

Reading Guide for Ezekiel 34

Message-reception Formula (34:1)

JUDGMENT ON THE WICKED SHEPHERDS FOR THE SAKE OF THE FLOCK (34:2-16)

Ezekiel uses the familiar metaphor of a shepherd and his flock to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel who, rather than caring for the people, exploit and oppress them. Because of this, the Lord will remove the corrupt leadership from His people, not only as judgment against them, but as a means of saving the flock. This positive promise at the end of v. 10 leads to the next oracle in vv. 11-16, which promises that the Lord *Himself* will shepherd, gather, and care for the flock.

Accusation Against the Shepherds (34:2-6)

- Command to Ezekiel to Prophecy (v. 2a)
- Quotation Formula (v. 2b)
- Pronouncement of Woe (v. 2cd)
- Accusation: Not Tending the Flock (vv. 3-4)
- Effect of the Wicked Shepherds on the Flock (vv. 5-6)

Sentence on the Shepherds (34:7-10)

- Command for the Shepherds to Hear (v. 7)
- Recapitulation of the Accusation (v. 8)
- Command for the Shepherds to Hear (v. 9)
- Sentence: The Lord will Remove the Flock from Them (v. 10a)
- The Lord will Rescue the Flock (v. 10b)

The Lord Himself will Tend to His Flock (34:11-16)

JUDGMENT ON THE WICKED WITHIN THE FLOCK (34:17-22)

A new metaphor is used in this oracle. The blame shifts to those over the flock to those *amongst* the flock, who care only for themselves. The Lord Himself will bring justice by judging between the flock. Like the previous judgment oracle, rather than an emphasis on judgment, it concludes with a promise that God Himself will save His people from their oppressors (v. 22).

Accusation Against Those within the Flock (34:17-19)

- Address/Quotation Formula (v. 17a)
- Opening Pronouncement of Judgment (v. 17b)
- Accusation: Pushing Aside the Flock (vv. 18-19)

Sentence on Those within the Flock (34:20-22)

- Quotation Formula (v. 20a)
- Pronouncement of Judgment (v. 20b)
- Recapitulation of the Accusation (v. 21)
- Result: Announcement of Salvation (v. 22a)
- Closing Pronouncement of Judgment (v. 22b)

FUTURE PROMISES OF BLESSING FOR THE FLOCK UNDER THE LORD'S CARE (34:23-31)

This next section opens with a promise that one shepherd will rule over God's people, thus bringing unity to a divided kingdom (vv. 23-24). The next oracle highlights the blessings for those under the Lord's covenant (vv. 25-30). A summary statement in verse 31 emphasizes the covenant that exists between God and His people (i.e., His flock).

The Lord Promises One Shepherd will Rule Them (34:23-24)

The Blessings of the Lord's Care (34:25-30)

- The Blessings of the Lord's Care (vv. 25-27a)
- Recognition Formula (v. 27b)
- The Blessings of the Lord's Care (vv. 28-29)
- Recognition Formula (v. 30)

The People's Identity Under the Lord's Care (34:31)