



Week 4 Session Guide

Jehovah-Rohi “The Lord Is My Shepherd”

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the still waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Psalm 23:1-3

Introduction:

We are moving into the “compound names” of God which combine His personal name Yaweh or Jehovah with a specific characteristic of God. These are also referred as the redemptive names of God. Today we start with such a personal, comforting, and powerful aspect of God’s character and heart toward us ... Jehovah Rohi: The Lord is My Shepherd.

First why do we need a shepherd in the first place? Because we are described as sheep. This is not necessarily a compliment from an ability point of view. Sheep are not known for their wisdom, strength, or leadership acumen. Actually quite the opposite. Sheep are known for their stupidity, weakness, and tendency to wander many times into danger. They can’t protect themselves or care for themselves. They need a shepherd.

Old Testament:

Before you get too offended understand that the man who penned the words first found in the 23rd Psalm was none other than King David; the mighty warrior King David, the “man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22), the one who led Israel, the chosen nation of God, to heights never seen before, the patriarch whose generational line would lead to Jesus Christ the Messiah. Why would he compare God to a Shepherd and us as sheep?

Before David was anointed as a King, he spent years in his youth as a shepherd tending to his father’s sheep. He knew more than anyone the love and care and provision that a good shepherd has for his flock. Apart from the shepherd the flock was aimless and defenseless. Remember before David killed Goliath he has already killed a bear and a lion to protect the sheep.

As the shepherd boy turned warrior turned king reflects on his journey through life he doesn’t point to his own strength. He knows where all of his success came from and as he writes he can find no more beautiful and fitting analogy of Jehovah’s relationship to himself than that of a shepherd to the sheep. And now after the storm and stress (and David knew those well) of the years through which Jehovah has so safely and successfully brought him, with confident faith he can look forward to his future and say: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow after me all the days of my life.” (Psalm 23:6)

Throughout the Old Testament this image of God is repeated over and over again. So many make God out to be impersonal, harsh, and distant, yet listen to the Prophet Isaiah speak in chapter 40:10,11 “See, the Sovereign Lord

comes with power ... He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those who have young." Ezekiel shows the heart of God after rebuking the false shepherds he shows Jehovah as the Shepherd who will "search for the lost sheep and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak." I pray that you know God as Jehovah Rohi!

Christ Our Shepherd:

As we will see with all of the names of God, Jesus reflects them in his life and ministry. This is to be expected as he is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). It wasn't by accident that the glorious announcement of his birth was first made to shepherd keeping watch by night over their flock, a picture of what he was to become to men. And his last discussion with Peter before ascending to sit at the right hand of God the Father is to feed and tend his sheep. (John 21:17)

As Nathan Stone writes in his classic book on the names of God "As the good and great Shepherd of the sheep, He meets every need of His flock (Philippians 4:19), and there is no want to those who trust Him. He leads us into the green pastures of His Word, and feeds us upon the true Bread of Life. He guides us into right paths and we are assured of His continuous presence. The Spirit of truth, He promised, will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

Think about all that Jesus Christ does for us. Think about how much he cares for us. We should never believe the lie that we can make it on our own. We are not smart enough or strong enough to make it through this life. If a mighty King like David can have the humble position of a sheep under the care of a shepherd shouldn't we also.

Nowhere in scripture do we find a more powerful example of the depth of love that our Good Shepherd has for us than the sacrifice Jesus made for us. Jesus said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (v. 11)

Yes it is true that we are like lowly sheep, but we have a Shepherd that treasures us deeply. What a wonderful privilege we have to be the sheep of His pasture. He is faithful. He is good. Will we allow ourselves to be led, cared for and protected by the Good Shepherd so that we can know him more and in turn share of his goodness with those around us who are also in desperate need of his guidance?

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Psalm 23. What blessings and benefits do we have from our Good Shepherd? What is his heart toward us?
3. Much of the shepherd passages in scripture center around protection and provision during attack and difficulties. What are some of the "wolves" that you have experienced and in what ways does the Lord protect us?
3. How did Jesus reflect the Shepherd's heart in his ministry?
4. What can stand in the way of us experiencing our Lord as Jehovah Rohi in our lives?
5. In what ways do we carry the role of the shepherd in our lives? What does being a shepherd require of us?
Read Ezekiel 34:2-4