



## WEEK 7 : SIEGE & EXILE

Question: Have you experienced moments in your life that feel like you are exiled or under siege? Take a moment, and then write down your thoughts.

This week's section of Bible history is particularly tough to read. Assyria had conquered and scattered the people of the Northern Kingdom, who had been worshipping golden cows because after the split they no longer had access to the temple in Jerusalem.

The two southern tribes fared a bit better, because they did have access to the Temple. However, the temple became defiled as people worshipped other gods even there.

Yet, **2 Kings 8:19**, reminds us that despite the difficult things God's people had to face, he was still committed to them:

*<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants for ever.*

At this time, God sent prophets to show his people how far from their covenant they had slipped, to announce God's judgment as a result, but also to deliver a message of hope.

In Ezekiel 34, God specifically challenges the priests – the "shepherds" – for not having protected the people's relationship with God through proper temple worship...

### Ezekiel 34:7-15

*<sup>7</sup> "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: <sup>8</sup> As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, <sup>9</sup> therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: <sup>10</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.*

*<sup>11</sup> “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. <sup>13</sup> I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. <sup>14</sup> I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.*

Who are the flock referred to in this passage? v8

What has happened to them? v8

Who is blamed for what has happened to them, and who do they represent? v7,9

How does God respond? v11-15

Now, read John 10:11-14. How does it relate to the passage in Ezekiel?

At the same time Ezekiel was prophesying to the first exiles, Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem whilst it was under siege. He also prophesies about God himself coming to shepherd his own people, in Jeremiah 23:1-4.

**Jeremiah 23:5-6** then goes on to talk about God honouring his promise to David.

<sup>5</sup> "Behold, *the days are coming,*" declares the LORD,  
"When ***I will raise up for David a righteous Branch*** [or sprout/shoot]  
And He will reign as king and act wisely  
And do justice and righteousness in the land.  
<sup>6</sup> In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will live securely;  
And this is His name by which He will be called,  
'The LORD Our Righteousness.'

What are the characteristics of this king who will shoot from David's family tree?

In Luke 1:68-79, we read how Zechariah, a priest, and the father of John the Baptizer, rejoices because his son will prepare the way for this coming Lord /Messiah/King.

What similarities do you see in Zechariah's words to those of Jeremiah above?

How does Paul describe Jesus in 1 Corinthians 1:30?