

Lesson 12 | May 22, 2022

The Good Shepherd

Study Text: Ezekiel 34:1–31

Central Truth: Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, who cares for His sheep.

Key Verse: Ezekiel 34:16

I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment (KJV).

“I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!” (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand that Christ, our Good Shepherd, is the true and perfect example of godly leadership.
- Students will trust in Jesus to be the Good Shepherd of their lives.
- Students will seek to exhibit Christlike justice through their words and actions.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: In the previous lesson we learned that God holds all people individually responsible for their deeds. In this lesson, God takes the shepherds, or leaders, of Israel to task for abusing their positions of power. In doing so, we see God’s great promise of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who will care for His sheep.

Opening Activity—The Lord: Our Model Shepherd

Read Psalm 23 aloud. *Ask: What are some of the ways God is like a shepherd, as described in this psalm?*

Say: In Psalm 23, the Lord describes for us what a true Shepherd should do. In doing so, we are reminded that our human shepherds, as spiritual leaders, are accountable for the welfare of the sheep that God has placed in their care. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

God cares for His people like a shepherd cares for his flock. He is the perfect example of what a shepherd should be. As the Great Shepherd, God will not tolerate those who abuse and mistreat His sheep. In Ezekiel 34, the Lord scolded the human shepherds, or leaders, of Israel for being negligent and selfish in their duties, only looking out for themselves. While God was speaking specifically to

leaders, we must be aware that He expects all believers to exemplify servanthood, and to care for those around us, especially those in need.

Resource Packet Item 1: The Shepherd's Tasks

Distribute the information sheet and, as a class, discuss the ways in which a church leader's tasks are similar to the shepherd's tasks that are described.

Part 1—Wicked Shepherds Described and Judged Negligent Shepherds Condemned

Ezekiel 34:1–9

[Eze 34:1-9 KJV] 1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe [be] to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: [but] ye feed not the flock. 4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up [that which was] broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. 5 And they were scattered, because [there is] no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek [after them]. 7 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; 8 [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because [there was] no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; 9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

Say: Jesus said, “When someone has been given much, much will be required in return” (Luke 12:48, NLT). **Those who fill positions of privilege and power have a responsibility to use those offices for the good of those in their charge. Imagine how Ezekiel felt when God gave him the message to prophesy against the “shepherds” of Israel. He would have wanted to be absolutely sure he was hearing from God because prophesying against leadership would certainly be risky.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Bog Hoekstra said, "These perishing and lost ones are also spiritually "blinded." This is why they cannot "see" the truth we share with them. "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded." The false god of this world (Satan) is blinding people to the truth by feeding them with lies and deceptions. He is constantly offering counterfeit philosophical and religious messages to keep men from embracing the truth.

Ultimately, the problem with perishing, lost, and blind people is that they "do not believe." Consequently, they already stand guilty. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). However, a loving God has provided the remedy. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). By God's grace, we can proclaim this great message."

In the ancient world outside of the Bible, the term shepherd was often a royal title applied to kings, since they were responsible for the welfare of their nations. One example is the well-known ancient Babylonian king Hammurabi. It is not difficult to understand why this would be, and the fact that the people in general saw this connection is a good reminder of the value of the role of shepherd being filled by a leader. Therefore, we ought not be surprised that the title, "shepherd," is applied to David in his role as king: "The Lord told you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You will be Israel's leader' " (2 Samuel 5:2, NLT). The term "shepherd" applied to all the kings of Israel (nineteen kings) and Judah (twenty kings). As shepherds, each king would be responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of God's people. By extension, this title applied to the entire ruling class of ancient Israel, including the royal bureaucracy, magistrates, tax collectors, priests, etc. These individuals were tasked with preserving justice and equity in the legal and social system.

Unfortunately, the behavior of the Israelite ruling class was often characterized by injustice and oppression rather than justice and mercy (see Isaiah 5:7). Similarly, **Ezekiel accused them of fattening themselves at the public trough while the sheep went poor and hungry (Ezekiel 34:1–9). These violations would carry consequences: "What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks" (Ezekiel 34:2, NLT). Ezekiel also charged them with ruling the people with undue harshness rather than with kindness and concern. "You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty" (Ezekiel 34:4, NLT).**

As a result of misrule, the people had become scattered like sheep without a shepherd. This scattering is not just metaphorical. The delinquency of the shepherds had led to many of God's people (including Ezekiel) being sent into exile. Nevertheless, the shepherds did not seek the lost sheep like a good shepherd would. They cared about the sheep only to the extent that they could enrich themselves at their expense.

Discuss

? How did the behavior of these ruling shepherds of Israel differ from the model Shepherd described in Psalm 23?

? In what ways does God condemn negligent "shepherds" in today's culture?

Negligent Shepherds Judged

Ezekiel 34:10

[Eze 34:10 KJV] 10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I [am] against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

Say: James, Jesus' half-brother, warned his readers that "not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1, NLT). Those in positions of trust are held to a higher standard than others. If they misuse their office, God will hold them responsible. Such was true of Israel's leaders. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

God pledged to hold those who had neglected His people responsible for their actions (Ezekiel 34:10). He did not specify what kind of punishment would be applied to the shepherds, but the Scriptures indicate elsewhere that those who abuse and take advantage of His sheep will face severe consequences. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus addressed the responsibility of those who have been entrusted with the welfare of His kingdom: "What if the servant thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful. . . . When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required" (Luke 12:45–46, 48, NLT).

Those of God's people who seek positions of power and responsibility in the church should do so with sober judgment, understanding that God will hold them accountable for the manner in which they exercise the offices with which they are entrusted. They must keep in mind that the Lord said He would remove the false shepherds from their positions, thus rescuing His sheep from corrupt rule.

Discuss

? In what ways are leaders in the church held to a higher standard than those in their congregations?

? Read 1 Peter 5:1–4. How do the instructions in these verses contrast with the behavior of the shepherds of Israel?

Part 2—Wicked Sheep Described and Judged Not Only the Leaders Were Wicked

Ezekiel 34:17–19

[Eze 34:17-19 KJV] 17 And [as for] you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. 18 [Seemeth it] a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? 19 And [as for] my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

Say: Lest we assume the only people being judged in Ezekiel 34:17–19 were those in leadership, we should note that everyone has responsibility to care for each other. Wealth is a blessing that can become a curse if we use it wrongly, or mistakenly believe that riches grant us the right to do as we please. **God’s blessings are meant to be shared, not exploited.**(Share your highlights from the following text.)

Ezekiel’s denunciation of Israelite society did not stop with his critique of the rulers and their conduct. He went on to condemn the manner in which the common people were treating one another. God promised to judge, “separating the sheep from the goats” (Ezekiel 34:17, NLT). Translated literally, the verse states, “Between the rams, and the male goats,” but the wording is close enough for us to hear the echo of another passage where God is seen judging between sheep and goats. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus told us that, at the end of the age, God will separate the sheep from the goats. He explained that the sheep and goats are differentiated by the way they treated others. He stated in no uncertain terms, “When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” (verse 40, NLT; see verses 37–39). Through Ezekiel, God accused the “goats” of taking “the best of the pastures” for themselves (Ezekiel 34:18, NLT). That is, the rich were guilty of hoarding the best farmland, leaving whatever was left over to the poor.

[Mat 25:31-46 KJV] 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did [it] not to one of the least of these, ye did [it] not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The prophet Isaiah leveled a similar criticism against the rich of his day: “What sorrow for you [or, “woe to you”] who buy up house after house and field after field, until everyone is evicted and you live alone in the land” (Isaiah 5:8, NLT). God’s heart is for the poor, and He takes note of any injustice perpetrated against them. Not only were the rich of Israel grabbing the best land for themselves, they were using the power that came with their superior economic position in ways that were harmful to the poor. Ezekiel cried out, “Isn’t it enough for you to drink clear water for yourselves? **Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Why must my flock eat what you have trampled down and drink water you have fouled?”** (verses 18–19, NLT). Through their greed and lack of care for the welfare of others, the rich in that society had increased the burdens and hardships of the poor.

Resource Packet Item 2: Old Testament Laws Protecting the Poor

Ask several people to read aloud their summary of one or two of the listed passages. Then discuss how obedience to these passages might be lived out in today’s culture.

Discuss

? What is the Church’s responsibility toward the poor in today’s world?

? What practical things can and should believers be doing to meet needs of the less fortunate in their communities?

The “Fat” Sheep Judged

Ezekiel 34:20–22

[Eze 34:20-22 KJV] 20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, [even] I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. 21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; 22 Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

Say: It’s tempting to ignore the needs around us, perhaps even making excuses for our lack of concern, but God knows our hearts, and He protects the vulnerable. Proverbs 22:22–23 (NLT) states: “Don’t rob the poor just because you can, or exploit the needy in court. For the Lord is their defender. He will ruin anyone who ruins them.” (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In response to the brutal treatment of His sheep, God promised to judge “between the fat sheep and the scrawny sheep” (verse 20, NLT; “between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle”; KJV). Most likely, the “fat sheep” represented the rich people in Israelite society, while the “scrawny sheep” represented the poor. So, God would hold the rich accountable for their treatment of the poor and weak of society.

When we encounter those in need, whether or not we are in a position of spiritual leadership, we have a responsibility to express our love for Jesus by showing compassion toward those for whom He gave himself. **We should imitate Christ’s heart of compassion by defending those who are vulnerable to exploitation, including, but not limited to, the unborn, the aged and infirm, and the disabled. And we should never acquiesce, accept anything reluctantly but with out protest in a system that allows people to be treated as expendable. Those who are strong “ought to bear the infirmities of the weak” (Romans 15:1, KJV).**

Discuss

? What excuses have you heard for not caring for the needy, and how would you respond to those excuses?

? In what ways will our attitude toward the needy reflect our attitude toward Christ (see Matthew 25:31–40)?

Part 3—Good Shepherd Described

The Divine Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:11–16

[Eze 34:11-16 KJV] 11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, [even] I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep [that are] scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and [in] a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up [that which was] broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Say: Isaiah promised that, when the time came for God to come to the rescue of His scattered people in exile in Babylon, He would “feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young” (Isaiah 40:11, NLT). This promise stood in profound contrast to Israel’s earthly shepherds. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Beginning in Ezekiel 34:11, the prophet focused on the plans of the true Shepherd of Israel, the Lord himself. Since the human shepherds had scattered the flock, God himself would take over their role. He would be the true Shepherd, gathering them from all the places to which they had scattered, to “give them a place to lie down in peace” (verse 15, NLT). Similar to the shepherd in Jesus’ parable (Luke 15:3–7), the Lord stated to Ezekiel, “I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day” (Ezekiel 34:12, NLT). “Scattered” in this passage alludes to God’s people in exile (of which Ezekiel was one). It was the misconduct of the false shepherds that brought about the Babylonian exile, and now the true Shepherd of the sheep promised that He would gather them and restore them to their homeland. He spoke of giving them “good pastureland on the high hills of Israel,” and of making them lie down in “pleasant places” and “lush pastures” (verse 14, NLT; see also Psalm 23).

This description is not unlike the good shepherd of whom Jesus said, “After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice” (John 10:4, NLT). God’s good plans are never at the mercy of

evil men. He will always see them through, and His chosen people can rest in the knowledge that, whatever may befall them, their future is not dependent upon luck or circumstances but, rather, is in the hands of their Great and Good Shepherd.

Discuss

? The imagery of a shepherd, depicted in various places in Scripture, was a powerful illustration because shepherding was a common occupation that the people of Bible times would understand. What other shepherds can you name from the Bible?

? How does the image of Jesus as your Shepherd impact your relationship with Him?

The Davidic Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:23–31

[Eze 34:23-31 KJV] 23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, [even] my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken [it]. 25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. 26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. 27 And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. 28 And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make [them] afraid. 29 And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. 30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God [am] with them, and [that] they, [even] the house of Israel, [are] my people, saith the Lord GOD. 31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, [are] men, [and] I [am] your God, saith the Lord GOD.

Say: The Scriptures describe King David as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; see Acts 13:22) despite his personal flaws. However, the Messiah, who would descend from him, would be without sin and would be the

perfect Shepherd to God's people. The Messiah would ultimately lay down His life for them. We can rejoice that the perfect Shepherd did come and lay down His life for us. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Beginning in Ezekiel 34:23, the prophet proclaimed another truth to God's people: The Lord would raise up, from the house of David, One who would serve as the Shepherd for His people. **Indeed, the Lord would fulfill His promise to David, to "raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong" (2 Samuel 7:12, NLT). The New Testament makes it clear that this promise is fulfilled in Jesus, the "Good Shepherd" who "sacrifices his life for the sheep" (John 10:11, NLT).** In Ezekiel 34, God and David would both serve as shepherd. Thus, **within the messianic ministry and reign of Jesus, the divine Shepherd and the human shepherd are merged together into one, in a manner of speaking. The Shepherd spoken of in Ezekiel is not just another in a long line of Davidic kings, since He will reign as "prince forever" (Ezekiel 37:25, NLT).**

As a result of David's rule, Israel would live in peace and safety. In Ezekiel 34:25, God promised to "drive away the dangerous animals from the land" (NLT). And in verse 28, God further stated that Israel would "no longer be prey for other nations, and wild animals will no longer devour them" (NLT). **In prophetic writing, the imagery of nature is often used to portray human society. As a result, in the Old Testament it is not unusual for foreign nations to be depicted as ravenous beasts, threatening God's people. Thus, these verses serve as promises of the ultimate victory of God's people over their enemies. What a marvelous word of hope to the exiles, as well as to us today.**

Ezekiel 34 foresees a day in the future when Israel would not have to live in fear of aggressive and warlike Gentile nations. They would enjoy security and safety in their land, free from the oppression of foreigners. The image is similar to that of Isaiah 11, where the coming messianic kingdom is described as a time when the "wolf and the lamb will live together" (Isaiah 11:6, NLT). Indeed, a day is coming when the strong will no longer threaten the weak, and the weak need not fear the strong (see 2:2-4).

Resource Packet Item 3: Jesus and David: Shepherd Kings

Distribute the work sheet and divide your class into small groups. Assign one pair of Scriptures to each group. Give them a few minutes to do the compare/contrast activity, then ask them to share their findings with the class. Finally, discuss the two questions at the end of the sheet.

Discuss

? What does Ezekiel 34 tell us about events that are still in the future?

? Does the futuristic nature of Ezekiel 34 cause you comfort, anxiety, or a combination of the two? Explain your answer.

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Because human leadership is prone to fall short in some way, we must put our ultimate trust in Christ rather than people. He is the Good Shepherd, the One who will always do what is best for the sheep. How do we know what the Good Shepherd's leadership looks like? We have His example to us in Scripture, the record of His life and ministry on earth. Both those who are leaders and those who are followers are called upon to imitate the Good Shepherd who "sacrifices His life for the sheep" (John 10:11, NLT).

Living It Out Ministry in Action

- Plan a class project to minister to the community by assisting a homeless shelter or some other ministry to the poor in your neighborhood or city.
- Encourage someone going through a hard time that they can have hope for the future because of the Good Shepherd. Offer to pray with them and encourage them during the week.
- Examine your life to see how much it compares to the example of a shepherd, then ask God to help you better reflect the Good Shepherd in the way you live and interact with others.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

David, the Shepherd of Israel.
2 Samuel 5:1–5

[2Sa 5:1-5 KJV] 1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we [are] thy bone and thy flesh. 2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David [was] thirty years old when he began to reign, [and] he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

Tuesday:

The Lord Is My Shepherd.
Psalm 23:1–6

[Psa 23:1-6 KJV] 1 [[A Psalm of David.]] The LORD [is] my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort

me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Wednesday:

The Messianic Shepherd.
Micah 5:1–6

[Mic 5:1-6 KJV] 1 Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting. 3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. 4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. 5 And this [man] shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. 6 And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver [us] from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

Thursday:

Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
John 10:1–5,11–18

[Jhn 10:1-5, 11-18 KJV] 1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ... 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it

again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Friday:

Elders Must Shepherd God's Flock.

1 Peter 5:1–11

[1Pe 5:1-11 KJV] 1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you]. 11 To him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Saturday:

The Shepherding Lamb.

Revelation 7:9–17

[Rev 7:9-17 KJV] 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the

midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.