

Ezekiel 34:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Analysis

This passage employs the shepherd metaphor to contrast failed human leaders with God as true Shepherd of Israel. Ancient Near Eastern kings commonly used shepherd imagery for their rule; Ezekiel exposes how Israel's leaders failed this calling by exploiting rather than caring for God's flock. From a Reformed perspective, this anticipates Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 10) who lays down His life for the sheep, and calls undershepherds (pastors/elders) to feed and protect God's flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). True shepherds serve the sheep's welfare, not their own interests, demonstrating Christlike servant leadership.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי י'	דָּבָר	יְהוָה ה'	אֵל י'	לֵאמֹר:
H1961	And the word	of the LORD	H413	came unto me saying
	H1697	H3068		H559

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