

Lesson 3 – The Role of a Shepherd and The Role of a Warrior

Introduction

In Psalm 78:70-72 the poet Asaph wrote, “He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands.”

It was well known that David was a shepherd in his youth, and this week’s lesson will look at David’s life as a shepherd and the training he received from that role in preparation for becoming a courageous warrior. The lesson will also look at the use of the term shepherd in both the Old and the New Testaments, seeking to determine what this means to you personally.

Day 1 – David, the Shepherd and God, the Shepherd

1. David took care of his father’s flock of sheep in the hills of Bethlehem, and learned about God’s creation of nature from being outdoors! Please open today’s lesson by reading David’s Psalm 8 as your own **prayer** of worship to God and close by asking for His help. Now begin with these **observation questions** that will look at 1 Samuel 16 and 17, and Psalm 23.

- First read 1 Samuel 17:1-22 and then record what is shared about David in 1 Samuel 16:11,20 and 1 Samuel 17:13-22.

- The town of Bethlehem is located six miles south of Jerusalem in the hills of Judah, two thousand feet above the Mediterranean Sea. The town sits upon a long ridge, with a deep valley on either side. In David’s time this region grew figs, olives, and grapes and there were cornfields in the valley, which is probably where the name Bethlehem came from as it means the House of Bread. As a shepherd David was familiar with the challenges of tending animals. Please read Psalm 23 and meditate on how David described God, and then record this in the Appendix, “The Names and Attributes of God.”

- How would you explain David’s response to God?

- An excellent book on the role of a shepherd is *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, by W. Phillip Keller. This informative resource provides insight into the responsibility of a shepherd living in the ancient near east. God gave man dominion over animals, and for the sheep, that meant to provide for their nourishment, and to guard them from predators, so the shepherd spent time with them to be sensitive to their needs. The shepherd was also to promote healing, and used oil to cover the sheep’s wounds. In the evening, the sheep were in the sheepfold, an area fenced in with rock walls, with only one gate to enter. The life of a shepherd involved being outside in nature, and in the evening he was under the stars. Sheep provided wool for clothing as well as meat

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for eating. In the nation of Israel, sheep were used in the sacrificial system for worship, and their horns were used during ceremonial observances. The Passover lamb was to be an unblemished animal, carefully tended by shepherds, and offered at the Passover feast as a reminder of God's deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. While David was protecting his sheep from predators in the hills of Bethlehem, the nation of Israel was being challenged by its enemies, the Philistines.

- As you proceed through this study of David, you will see David in many difficult situations. David faced the struggles of his life with a knowledge of God that he had learned as a child, even when his life was known by the opposite of circumstances from what he proclaimed in Psalm 23. Please complete these sentences according to David's claims of Psalm 23.

David's future would involve dry, arid deserts, and not

David's future would involve entering into rough waters, and not

David's future would involve running away from unrighteousness, and not

David's future would involve facing death at the hands of his enemies and need

David's future would involve coming face to face with evil and he would need

- Now please read Ezekiel 34:11-22 and allow these words of prophecy to feed your soul concerning God's role as your Shepherd.

2. Please examine these word studies for some of the **key words** in this lesson.

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
7462 Hebrew ra-ah Psalm 23:1	Shepherd , to tend a flock, pasture it, generally to rule, to associate with (as a friend)	Ezekiel 34:5,8
5095 Hebrew nahal Psalm 23:2,3	Leads , to run with a sparkle, flow, to conduct, to protect, sustain, carry, feed, guide, lead gently on	Genesis 33:14 (proceed at leisure)
7725 Hebrew shuwb Psalm 23:3	Restores , to turn back, (way), (not necessarily with the idea of returning to the starting point), to retreat, again. <i>Many uses in the Hebrew language.</i>	This word was generally used to command that a person <i>turn back</i> to God, rather than the way David used it in Psalm 23, as God turns back his soul.
5148 Hebrew nachah Psalm 23:3	Leads , to guide, to transport (into exile, or as colonists), bestow, bring, govern, put, straiten	Exodus 13:21
2896 Hebrew towb Psalm 23:6	Goodness , good things, as a noun good in the widest sense. <i>Morally good.</i>	1 Kings 8:36

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
2617 Hebrew checed Psalm 23:6	Mercy , lovingkindness, by implication (towards God) piety, pity. <i>A word associated with God's covenant love with His people. In the midst of our sin, God looks at us with compassion and lovingkindness.</i>	Psalm 136 (This word is in every verse!)
3427 Hebrew yashab Psalm 23:6	Dwell , to sit down (as judge, to ambush in quiet); to remain, to settle, to marry. <i>"Follow" in the LXX, and three other translations, "return" in the Masoretic Text.</i>	Psalm 27:4

3. While David had an accurate understanding of the role of a shepherd, he also used the analogy of God as his shepherd in Psalm 23. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel also wrote about shepherding based on words God spoke to them on behalf of the people. In these passages you will see the seriousness of the calling of a shepherd. Throughout the Bible we read **admonitions** known as “woes.” One of these **admonitions** was spoken against the spiritual leaders of Israel in Ezekiel where they are called shepherds. Please read this admonition to see the seriousness of their sins in God’s eyes. In Ezekiel 34:1-4, what had these shepherds done and what had these shepherds not done?

What had these shepherds done?	What had these shepherds not done?

4. How did God describe His untended flock in Ezekiel 34:5?

5. Some prophecy has a literal meaning while some might be more figurative in nature. These next passages can be interpreted both ways. What was God’s promise to His people concerning His covenant in these Ezekiel passages? These passages also introduce David in a new way. A later lesson will study this, but for now jot down what is told about David here and what is God’s promise to His people.

a. Ezekiel 34:23-31

b. Ezekiel 37:24-28

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6. What circumstances are challenging you today? Does the challenge involve your role in your family, in your home, or in friendships? Perhaps the challenge is in your ministry, or within your church, in the work place, or in your neighborhood. Are you challenged today by events that took place in your past or are you anxious about events that will take place in your future?

God wants you to trust Him as your shepherd. Will you allow God to lead and comfort you in EVERY area of your life? Some people compartmentalize their lives, and keep God at a distance from some roles that they have. Have you done that or do you allow the Lord to be your shepherd, accepting His leadership in **all** of your decisions?

List the roles in your life where you have allowed God to shepherd you. List the roles in your life where you have not allowed God to shepherd you. Why have you not trusted God with **all** of these areas of your life?

Where I allow God to shepherd me: Where I have not allowed God to shepherd me:

Please write out Philippians 4:19 and claim this truth in your life.

What gets in the way of you living that truth?

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 to the people in Corinth who had come to a faith in Christ after worshipping other gods. These people had not grown up as David had with an understanding of God, or with a faith in Him being sufficient in every circumstance. Maybe you came to the Lord later in life like the Corinthian people, or for some other reason it is harder to trust in the Lord God as your shepherd. But God through Christ has given you everything you need for eternal life and He has provided all you need to resist temptation and follow Him. Read these verses in 2 Corinthians out loud and claim these truths for yourself.

Following the instructions of these verses would involve “checking out” those thoughts that come to your mind to determine if they came from your flesh, the world, the devil, or from your shepherd.

Please close in prayer asking God to help you recognize “speculations and every lofty thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God.”

Days 2 and 3 – Christ, the Good Shepherd

1. The psalmist Asaph opened Psalm 80 with these words, “Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, Thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock; Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!” Asaph closed Psalm 79 with these words, “So we Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture will give thanks to Thee forever; to all generations we will tell of Thy praise.”

You might open in **prayer** using these words of praise and then start with these **observation questions**.

- The night that Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, God honored the shepherds guarding their flocks on the hillside. Read this account in Luke 2:8-20, and try to imagine yourself as a shepherd on that night.
- Jesus spoke a parable about the good shepherd in John 10. Please begin by reading John 10:1-5 and record the descriptions of the Shepherd and the stranger.
 The Shepherd: _____ The stranger: _____
- How did Jesus describe Himself in John 10:7-18 and what did He mean by that?
- Who else is described in John 10:7-18 and what did Jesus say about them?

2. Please examine these word studies for some of the **key words** in this lesson.

Strong's # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong's Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
4166 Greek poimen	Shepherd , pastor. <i>Applied spiritually to Christ and also given as a designation for a spiritual pastor of the flock.</i> ¹	John 10:11,12,14,16

3. Jesus shared in Luke 15 the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. Please read Luke 15:1-7 and think about how Jesus described the shepherd here.

4. What was the spiritual significance of this parable as explained in Luke 15:7?

5. The word *repent* in Luke 15:7 would be the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *restore* that David used in Psalm 23:3. Read these two verses together and write out a summary of what these verses say, and what relationship these two verses have.

¹ Zodhiates, p. 1869.

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6. Many of Jesus' followers wanted Him to assume the role of political leader while He was on earth. Jesus described His relationship with those who followed Him, and yet He had another role besides being their shepherd. Please read Hebrews 10:10-13 and Hebrew 9:11-14 and write out the role that Jesus, the good shepherd had on behalf of His followers.

7. Please close today by reading John 10:24-30 and record what Jesus claimed about His sheep.

8. The Jewish people living in the time of Jesus had heard the many references in the sacred writings proclaiming that God was their shepherd, and they also knew of the references to their spiritual leaders being shepherds. In the culture of the ancient near east, a leader was considered a shepherd, as both the kings of Mesopotamia and Egypt were given this designation.² Isaiah added to the dimension of this when he wrote to the nation Israel in Isaiah 53:6, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." This passage is a messianic prophecy proclaiming Christ, the anointed One, who would come to save His people from their sin.

In John 10, Jesus said His sheep would know His voice. One way to know His voice is through His word. God has spoken to us through Jesus, His Son, and "all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person who belongs to God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work," 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

Please close by reading Psalm 119:1-8 as a prayer of your commitment before the Lord God Almighty, and then you might sing this lovely hymn about Jesus, your shepherd.

"Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Me"

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care, in Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare; blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are; blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

By Dorothy A. Thrupp and William Bradbury.

Day 4 –Being a Shepherd and Being Shepherded in the Body of Christ

1. God's plan for the church was that some would be gifted to take the role of shepherd among His people. Christ demonstrated what that meant by the life He led here on earth as He spoke truth and showed His passion for people. Open in **prayer** and consider these **observation questions**.

² Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms II*, New York, Society of St. Paul, 1969, p. 102.

- Christ revealed a dimension to the role of a leader in a conversation with Peter in John 21:15-17. What did Jesus ask Peter to do and what would prompt that response?
- Now please look at Paul’s instruction to the church leader’s at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-31. What was Paul’s concern for the leaders and the church of Ephesus?

2. In 1 Peter 2:25, the apostle Peter wrote, “For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.” Peter then ended this letter with **instructions** to the leaders in the early church. What were the **instructions** given in 1 Peter 5:1-4?

3. Please read the **instructions** Paul gave to the early church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 16:15-18. What does this ask you to do in relationship to those who are leading you in the church?

4. God planned that His people would be shepherded by Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ. God designed His church to be shepherded by those He gifted in the role of pastor and elder. Are you willing to follow the leading of God and Jesus Christ? Are you willing to follow the leading of God’s shepherds in the church?

To follow, seek _____	James 1:5
For food, turn to _____	Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:11
To be on guard, _____	1 John 4:1,4
For courage and strength, _____	Isaiah 41:10
For peace _____	Isaiah 26:3,4
During temptation _____	1 Corinthians 10:13

Now please read about the responsibility God has given to you concerning being a sheep. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13 and record what you are to do. Would you pray about these **instructions** and ask God to help you be obedient to these commands. What could you do this week in obedience to this passage?

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Please read Psalm 23 again and see how much of it you have memorized this week. This is the Psalm I say as I sit in my dentist's chair! The chair looks out onto an open field with sheep grazing on the grass. I confess I never look forward to going to the dentist, although I go every six months. When I sit there, I go over Psalm 23 and thank God for His comfort and strength, while praying for wisdom for the dentist to do the right thing in regards to my sensitive teeth! Since starting this recitation, the Lord has brought me through eighteen years of dentist appointments, thus proving that His grace is sufficient in all circumstances!

Day 5 – 1 Samuel 17 through 1 Samuel 18:9

1. The story of David's first encounter with the Philistines is well known. David as a youth had played the harp for King Saul in earlier meetings (1 Samuel 16:21-23), and some believe that several years passed between 1 Samuel 16 and 1 Samuel 17, which would explain why Saul did not recognize David. Please open by **praying** David's prayer in Psalm 26 and then answer these **observation questions**.

- According to 1 Samuel 17:4-7 how was Goliath described (one cubit is about 18 inches) and where was Goliath from?
- As you move through these questions, look for the ways that David proclaimed God's nature in 1 Samuel 17, and record these on your "Names and Attributes of God" sheet.
- What was at stake in this battle according to 1 Samuel 17:9?
- What was David's charge from his father Jesse in 1 Samuel 17:14-19?
- What bothered David about Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:26?
- How had shepherding prepared David for fighting Goliath according to 1 Samuel 17:33-37?
- What was the contrast God wanted us to see about Goliath and David's preparations for battle?

Goliath's preparation for battle:	David's preparation for battle:
1 Samuel 17:5-7	1 Samuel 17:38-47

- The Bible often gives details that might make you uncomfortable, but according to 1 Samuel 17:49,50 how was Goliath killed?
- Without effective communication the victors in war spread news in a number of different ways. What did the victorious Israelites do according to 1 Samuel 17:52-54, and notice the impact David’s victory had on people in 1 Samuel 18:1-9. How did these individuals respond to David after his victory over Goliath?

Jonathan:	Saul:	The people of Israel:

2. Please examine these word studies for some of the **key words** in this lesson.

Strong’s # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong’s unless written in <i>italics</i> :	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
6635 Hebrew tsabah 1 Samuel 17:45	LORD of hosts , a mass of persons organized for war (an army), a campaign...soldiers, waiting upon	Amos 4:13
8199 Hebrew shaphat Psalm 26:1	Vindicate , to judge, to pronounce sentence (for or against), to punish, to litigate	Jeremiah 25:31 (judgment)
2617 Hebrew checed Psalm 26:3	Lovingkindness , mercy, kindness, by implication (towards God) piety, pity. <i>A word associated with God’s covenant love with His people. In the midst of our sin, God looks at us with compassion.</i>	Psalm 136 (This word is in <u>every</u> verse.)
6299 Hebrew padah Psalm 26:11	Redeem , to sever, i.e. to ransom, generally to release, preserve, rescue	2 Samuel 4:9

3. David opened Psalm 26 with a request for God to vindicate or judge him. What was the evidence that David shared in this Psalm that would be used in his judgment?

Evidence of David’s character:

What did David say he would not do?

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4. What did David ask of God and what did he promise he would do?

5. Please close by reading Psalm 26 and list the evidence of David's adoration of God.

David stated that he walked in integrity. Is that your goal in life? Is there something in your life you would have to change for your walk to be one of integrity?

David also said in Psalm 26 that he trusted in the LORD without wavering. A dear friend of mine was in the hospital and the doctor came into the waiting room to tell her husband and me that there was nothing else that could be done to save her life as she had battled with cancer for years, and no treatment options remained. I was unable to speak, but knew we needed to pray, so after the doctor left I prayed with my friend's husband and found myself saying, "I do not like what we just heard God, but I trust You with what you are doing." When I am shocked by circumstances in life that have not gone the way I had prayed, I find myself uttering that simple prayer over and over again. What are you struggling with where you might need to let go of your own desires and announce that you trust God with what He is doing?

David also claimed that God's lovingkindness was before his eyes. How can you recognize God's lovingkindness? David claimed in Psalm 22:3 that God is enthroned upon the praises of Israel, and to me that is a challenge to look for God in everything I do, and in all the circumstances around me.

Close by a time of adoration to God for His lovingkindness and His plan for your redemption.

Before starting the next week's lesson, would you please read the Psalms you read this week and record in a prayer journal or on paper to include in this notebook, your response to God's truth as revealed to you in the Psalms. Be honest and open before God and share your heart with your Father who created you.

