

The Church as God's Flock Selected Scriptures

The theme of shepherding runs like a thread through the entirety of Scripture. We read in Genesis, for example, that Abel was a “keeper of sheep” (4:2). The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and numerous leaders after them also had flocks of sheep. The *metaphor* of God being like a shepherd is also found often in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Psalms. “He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock” (78:58). Through King David’s inspiration we have one of the most beloved passages in Scripture, the 23rd Psalm. The prophets employed this instructive metaphor as well, as we shall see. In turning to the New Testament, we see our Lord often employing this compelling truth in His teaching, included in His beloved “I AM” declarations: “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep” (John 10:11). Because this is such a vast theme, we can only address some of the high points of this lovely pastoral imagery.

PROPHETIC PICTURES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

1. Isaiah’s tender _____ of an omnipotent Messiah (Isaiah 40; 57:15)

2. Ezekiel’s resounding _____ against the backdrop of Israel’s unfaithful shepherds (Ezekiel 34)

PENETRATING DECLARATIONS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1. Jesus’ compassionate plea for _____ with a shepherd’s heart (Matthew 9:36-38)

2. Jesus’ _____ story of the ninety and nine (Luke 15:4-7)

3. Jesus’ _____ of Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18)