

# EZEKIEL



## ISRAEL RESTORED

## PART 5

*The Good Shepherd*

**READ EZEKIEL 34:11-31**

### INTRODUCTION

In this section of chapter 34, we see that God will lead His children back to Him in the same way that a shepherd goes to collect his sheep. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were taken into captivity and scattered throughout the nations. Other nations, in an effort to end the nation, would send in their people to intermarry with the Israelites so that they would lose their tradition and their identity. We see here that God would not let that happen and that He would gather them back to Him and that He would take care of them, protecting them from all dangers. We have seen this happen twice already with the freedom from captivity of the Babylonians and also in the establishment of Israel on May 14th 1948. There is yet one more “gathering of the sheep” that will take place after the tribulation when the children of Israel will enjoy an eternal rest and protection from their enemies with the Father.

Even if we understand the imagery that comes with a “good shepherd” there is still the question of who that shepherd is. Well, God answered that through His Son, Jesus Christ. In Matthew 25:31-46 we see Jesus sitting on His throne at the end of days, judging the nations. Every human being will come before Christ and be judged. There will be two options: the Bema seat and the Great White Throne. The Bema seat refers to ancient olympics when athletes would stand on the podium and the judges would sit on the Bema and “judge” them. A better word for it is reward. This was not a punitive judgement but a rewarding one. This is where everyone who is saved will stand before Christ and He will hand out their rewards according to their confession and their deeds here on earth.

The Second judgement is the Great White Throne judgement. This will be where those who have rejected Christ and God will be judged according to their confessions and deeds as well but they will not have the blood of Christ covering their sins and they will have to give an account. This judgement is one of consequence and punishment. This is where Christ will say to the goats, “depart from me, I never knew you” and they will turn away into everlasting fire. Hebrews 9:27 talks about this judgement and how humans only have one opportunity. The Great White Throne judgement will be one that sees many people being forced to their knees and proclaiming that Jesus is Lord, but for them it will be too late to be saved from the consequences of their sin.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many times do you think God takes Israel back in the Old Testament? Do you think that they deserve it? Why or why not? How many times has God taken you back? Do you think you deserve it?
2. How is God like a Shepherd? Read Psalm 23 and discuss.
3. Do you often think of the coming day when you will stand before Jesus and give an account? Do you think that on that day you will be in right standing before the Lord? Why? How can you remind yourself to follow Him more closely throughout the day to day?
4. Is it fair that Jesus judges all of humanity? What gives Him the ability and the right to do so?
5. Given what Hebrews says about man having one chance at life and then judgement, how do you think you are doing with serving Jesus first? Have you been seeking His will first above all others? What can you change to see a deeper relationship come to life with Him?

## WRAP UP

This life is short. God is patient and He is able to bring us back and restore us to Him. We have to be willing to follow Him and to make sacrifices of comfort and desire to do so. We only get one shot at this life and so it is important that we spend our days honoring and glorifying Him so that, not only we can be saved, but that others might come to know Him better as well.