

Earth's Ultimate Coronation

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[0 : 0 0] word. Now speaking of God's word, we're going to turn to it just now. So please do pick up your Bibles. Ezekiel 34 is the chapter that we're going to be looking at a little bit later in our service, when Willie comes to preach to us. Ezekiel chapter 34, which is really all about earth's ultimate coronation. We're going to read the whole thing together.

Ezekiel 34, beginning at verse 1. Hear the word of the Lord. The word of the Lord came to me, son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, even to the shepherds, thus says the Lord God, ah, the shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves. Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool. You slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened. The sick you have not healed. The injured you have not bound up. The strayed you have not brought back. The lost you have not sought. And with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd. Now they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered. They wandered all over the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts. Since there was no shepherd and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep. But the shepherds have fed themselves and have not fed my sheep. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God, behold, I am against the shepherds and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths that they may not be food for them.

For thus says the Lord God, behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture.

And on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep and I myself will make them lie down declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost and I will bring back the strayed and I will bind up the injured and I will strengthen the weak and the fat and the strong I will destroy or probably better translated as the footnote there which is I will watch over. I will feed them in justice.

As for you my flock thus says the Lord God behold I judge between sheep and sheep between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? And to drink of clear water that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet?

[5 : 07] And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet and drink what you have muddied with your feet? Therefore thus says the Lord God to them behold I I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep because you pushed with the side and shoulder and thrust at all the weak with your horns till you have scattered them abroad I will rescue my flock they shall no longer be a prey and I will judge between sheep and sheep and I will set up over them one shepherd my servant David and he shall feed them he shall feed them and be their shepherd and I the Lord will be their God and my servant David shall be prince among them I am the Lord

I have spoken I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods and I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing and I will send down the showers in their season they shall be showers of blessing and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit and the earth shall yield its increase and they shall be secure in their land and they shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them they shall no more be a prey to the nations nor shall the beasts of the land devour them they shall dwell securely and none shall make them afraid and I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land and no longer suffer their reproach of the nations and they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them and that they the house of Israel are my people declares the Lord God and you are my sheep human sheep of my pasture and I am your God declares the Lord God well amen and may God bless to us this his word well turn with me if you would to the passage that Phil read to us

Ezekiel 34 now we've been going through Ezekiel and having weathered 24 chapters of Ezekiel's monotonous repetition of oracles of judgment and of God's declaration to remove his glory even from among his own people because his presence has to depart from sin and for wickedness wherever it's found this chapter is a wonderful contrast as one writer says it is full of pastoral reassurance and that's because it promises that the removal of God's glory is not permanent it will return and indeed it will do so in the sight of all nations I will set my glory among the nations says the Lord that's Ezekiel's watchword and they will see my justice my righteousness and God's justice his divine rightness is displayed not only as he destroys all evil not just among his own people but wherever it's found throughout all the world that's what these middle chapters chapter 25 to 32 showed just to make the point to God's people Israel there's no hope in looking to the world their evil will be destroyed as well but his justice is not just seen in his destruction of evil it's also seen wonderfully seen when he will display his righteousness to the world and he will do that through a complete and permanent restoration and renewal of his kingdom and of his people and that's what the rest of Ezekiel's prophecy is all about and it begins here and that's expressed in the language of concepts that Israelites would understand it was only way could be expressed to those exiles in that time it talks about God's land it talks about God's people Israel the temple the city of Jerusalem as we read on we can't help but seeing how how the hope that Ezekiel expresses here is something that far transcends anything that is just local or ethnic or anything that is merely time bound in history

Ezekiel's message is about the return of God's glory to this whole world so that all the nations will know that he is the sovereign Lord of the universe and all of this global restoration of God's order will come and Ezekiel lays this out so vividly for us it will come as God restores to the world his divine ruler as he establishes in the world his divine rest as he fills the world with his divine righteousness as he regathers all his people through resurrection and as he brings ultimate retribution and all his enemies and ultimately a complete divine recreation of all things the ultimate city of God where God's presence will be among his people and his provision will be for the whole world forever and ever nothing less than that that Ezekiel is speaking about

Ezekiel's gospel we might call it his announcement to the good news to the whole world and that's what we see in chapters 34 right to the very end of the book chapters 48 and as we look at chapter 34 here tonight we see from the outset that although it is rooted in real history it does look forward to a historical restoration of Israelites to the land of Canaan it speaks about much much more than that because God is showing us through Ezekiel the consummation of all history he's showing us where and how the whole human story comes to its denouement Ezekiel's visions as Chris Wright rightly observes very clearly transcend anything yet seen in the history of God's people and look to an age yet to be enjoyed and that's why these chapters are so wonderfully encouraging for us still today the apostle Paul says all these things in our old testaments are written for us that we might have encouragement that we might have hope so I want to look at the wonderfully reassuring hope that there is for us in this chapter which speaks about earth's ultimate coronation and that is what will usher in

[12 : 37] God's kingdom restored by his divine ruler and his wonderful covenant of peace that Ezekiel speaks about here as we read it you'll see that the chapter consists of a whole lot of oracles of God thus says the Lord again and again but it's really falling into three movements and they speak of first of all the removal of human rulers then the restoration of divine rule and finally it describes for us the reign of the prince of peace so look at verses 1 to 10 it describes the permanent removal of human rulers God himself will remove corrupt human rulers because he holds them responsible to him to rule for him and for his people not to rule just for themselves and once again Ezekiel here is given words of condemnation words of judgment a diatribe verse 2 against these shepherds of Israel and God is firmly set against them we're told in verse 10 and the reason for that though is because of his great care his compassion for his sheep that's why verse 10 ends there the oracle with I will rescue my sheep from their mouths now what's he talking about here what's he talking about shepherds and sheep well the shepherd of the nation in the ancient world was just a normal term for the king the shepherd was the king that was used not just in

Israel but in Babylon and Egypt everywhere everybody knew the shepherd of the nation was the king and so Ezekiel here is signing a blast against all Israel's kings very likely he's picking up on Jeremiah's similar pronouncement of judgment you can read in Jeremiah chapter 23 where God blames clearly Israel's kings Israel's shepherds for the plight of his people to their evil deeds that has caused God's people to be scattered into exile and so what he is saying here is through judgment on these kings he will replace them with a righteous king and that's exactly what Jeremiah spoke about he said the name of that king would be called the Lord is our righteousness and it will be in his days that Judah will be saved so Ezekiel's charge isn't new you might say though is it fair seems very extreme doesn't it but we were reading not long ago through the books of kings with Phil and of course that history tells a very sad and sordid tale of rulers who just went from bad to worse to worse still kings should protect a nation from divisions within and from dangers without but Israel's kings so obviously they failed in both of those things the kingdom was divided and then it was conquered and the reason

Ezekiel tells us here in verse 2 is that the rulers had been serving themselves not the people they'd just been feeding themselves not the sheep and verses 3 to 5 here spell it out for us what they had done was consume for themselves eat the fat clothe themselves with the wool even slaughter the best and coerce verse 4 ruling with domineering harshness but what they have not done is care for their people you've not fed the sheep the weak you've not strengthened the sick you've not healed the injured you've not bound up the straying and the lost you've not sought you've not brought them back and the result verse 6 is God's people his sheep are scattered they're wandering they're lost they're scattered over the earth with no one to seek and search for them the very opposite of the gathering the congregating of God's people in his place under his gracious rule and under his care being tended in order to flourish and instead they've become verse 8 prey food for all the wild beasts in other words they've fallen under God's covenant curse that's the language of covenant curses read about it in Leviticus chapter 26 or in Deuteronomy 28 because repeated again in verse 8 you see the anointed kings

God's shepherd have just fed themselves not God's people and therefore verse 9 thus says the Lord I am against you shepherds and I will put a stop to their feeding of the sheep I will rescue the sheep from their mouth so they may not be food for them God will bring an end to the kings of Israel and Judah because they will be held responsible they'll be removed permanently and indeed never again would there be a merely human king in Israel Zedekiah was the very last and only thus can God's people be rescued is what he's saying notice the motivation for this dietary the whole reason for the severe judgment is God's burning compassion for his people they're my sheep my sheep is the repeated refrain God is distressed at the plight of his sheep he has compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and so he says I will rescue them it's a wonderful comfort isn't it to know that God cares about his people

God cares about his household above all his own people when they're abused and he sees when the rights of leaders are not met with the responsibilities that they should have where the gain of rulers is not matched by their giving to the people that's the duty of those who are at the top of society God sees and God cares and he says he will bring rescue it's a real warning I think to all human rulers because God cares about how they rule he holds all of them responsible and he will judge in all the earth not just not just here for Israel that's so clear isn't it that Ezekiel when we saw all those oracles against all the nations God cares about all the nations and all the people and all the rulers of the world remember Pharaoh is going to judge him it's very clear throughout the scriptures that so if you turn to the next book of Daniel you'll find it very famous they won't you

[19 : 21] God removes kings and God sets them up that's what Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar the emperor of the world in that day it's the most high he says who rules the kingdom of men and he gives it to whom he will and God's purpose for establishing all human rulers is very clear throughout the scripture Paul tells us very clearly doesn't he in Romans chapter 13 that they're there to promote and to praise what is good and to prevent and to punish what is evil according to God's standard they're to rule according to God's standard not against God's standard not with the tyranny of Revelation chapter 13 you were hearing about this morning the elites in our world those people with power not to feed themselves not to enrich themselves not to lord it over and exploit and domineer failing to feed failing to nourish failing to strengthen and heal the weakest and God says if they don't he will hold them to account but that's man's way isn't it that's the way human beings have been right since the very beginning go right back to the very beginning of the

Bible read about it in Genesis chapter 4 as human civilization as human culture grows and develops well human cruelty and human corruption grows and dominates along with it epitomized by Lamech the first tyrant in the world with his 70 fold revenge and even here you see even in Israel the unique society enlightened by the word of God himself more than any other nation on earth and with kings descended from the great shepherd king David the man after God's own heart even here all the human rulers fail and so God says he himself must step in as a rescuer and so the other side of God's removal permanently of human rulers is there in verses 11 to 22 and it's the promised restoration of divine rule

God himself will reverse the curse of all human harms because only he is able to rule and be the ruler that we all need and that we can trust even great David the king sang in one of his psalms didn't he put not your trust in princes or in the son of man there's no salvation in him but rather he said blessed is the one whose hope is in the Lord his God Israel's true king Israel's true shepherd was always God himself we sang it in Psalm 80 oh shepherd of Israel you who lead Joseph like a flock you who are enthroned above the cherubim David knew that didn't he he sang the Lord is my shepherd he's my king and this true king says here in verse 11 I myself will search for my sheep verse 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep he and he alone can and will utterly reverse the total calamity of human rule look at verse 16 it's the total reversal of the human leadership failure of verse 4 in fact the word order in the Hebrew in verse 16 is just like verse 4 emphasizes it even more the lost

I will seek the straying I will bring back the injured I will bind up the weak I will strengthen and the fat I will watch over or tend justly I think the footnote is probably the right reading there it's parallel to the end of verse 4 which also should probably read the strong you have harshly and brutally ruled over it's the reverse a total reversal of the corruption of human rule and the threefold indictment of Israel's kings that they ruled unjustly and exploitatively that they didn't tend and strengthen the people and that they saw the people scattered it's utterly reversed and that's what verses 11 to 22 spell out for us first in verses 11 to 13 God himself will regather the sheep they'll go from being scattered to complete security so verse 12 he will seek them from all places that they've been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness there's a cosmic feel isn't there to the language there reflects the day of the

Lord a day of clouds and doom for the nations we saw that in chapter 30 verse 3 it's a way of speaking about the ultimate judgment of God but it's also the day here you see that brings ultimate deliverance look at verse 13 God gathers his people out of the peoples that's the gentile nations and gathers them from the countries into his own land there's echoes there I think of the prophet Hosea a hundred years and more previously who spoke about when God said there'll be a people who are not my people and they'll be called my people they'll be called sons of the living God God the true shepherd king will gather many peoples from the nations scattered under judgment and bring them in to the security of his kingdom and verses 13 to 16 he will feed them and tend them they'll go from neglect to real nourishment

[25 : 03] I will feed them and I myself will make them lie down that's what it will mean when when God himself shepherds his sheep when his strong arm will rule for him the very antithesis of power grabbing of wealth grabbing human rule like Pharaoh's arm like Nebuchadnezzar's arm remember which God says he will break and indeed even the arm of rule of his own representative kings in Israel Isaiah the prophet a hundred years and more before had said that the Lord comes with might and his arm rules for him and that will mean he goes on to say he will tend his flock like a shepherd and he will gather the lambs in his arms and he will gently lead those that are with young he will care for his people a strong arm yes a powerful ruler but for his people not against them not subjugating them but serving them and then verses 17 to 22 you see ruling justly he'll bring them from rivalry to righteousness

I will judge between sheep and sheep between ram and male goats it's not just human rulers who are corrupt it's human nature that is corrupt not just the leaders who are at fault it's all the people they've been led into an attitude of self gain and self serving and spoiling for others he says it's not enough that you just put yourself first verse 18 you want to tread them down you're not just drinking the best for yourself you're making it all muddy and spoiling it for everybody else it's a very vivid description isn't it of the one-upmanship that's so deep in the human heart but God will deal with both the calamity of human rulers and with the corruptions of human rivalry where sheep behave instead like billy goats verse 21 pushing and thrusting their horns and scattering the weak abroad he will rescue his flock he says so that verse 22 they are no longer prey and that will involve judgment not just at the top of humanity but right through humanity

I will judge between sheep and sheep it can be easy isn't it can't it to take God's side when when we've got the top echelons the elites the rulers in the line of God's judgment well God will hold all such accountable people he's against it all exploited of power but he will also judge between sheep and sheep he will also judge every single person and he knows and he will tend them in justice and I will judge between sheep and sheep and that is a promise about the restoration of divine rule but you might ask yourself well when was all this restored as promised well that was a measure of good leadership restored after the exile through men like Ezra and Nehemiah who led God's people back and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple and so on many decades later but there was never another king certainly there was no great

David like spoken of here in verse 23 and nothing like this picture of perfect security and nourishment and justice everywhere so what does this refer to and where can we look for fulfillment of what Ezekiel is clearly pointing to here and how can this reign of God himself on earth that he seems to be talking about how can that be realized well look at verses 23 to 31 because this describes for us thirdly the perfect reign of the prince of peace God himself will reign combining divine and human rule forever in an eternal shepherd king who is truly his servant king they're not getting away from the ultimate language here the climactic language that's used this one shepherd this one king verse 23 my servant

David it's clear he's not he's not talking about literal David somehow being being resurrected he's certainly not talking just about a merely human king restored to Israel no in using the name David he's talking about the king par excellence the very name David epitomizes kingship for Israel he was the man who was a shepherd of sheep remember before God made him a king over men and this whole glorious situation that's pictured here isn't something temporary it's ultimate this is the ultimate resolution to God's promise that goes way way back to the beginning way back to Moses who spoke about the latter days when God would at last vindicate his people when he bring judgment on all evil and rescue his people it's indeed what Jeremiah was speaking about in these terms exactly as I said in Jeremiah chapter 23 behold days are coming says Jeremiah that's the prophet's language for the great day of the

[30 : 36] Lord the final judgment the last days days are coming when I will raise up for David a righteous branch and he shall reign as king and execute justice and righteousness in his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely and this is the name by which he will be called the Lord our righteousness it's an extraordinary name for the king isn't it the Lord our righteousness but if you're in any doubt that this David here is not just an ordinary human king turn forward just a few pages to chapter 37 because he speaks about him again in chapter 37 verse 24 my servant David shall be king over them and they shall all have one shepherd that is all his people he's speaking about here from all the nations gathered in indeed as we'll see later on gathered in from their graves and look at verse 25

David my servant shall be their prince forever and verse 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them just as we have in our chapter and it will be an everlasting covenant and I will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore again in verse 28 then the nations will know that I am the Lord when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore do you get it forever forevermore forevermore now look back to our chapter and see what it is he's describing verses 23 and 24 describe the reign of God's prince a servant ruler reflects the Lord's own rule with perfection at last on this earth God's covenant hasn't been annulled the promise that he will be their God and they will be his people look at verse 24 I the Lord will be their God the failure of the kings has not meant that his covenant with David has been annulled my servant

David shall be prince among them it's interesting he doesn't use the word king there maybe it's to distance this one from all these other failures of kings this David was very clearly not to be just a revival of these Judean kings they're finished permanently God has said that but this one will be God's ruler in the midst he will be among them and he will usher in what verses 25 to 29 describe the restoration of God's peace his saving righteousness will be restored permanently through a covenant of peace verse 25 God's peace God's shalom that's much more than just the absence of threat and war it is all that's wonderfully so they will dwell securely he says verse 28 they will dwell securely none shall make them afraid wonderful verse 27 there will be deliverance from everyone who enslaves them under the yoke there will be ultimate security ultimate peace from every fear it's a wonderful picture isn't it no fear of violence or robbery or rape or murder no fear of weakness or sickness or even death no fear of the future no fears for your family no fear about your jobs no fear about anything none shall make them fear when has that ever been seen on this earth but it's far more than just the absence of things that destroy peace it's the permanent presence look verse 26 of showers of god's blessing all around his hill that is where he dwells in the midst showers of blessing cascading over his people not just security but verse 29 satisfaction i will provide for them and they will hunger no more nor suffer any reproach in the world it's the abundant language there of god's covenant blessings again you can go back and read it in leviticus chapter 26 or deuteronomy chapter 28 when has that ever been seen so lavishly in human history certainly not under ezra and am i even their godly leadership as the people came back to the land it was full of conflict wasn't it and not ever after in the bible and still not so on the earth today but if you do read in leviticus chapter 26 you see what the ultimate expression the ultimate expression of all god's covenant blessing really is and it's this i will make my dwelling among you and i will walk among you and i will be your god and you will be my people and that too is the is the ultimate blessing that it's expressed here look at verses 30 and 31 they speak of exactly that the reality of god's presence his sovereign relationship will be renewed with his people ultimately and forever the renewal of his covenant of eternal peace his shalom it means that that god's people will know him do you see verse 30 with them with them and god's people verse 31 human sheep are back in the intimate presence of god himself with them in the midst just like at the beginning remember when god's dwelling place was on earth in his garden in eden when he walked with them well god will be with them in the midst again and all of this the ultimate renewal of god's covenant of perfect shalom his peace

his presence it's all bound up with the rule of this human ruler it's his human presence that's going to embody everything that god's presence here implies look at verse 13 it's god himself who will feed and tend his flock verse 15 it's god himself who will be the shepherd of his sheep but then he says in verse 23 there'll be one shepherd and it's this human servant this david and verse 27 you see it's god himself who is their deliverer verse 29 it's god himself who is their provider it's god himself who will be with them verse 30 and yet all of this is going to be brought about by the rule of the prince of peace verse 24 god's servant among them the one who brings this covenant of peace this ultimate shalom and again we have to ask don't we when was this glorious reality ever seen sounds like sounds like when you read these verses it sounds like the world we all long for but it's just a dream a world full of peace and not hostility and not hatred not war a world full of security and no fear a world where rulers provide and don't plunder their people where there isn't hunger but there's feasting where there's no scarcity but there's only great satisfaction where there's no repression only wonderful release sounds like heaven on earth doesn't it and indeed that is exactly what it does describe and yes it's not something we see at least not yet but you know it has been glimpsed on this earth it has been at least for a time because if you read any one of the four gospels in the new testament and if you've never done that let me urge you to do that you'll read about the words and the works of a man who self consciously named himself to be this king i am the good shepherd said jesus of nazareth he was naming himself to be the king of israel the son of david the promised messiah this christ being spoken of here and even before his birth there was a supernatural announcement for the angel that this birth was indeed divine that this child would fulfill isaiah's prophecy a hundred years and more before ezekeiel's here of a virgin who would conceive and bear a son and his name would mean god with us emmanuel my prince among them i the lord with them and in his earthly ministry he did bring as verse 27 here promised he brought deliverance to everything that enslaved people sickness demons death itself and he brought that wonderful command go in peace in peace in god's shalom of wholeness of joy and all around his presence on this earth there was exactly what verse 26 here describes earth and fields and trees bearing fruit in such abundance that even water turned into wine and even a few loaves and fish could feed thousands of people with an abundance of satisfaction that left baskets left over wherever jesus went the presence of god's power was felt

the presence of god's beauty was seen the wonder of god's abundance was manifest and he came he said himself to gather in his lost sheep the son of man came to seek and to save what is lost they came home to bring the prodigals home to the father's house and shout with joy in the heavens when it happened he came to seek all of his sheep from among the nations not just the lost sheep of the house of israel but jesus said in john's gospel chapter 10 i have other sheep that i must bring into this fold so that there will be one flock under one shepherd he will feed his flock he will lead his flock he will care for his flock together as a shepherd king and when jesus uttered those words read them in john's gospel chapter 10 his heroes knew exactly what he was claiming they said you being a man make yourself god and they called it blasphemy they wanted to stone him they were very clear what he was saying and yet he is the one that their own scripture spoke of right here in our chapter and many many places besides the ultimate rule of god himself expressed in the human rule of one shepherd god's ruler among them by which god himself would be with them and some of course recognized it and loved him and welcomed him but as jesus said my sheep hear my voice and i know them and they follow me i give them eternal life and they will never perish is what the messiah king said to them my father has given them to me and i and the father are one you see just as it promises here he will judge between sheep between those who really do know his voice and hear his own and those who don't those who resented jesus and rejected jesus said he had a demon and in fact sadly proved that it was they who belonged to their true father the devil said jesus and one day jesus said that judgment between the sheep will be made public and universal and ultimate look at verse 17 here in front of us and just listen to jesus words when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him then he will sit on his glorious throne and before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats saying to those on his right come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world but to those on his left depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels friends be in absolutely no doubt jesus christ claimed to be and is this shepherd this king the shepherd king who will sit in judgment on all people but he is also the servant king my servant david he is above all as jesus himself said the shepherd who seeks his sheep ultimately to save his sheep he is the good shepherd who lays down his own life for the sheep ezekiel tells us here that god himself will be with him and with his people to deliver them to save them through his ruler through this great ruler this this new david this prince of peace he doesn't tell us though how exactly he can save such a rebellious recalcitrant flock of human sheep but there's a hint in that word that he

[44 : 47] repeats twice in verse 23 and verse 24 my servant david my servant this great shepherd this great king will be god's servant and ezekiel knew of isaiah the prophet's words before his of god who spoke about one who would come as a servant to gather his flock as a shepherd the one on whom the holy spirit would rest in all his fullness who would indeed lay down his life for the sheep he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace shalom because all we like sheep have gone astray we've turned everyone to his own way and the lord the lord laid on him the iniquity of us all in order that we should be gathered into his presence but so that we would be gathered in he was cast out under judgment that's what it would mean for god to be with his people at last as a shepherd it would mean the son of god come down into the mess into the misery of this world to be the servant of god's saving mercy to be himself the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep so that everything in this vision of ezekiel in this chapter everything of god's eternal peace his shalom might be so on this earth as promised i came says jesus that they may have life and have it abundantly i am the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep i have authority to lay it down and i have authority to take it up again and so he did you see having accomplished his great deliverance he rose triumphant from the grave and he is now ascended to that throne on heaven because earth's ultimate coronation has already taken place and from there he will come again to this earth to usher in forever this peace throughout the whole wide world and on that day every human ruler every empire that is set against the lord and his christ will be judged forever the rule of man in the image of the beast as we saw in revelation 13 that whole edifice of human power and evil will be destroyed forever the whole of heaven will sing hallelujah the smoke goes up from her forever and ever and the kingdoms of this world will be seen at last have become the kingdom of our lord and of his christ and he will reign forever and ever and there will be people gathered in from every tribe and language and nation who have been washed in the blood of the lamb that's what revelation chapter 7 tells us the blood of the good shepherd himself who became the sacrificial lamb to bring deliverance to his sheep and john and john goes on god himself will shelter them with his presence for the lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd and he will guide them to springs of living water and god will wipe away every tear from their eyes you see just as ezekiel saw here david shall feed them he shall be prince among them and they shall know that i am the lord their god with them forever

the reign of the prince of peace filling this world at last he will reign forever and ever is the chorus and not only that his flock of human sheep his people all who love all who rejoice at the name of the jesus we're told we will reign with him as well forever and ever that's the promise of the very last chapter of the bible but it's just reiterating what ezekiel saw long long ago and what we see with such wonderful finality in the light of the triumph of our lord jesus who is great david's greater son who was crucified who rose who is ascended and who reigns on high and who is coming as promised to reign forever and we long for that day don't we those of us who are christian believers that's our vision of a glorified savior the great shepherd king christ reigning with his people in glory forever that's the only answer the only answer to all this world's misery to all this world's mess and that's why the purpose of our lives as his people until that day is to be a truly worshipping church serving christ gathering his people through the gospel today until he comes by showing forth that same vision that ezekiel has shown forth our lord's earthly ministry as i said gave wonderful glimpses of that glory that's to come pointing people to the beauty to the blessing to the brightness of god's glorious shalom his peace and the world still needs to see that where is it going to see that the apostle paul says that the church of jesus christ is to be a pillar and buttress of that heavenly truth in this world the world needs to see that through the people of the lord jesus and the church of jesus christ that's a challenge to us all isn't it to show the world true christian leadership not verses three to five here but to show the world what verse sixteen describes to show the world true christian lives not not what verses eighteen and nineteen describe here the rivalry of selfishness pushing and thrusting out for ourselves but rather to show the righteousness of our shepherd our savior so that we also as god's people become showers of blessing to the world conduits through which the living waters of his great grace and mercy flow out to others to assuage their thirst to show them the way of life so that they also will come to know this wonderful lord whom we know to know the lord with them and to be his sheep who hear his voice the voice that says to them you are my sheep human sheep of my pasture and i am your god that's why we're here friends that's what god has called us to we see what god has shown us and our task is to show the world this glorious future and lead them to the one through whom alone that glorious future has been made true jesus christ our lord and our king let's pray heavenly father how we thank you that our future is secured in the coronation of your

son our great king the lord jesus christ we long for his coming and we pray lord that indeed you would come quickly but help us lord we pray help us to show forth this glorious vision of the world as you created it to be and the world as marvelously you have redeemed it so that it shall be one day to the praise of your glorious grace help us to speak of it but even more so lord help us to live it that people might see through your church a pillar and buttress of this glorious message of truth so help us we pray to live for our shepherd and we ask it in his name amen