.” John 10:14 (NASB)**

**“They will become one flock with one shepherd.” John
10:16 (NASB)**

So, Ezekiel 34:23-24 reveals that Yahweh loves and cares for Israel.

Covenant of Peace (v 25-29). The third and

¹ Risto Santala. *The Messiah In the Old Testament*. Karen Ahvah Meshihit. Jerusalem. 1992. p. 177.

² Ibid.

last section begins in verse 25. It introduces us now to the covenant of peace which we will soon discover is also the New Covenant of the New Testament. Verse 25 says,

“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.” Ezekiel 34:25 (NASB)

This covenant of peace is actually the new covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Here is Jeremiah 31:31-34,

**“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NASB)**

Now notice the characteristics of this new covenant. We are told that peace will exist between Yahweh and each person in His kingdom. Verse 34 says that all will know the LORD “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” This speaks of the salvation of the believers in the millennial kingdom. It describes reconciliation between Yahweh and each believer. Jesus referred to the New Covenant in the Upper Room in Luke 22:20 on the last night before He was crucified. Hebrews 8:7-13 tells us that the New Covenant replaced the Mosaic Law in the New Testament. If we were to read Hebrews 8,

we would discover that it quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34. This reveals that the New Covenant was referred to in the Old Testament. The New Covenant is the covenant of peace. When a person believes in Christ, they are reconciled to God. Believers have peace with God. The alienation between God and the sinner disappears. The sinner becomes as righteous as Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). The sinner becomes a new creature. The Holy Spirit is dwelling within each believer. The sinner is adopted into the body of Christ as a joint-heir and what Christ inherits we inherit. Believers are part of God’s family. So, the New Covenant is also a covenant of peace.

The new covenant began at the cross and will be experienced in steroids in the millennial kingdom. Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 34:23-31, 36:24-38, and 37 all describe the spiritual blessings of peace with God. I encourage you to study them later. So peace starts when a person believes in Christ and is then reconciled with God the Father.

Isaiah 11:6 and Isaiah 65:25 tell us that in the millennial kingdom the peace will extend to the animal kingdom. Isaiah 65:25 says,

The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD. Isaiah 65:25 (NASB)

Isaiah 11:6-10 expands the description of Isaiah 65:25 and reveals that the peace within the animal kingdom in the millennial kingdom will be much greater. Also, Ezekiel 34:25-29 connects this covenant of peace with productive crops and lush vegetation. It says,

“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. 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. 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. 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. Ezekiel 34:25-29 (NASB)

Notice that all of the references speak of peace. Animals will live in peace. Verse 26 speaks of showers of blessing. In verse 27, the plant kingdom will live securely. Verse 28 says everyone will live securely and no one will be afraid. Verse 29 describes peace and safety from famine, and Israel will no longer experience insults. The message is that when Christ rules as the Messiah over the millennial kingdom, peace will exist everywhere. It is obvious that Christ is not reigning today for peace does not exist within the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, or between humans. Postmillennialists and preterists want us to believe we are living in the kingdom, but these passages reveal that is not true. Amillennialists view that Christ's kingdom is in the hearts of believers. But to say He is reigning in the hearts of believers is inconsistent with these passages.

I Am Your God (v 30-31). Verses 30-31 now conclude the chapter and describes the ultimate salvation of Israel.

“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. Ezekiel 34:30-31 (NASB)

Yahweh says then Israel will know that Yahweh is their God. They will know that Yahweh is with them. They will know that they are His people, His sheep, and He is their God. This has been a description of the new covenant on steroids.

Conclusion. This passage is so wonderful. Yahweh punished Israel for their sin and then repeatedly kept encouraging them. He promised them forgiveness and reconciliation or peace. He kept giving Israel hope of a great future. He wanted to give them hope. Yahweh is a God of peace (Romans 15:33) who offers peace. He cares about every family member. Yahweh is the Good Shepherd to every believer. We will close with some of the lyrics from the song “Showers of Blessing.”

There shall be showers of blessing;
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.

Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need;
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

There shall be showers of blessing-
Precious reviving again;
Over the hills and the valleys,
Sound of abundance of rain.

There shall be showers of blessing;
Send them upon us, O Lord!
Grant to us now a refreshing;
Come, and now honor Thy Word.