

Ezekiel 34:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

Analysis

"And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered." Absence of faithful shepherds leaves sheep vulnerable to predators. The imagery depicts both physical danger and spiritual corruption. Without godly leadership, people fall prey to false teaching, immorality, and exploitation. This emphasizes pastoral responsibility: shepherds must actively protect, guide, and feed the flock. Christ as the Good Shepherd provides what human shepherds fail to give—perfect protection, complete provision, eternal security.

Historical Context

Israel's corrupt leadership (586 BC) left people spiritually defenseless against Babylonian conquest. The scattered sheep represented both physical dispersion and spiritual vulnerability. Archaeological evidence confirms widespread scattering of Judeans throughout Mesopotamia. Without faithful leaders, people abandoned Yahweh worship for pagan practices. This pattern repeats when churches lack faithful shepherding: members scatter into error or worldliness. The passage emphasizes ministry's crucial importance: faithful shepherding prevents catastrophic scattering.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does absence of faithful shepherding leave believers vulnerable to spiritual predators?
2. What characteristics distinguish faithful shepherds from neglectful hirelings?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּפֹזְזִינָהוּ	מִבְּלֵי	רֹאשׁ	הָיָה	וַיָּפֹזְזִינָה
And they were scattered	H1097	because there is no shepherd	H1961	
H6327		H7462		
וַיָּפֹזְזִינָהוּ	לְאַכְלֵל	לְאַכְלֵל	בְּשָׂדֶה	וַיָּפֹזְזִינָהוּ
and they became meat	H3605	to all the beasts	H7704	And they were scattered
H402		H2416		H6327

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:36 (Parallel theme): But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

2 Chronicles 18:16 (Parallel theme): Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.

Jeremiah 23:2 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 34:8 (Parallel theme): As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

Isaiah 56:9 (Parallel theme): All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

Jeremiah 50:17 (Parallel theme): Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

1 Kings 22:17 (Parallel theme): And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.