

Ezekiel 34:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

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

וְצֹאֲנִי י	מִרְמֵס	בְּגִלְיֶיכֶם	תֹּרְעַ יָנָה
And as for my flock	that which ye have trodden	with your feet	they eat
H6629	H4823	H7272	H7462
וּמְרִפֵּשׁ	בְּגִלְיֶיכֶם	תִּשְׁתִּינָה:	
that which ye have fouled	with your feet	and they drink	
H4833	H7272	H8354	

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