

Ezekiel 37:15-28

One Nation, One Shepherd

Text: Ezekiel 34:23-26; 37:15-28

Introduction:

1. God had promised that the seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent and the enemy of man would be defeated (Genesis 3:15).
2. He showed that this victory would include blessedness for all through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).
3. This Victor would be a mediator (Job 19:23-27), a ruler (Genesis 49:10), a star (Numbers 24:17), a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), a priest (1 Samuel 2:35), and a king (1 Samuel 2:10) - ruling from the throne of David (1 Chronicles 17:11-14).
4. During the time of David, the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1) recorded many prophecies of Jesus in the Psalms.
5. In the writings of the prophets, much more detail about the coming Messiah was given.
6. Ezekiel showed that the Messiah would be the true Shepherd over His united people...

I. THE BACKGROUND

- A. Ezekiel prophesied during the captivity of Judah in the land of Babylon.
- B. Ezekiel was taken to Babylon with the second group of captives, among whom he remained by the River Chebar.
- C. The name Ezekiel means, "God strengthens" or "the strength of God."
- D. His father was a priest named Buzi (1:3), making Ezekiel both a priest and a prophet.
- E. His message was three-fold:
 1. Ezekiel 1 - 24 - *Jerusalem would be destroyed for the sins of the people.*
 2. Ezekiel 25 - 39 - *There would be a return of the people to Jerusalem.*
 3. Ezekiel 40 - 48 - *The kingdom of the Messiah would be established.*
- F. Before the captivity, God's people had been divided into two kingdoms - Israel and Judah.
- G. When they returned from captivity, they would once again be united as one nation.
- H. However, this only foreshadowed the true unity that would be found in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah - the church of Christ.

II. ONE NATION (EZEKIEL 37:15-23)

- A. Ezekiel was to take two sticks and write upon them - one for the kingdom of Judah and the other for the kingdom of Israel.
- B. Then he was to join the two sticks together, making one stick.
 1. The word for 'stick' is the word used for a "rod or staff."
 2. It probably refers to each tribe choosing a staff and writing their name upon it, whereby God showed who was to serve as priest (Num. 17:2ff).
 3. Judah was the name of the largest tribe of the Southern Kingdom.
 4. The "children of Israel" included with Judah are those who chose to remain faithful to God when the kingdom divided - Benjamin (2 Chron. 11:12), Levi (2 Chron. 11:13), and individuals from other tribes who moved south (2 Chron. 11:16; 15:9; 30:11, 18).
 5. Ephraim was the dominant and leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom.

Prophecy of Jesus

- C. The divided kingdom would be reunited as one people when they came out of captivity in Babylon!
- D. When Ezekiel was asked the meaning of this prophecy, he was to say that God would reunite the twelve tribes of Israel in His hand, just as Ezekiel had joined the two sticks in his hand.
- E. When the two kingdoms were joined together, God would bring them out of the land of the Gentiles and return them to their own land.
- F. In their captivity, Israel had been purged of idolatry and their sins forgiven.
- G. Thus, once again, they were the people of God receiving the blessings of God and dwelling as one nation in the Promised Land.

III. ONE KING (EZEKIEL 37:24-28)

- A. As great as the promise of a return was, it was not the ultimate lesson that God was teaching.
- B. This prophecy and promise looks forward to the time of Jesus.
- C. God declared that David would be the king over His people.
 - 1. David had been dead for many years; so, this is not a literal reference to him.
 - 2. God had promised that a descendant of David would reign over a kingdom that would never end (2 Samuel 7:12-14).
 - 3. This was a reference to Jesus (Hebrews 1:5; Luke 1:32-33).
 - 4. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached that Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:22-36).
- D. This King is also a shepherd – the one shepherd who would rule over one flock– another reference to Jesus (cf. John 10:11, 14-16).
- E. Those under the rule of Christ would be obedient to the will of God.
- F. The covenant of peace is the Gospel of Christ, restoring fellowship between God and man (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 21:3, 22).
- G. With the establishment of the church, God proved to the world that He reigns and is faithful to every promise!

IV. ONE SHEPHERD (EZEKIEL 34:23-26)

- A. Because the shepherds of Israel had failed at their responsibility, God was against them.
- B. Therefore, God promised that He personally would restore His people to Judah.
- C. God uses this image of a flock and its shepherd to give a prophecy of the coming Messiah.
- D. There was a day coming when He would set up “one Shepherd” over His people.
- E. That Shepherd would be David – meaning, the descendant of David who fulfilled the promise and type of King David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:11-12).
- F. That Shepherd is the Good Shepherd – Jesus the Christ (John 10:11, 14, 16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4).
- G. The remainder of the chapter speaks of the blessing Israel would enjoy when they were returned from their captivity.
- H. Yet, these only prefigured the spiritual blessing that would be made available to all through Jesus.

Conclusion:

- 1. Because there is only one Shepherd, there can be only one flock.
- 2. Because there is only one Head, there can be only one body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4).
- 3. Because there is only one King, there can be only one kingdom.
- 4. Because there is only one Christ, there can be only one church.