

Handout: Ezekiel Lesson 12

The prophecies against the nations in Chapters 25-32 focused on the prophetic fulfillment of God's curse judgments for failing to maintain the Sinai Covenant in Leviticus 26:14-45 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68. The focus of Yahweh's oracles concerning the restoration of Israel will recall the promised blessings for covenant fidelity in Leviticus 26:1-14 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14. After the word announcement formula in 34:1, the third oracle in Chapter 34 divides into two parts:

- Part 1 of Ezekiel's prophecy is a covenant lawsuit against the failed civil and religious leaders of the Sinai Covenant who do not rightly "shepherd" the flock of God's people (34:2-10).
- Part 2 is Yahweh's response to the failed shepherds of Israel and the promise of a Davidic Messiah to rightly shepherd God's covenant people (34:11-31).

Part 1 divides into two parts:

- Part 1A: Yahweh's list of charges against the failed shepherds of Israel (34:2-6).
- Part 1B: Yahweh's judgment against the failed shepherds (34:7-10).

Part 2 divides into three parts:

- Part 2A: Yahweh's remedy to provide righteous leadership for the covenant people (34:11-16).
- Part 2B: Yahweh's judgment of the sheep of His flock (34:17-22).
- Part 2C: God's promise to send a Davidic heir to shepherd His people in a covenant of peace (34:23-31).

God's six charges against the failed shepherds of Israel in 34:1-6:

1. The failed shepherds secured their economic advantage at the expense of the people (verses 2-3).
2. They failed to care for the poor, weak, and disadvantaged of God's flock (verse 4a).
3. They failed to bring back those who became separated from their covenant relationship with God (verse 4b).
4. They ruled the people without mercy, treating them cruelly and harshly (verse 4c).
5. Because the shepherd/rulers did not lead the people rightly, they became scattered and fell prey to pagan worship on high places instead of worshiping in Yahweh's Temple (verses 5-6a).
6. The failed shepherds/rulers didn't care about God's people who became lost and separated from their covenant with Yahweh (6b).

The promise of a Davidic heir in 34:23-25 gave the assurance that despite King Zedekiah's captivity, and the death of all his sons, that the eternal Davidic covenant was still in place (2 Sam 7:16; 23:5; 2 Chr 13:5; Ps 89:4-5; Sir 45:25; 47:11/13). In addition to the promise of a future Davidic king in Ezekiel, also see the prophecies in Isaiah 11:6-9; Jer 23:5-6; 30:9; Ez 37:25-26

For each of the abuses God lists in 34:2-10, He provides a remedy in verses 11-16: Verse 11 answers verse 2b, verse 12 answers verse 5, verse 13 answers verse 6, verse 16a answers verse 4b, and verse 16c answers verse 10.

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God repeats the promise “I Myself” will come four times (34:11, 15 twice, and 20):

1. In 34:11, He will come to “take care of His flock and look after it” = provide for the care and spiritual protection of the covenant faithful.
2. In 34:15a, He will come “pasture my sheep” = provide for their spiritual nourishment.
3. In 34:15b, He will come to “give them rest” = provide the rest that comes from peace with God.
4. In 34:20, He will come to judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep; He will judge between the members of the covenant people who grow prosperous at the expense of the poor members of the covenant family.

Yahweh fulfills His promise in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ

35:1-36:15 ~ Oracle 4: A Prophetic Oracle for the Mountains of Edom and Israel. The oracle develops two topics:

1. The Edomites intended occupation of the Promised Land of Israel after the Babylonian defeat and exile of its people.
2. God’s assurance that Israel would repossess its land and in greater prosperity than before.

The oracle is in two parts:

Part 1: Yahweh’s prophecies concerning the Edomites (35:1-15).

Part 2: Yahweh’s prophecy concerning Israel (36:1-15).

Part 1 is in two parts:

Part 1a: Yahweh’s judgment against the mountains of Edom (35:1-9).

Part 1b: Yahweh’s reasons for the judgment (35:10-15).

Part 2 of the 4th oracle in chapter 36 divides into three parts:

1. Yahweh’s answer to the mountains of Israel concerning those who tried to take possession of the land (verses 1-5).
2. The prophecy of the restoration of the land and prosperity for the people (verses 6-12).
3. The promise that the people will not repeat the sins that led to God’s divine judgment against them, the consequence of which was the death of their children (verses 13-15).

The promises Yahweh makes to the land of Israel and her exiles when Yahweh returns with the exiles to the land that is their heritage in verses 7-12.

1. God swears their neighboring nations will have sufferings and insults of their own to bear, which suggests they will not be a threat to the land or the returning exiles (verse 7).
2. The land will become fruitful again when the exiles return (verses 8-9).
3. The population of the people will increase and so will the animals (verses 10-11a).
4. The cities will be lived in again and the ruins rebuilt (verse 10).
5. They will become more prosperous than they were before the exile (verse 11b).
6. The exiles will return to the land that is still their heritage (verse 12a).
7. The sins the people committed against Yahweh that brought devastation to the land and death to their children will not be repeated (verse 12b).