

## Christ Church W4: Four Weeks in Ezekiel

### Week One: A New Shepherd - Ezekiel 34

#### 'From tyranny to theocracy'

Opening Thought:

"Power Corrupts: Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely"

Why do you think it's common for those in power to live much more comfortable lives than those they govern?

Read Ezekiel 34: 1-6

Who are the sheep and shepherds in this passage?

What is God's complaint against the Shepherds?

What has happened to the sheep as a result?

Read Ezekiel 34: 7-16

What will the Lord do as a response?

What will this mean for the sheep?

Read Ezekiel 34:17-24

What complaint does the Lord make against the rest of his people?

What is his solution?

Who does 'my servant David' refer to in v.22? Why is he called that?

Read Ezekiel 34:25-29

What will life look like when 'my servant David' rules and reigns?

Why is life not like that yet for us as followers of Jesus?

How can we see Jesus as 'Good Shepherd' in the here and now? cf. John 10; Psalm 23.

**Read Psalm 23 slowly and imagine yourself as the sheep being guided beside still waters | through the valley of the shadow of death | into the great banquet. What image stands out most for you today. Turn it to prayer.**

Go Deeper: Read More: Kenneth Bailey, *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey From Psalm 23 To The New Testament*.

### Week Two: A New Garden - Ezekiel 35:1 - 36:15

#### 'From abandonment to abundance'

**Last week showed us what it would look like to move from 'tyranny to theocracy', as God himself replaces unjust rulers with his own rule. This passage shows the move from 'abandonment to abundance'.**

We are used to seeing pictures on our TVs of devastated lands, including the current images from Ukraine, Gaza, Syria and more. We're also very aware of the lives of people devastated by conflict who have fled native lands to move here and know many who dream about a time when they could go home. What do you imagine is hardest about a forced evacuation?

Background: The Judean exiles have been forced to walk to what seemed like the ends of the earth - Babylon - a pagan, enemy country. Their last image of their beloved homeland was of devastation, smoke rising over Jerusalem, systematic destruction and their houses ruined along with their temple, city and land. Ezekiel's role as their pastor was to restore them morally,

psychologically and spiritually. He has talked about a new leadership under a new Shepherd, David. Now he talks about restoring the land itself. But with the Babylonians having laid it to waste and carried the people into exile what was to stop the ancient local enemy, the Edomites, from taking over?

[nb. Edom was to the south and east of Judah, filled with the descendants of Esau who had been at odds with the people of Israel since Jacob and Esau fought in their mother's womb. Edom is also known in this passage as 'Mount Seir' after its famous mountain].

Opening Question:

We all know the expression 'don't kick a man when he's down'. Think of a time when life was hard, do you tend to catastrophise (assume it will get even worse), or expect to bounce back? Why?

### **Read Ezekiel 35:1-15**

What boasts have the people of Edom made about the land of Judah?

What response does the Lord make to these boasts and threats?

What comfort would that give the exiles in Babylon that Ezekiel is ministering to?

What hope would that give them about the promised land?

### **Read Ezekiel 36: 1-15**

What concerns are addressed in this passage?

How is the Lord ministering to Israel's psychological needs here?

What will the new abundance look like?

What does it teach us about God's restoration after judgement?

### **Apply it:**

Is there any part of your life where you have experienced destruction? What would God's restoration look like there?

## **Week Three: A New Heart - Ezekiel 36:17-38**

### **'From profanity to purity'**

This passage re-tells the story of God's promised restoration from God's own viewpoint. It is good news not just for Israel but for God himself.

### **Read Ezekiel 36: 17-19**

In what ways has God's land been defiled?

### **Read Ezekiel 36: 20-21**

In what ways has God's name been profaned?

### **Read Ezekiel 36: 22-23**

In what ways are God's holiness defended?

### **Read Ezekiel 36: 24-30**

How will God's God's people be restored?

- Deported? (24)
- Defiled? (25,29)
- Disobedient? (26,27)
- Disgraced? (28-30)

**Read Ezekiel 36: 31-32**

How will God's blessing impact his people?

**Read Ezekiel 36:33-38**

How will God's reputation be restored by restoring and blessing his people in this way?

**Apply it**

Spend some time praising God and asking for his restoration for his people here in Chiswick, London and the World.

**Week Four: A New People - Ezekiel 37:1-14****'From rigour mortis to resurrection'**

This passage shows just how dead we can be spiritually before God wakes us up (see Ephesians 2 for how this is true in the New Testament too).

**Read the passage right through.**

What images strike you most?

How would this sound to the defeated exiles listening to Ezekiel?

What hope would stir in them?

**Into the passage:**

Who do the bones represent?

Why does God lead Ezekiel 'to and fro' among the bones?

Why do you think the army needs to be prophesied to twice? What is the significance of these stages?

**Applying it**

How does God's word and Spirit revive you personally on a weekly, monthly, yearly basis?

What happens to us without it?

How can you keep hearing God's word and receiving his Spirit?