

WFN Lesson
April 8, 2020
Ezekiel 34

-In more ways than one, shepherding and leadership go hand in hand in the Bible. **Q:** Can you think of any examples of shepherds from the Bible who became leaders?

-**A:** Moses, David, the prophet Amos (cf. Amos 1:1; 7:14-15)

-“Ezekiel asserts that Judah’s rulers profited from their positions while doing nothing to exercise the responsibilities of their offices. They did little more than exploit the very people whom they were to protect. The oracle that condemns them does not serve as a warning for the shepherds. Their discredited rule is over; the likelihood of God restoring it is almost nil. The prophet uses Judah’s human shepherds as a foil for the shepherd who will tend the sheep in the future. This shepherd will be none other than the Lord” (Vawter & Hoppe, 155).

Read Ezekiel 34:17-31

-vv. 17-22—a switch from condemnation of the bad shepherds to those of the flock who victimize others of the flock.

-“Ezekiel abandons the shepherd metaphor. Instead he uses the image of weak and strong animals in a flock, because the prophet knew that Judah’s political leadership was not its only problem. There were great injustices that were the product of Judah’s stratified society. The people of means were not content with merely consuming the bulk of the nation’s resources. They made it impossible for the poor to profit from the few resources that the rich did not dissipate” (Vawter & Hoppe, 155-156).

-We have to be careful not to trample over people ourselves! We might not be designated leaders in every situation, but we do still have a social obligation/responsibility towards our fellow human beings, making sure that we are treating them well.

-This passage is like the sheep & goats from Matthew 25:31-46 (read if you have time).

-vv. 23-24—God announces that a Davidic shepherd will be God’s agent in helping to carry out this era of good leadership. As Christians, we believe this divine-human agent is Jesus.

-Read John 10:1-18. Jesus describes himself as multiple things, not only a shepherd.

Q: What are some of the attributes and Jesus displays towards the sheep?

-vv. 25-31—God is granting to God’s people safety & security, abundance & provision, and rich blessings.

-Read Psalm 23:1-6. **Q:** How do the descriptions of God here compare to Ezekiel 34?

-God truly has a grand vision for God’s people!

Memory Verse

-Psalm 23:1-3a—The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul.

*If you want a fun challenge, try memorizing all of Psalm 23! It’s only 6 verses, and is very doable.

Fun Activity

-Good Leader, Bad Leader: This activity is mostly for kids, but is fun for parents to get involved and watch. Set up some kind of obstacle course in a room (chairs, tubs, etc.). It’s even more fun if the kids aren’t present to watch it be set up. Then, one of the kids has to walk through the

obstacle course blindfolded. But, someone will be giving them directions. The catch? At first, that person will give completely wrong, bad directions (and everyone can laugh when the blindfolded person runs into things). Then, approximately halfway through, switch to giving good directions. You can have the kids alternate giving directions for one another, or the parents can give directions to each kid.

*Talk about how much harder it is to accomplish your task/reach your destination when you have bad directions and poor leadership. God (and Jesus) is the kind of leader who doesn't trick us or lead us astray. God actually has our best interests at heart, rather than being selfish and self-serving.