

## WEEK 7: YAHWEH ROHI

### GOD MY SHEPHERD

What do you think of when you think of a shepherd? I remember standing on the side of a hill in Israel with a group of friends looking across the valley toward Bethlehem. A young shepherd boy, holding one of his sheep, stood beside us on that hill. I watched him as he tenderly cared for this little sheep, pulling “trash” out of his fur and keeping him away from brush on the ground that would hurt him. He watched this little sheep intently as he would move away from the shepherd, and the shepherd would quickly go after the sheep to pull him close to him. What a vivid reminder of our Great Shepherd who tenderly cares for us and protects and guides us.

This week we are going to look at the name of God, *Yahweh Rohi*, God my Shepherd. Begin by praising Him as your Shepherd, the One who lovingly cares for you.

### DAY 1: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved psalms of David. We often hear this psalm read at funerals or beside hospital beds. We read it when we are fearful or struggling with tough issues in life. What is it about this psalm that gives us comfort?

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want . . .” Ask God to speak to your heart today in fresh ways as you look at this familiar psalm praising God as our Shepherd.

### LOOKING TO GOD’S WORD

1. Read Psalm 23, marking anything that stands out to you. Jot down your initial observations.
  
2. Pay particular notice to the personal pronouns - I, He, You, etc. What does the use of these pronouns imply?
  
3. List all that the Shepherd does.
  
4. Which attributes of God do you see in this psalm?

5. David said in verse 1, “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.” The Hebrew word David used for *want* in this verse indicates “lack.” In other words, David was saying, “I shall not lack anything.” Why would that be true for all who have the Lord as their shepherd?

6. What does each of these phrases in verses 2-3 mean to you? How does He accomplish these things in your life as your Shepherd?

“He makes me lie down in green pastures. . .”

“He leads me beside quiet waters.”

“He restores my soul.”

“He guides me in the paths of righteousness. . .”

7. What is the “valley of the shadow of death” (v. 4)?

8. What is the purpose of a shepherd’s rod and staff?

### **LOOKING UPWARD**

9. What would keep you from wanting and allowing God to be your Shepherd?

## LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

Phillip Keller, in his book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, asks some penetrating questions.<sup>1</sup> Ponder these questions:

- Do I belong to Him?
- Do I recognize and acknowledge His right to me?
- Do I respond to His authority and acknowledge His ownership?
- Do I sense a purpose and deep contentment because I am under His direction? Or do I become restless and want to do things my way?
- Do I experience rest in belonging to Him?
- Do I look to God as my Shepherd?

Pray through Psalm 23. Make it personal. “Lord, You are my Shepherd, *Yahweh Rohi* . . .” Thank Him for each provision and benefit you receive as His sheep. Confess any disobedience or rebellion. He knows what is best for you and loves you dearly.

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 25.

## **DAY 2: BEWARE OF FALSE SHEPHERDS**

When we hear the word “shepherd,” we tend to think of someone who is caring, nurturing, and kind; someone who would lay down his life for his sheep. However, Ezekiel tells us that not all shepherds are looking out for their flocks. Just as there were false shepherds in Old Testament times, we must also beware of false shepherds today.

### **LOOKING TO GOD’S WORD**

1. Read Ezekiel 34:1-10. In Ezekiel 34, God contrasted the false shepherds of Israel at that time with the future true Shepherd. He charged the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy against these shepherds, the rulers of the people.
2. List your observations concerning the false shepherds in verses 1-6. What were they doing or not doing?
3. Describe the condition of the “sheep.”
4. What should these shepherds have been doing in their role as “shepherd”?
5. What was God’s response to these false shepherds?
6. What would God do for His sheep (v. 10)?
7. Describe the good Shepherd’s attributes.

## LOOKING UPWARD

8. How does it comfort you to know God as your Shepherd?

## LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

Kay Arthur made these comments about sheep from her book *How Can I Live*:

“If they (*sheep*) do not have the constant care of a shepherd, they will go the wrong way, unaware of the dangers at hand. They have been known to nibble themselves right off a mountainside. If they are not led to proper pastures, they will obviously eat or drink things that are disastrous to them. Not only that, they will literally live their lives in a rut if the shepherd does not lead them to new pastures. Sheep easily fall prey to other animals; when they do, they are virtually defenseless without their shepherd to protect them. Sheep can also become cast down and, in that state, panic and die. And so, because sheep are sheep, they need shepherds to care for them.”<sup>2</sup>

- In what ways are you a needy sheep? Acknowledge your need of a Shepherd. Let Him take care of you and guide you.
- Are you properly shepherding those whom God has placed under your care?
- Spend some time in prayer thanking God for being your Shepherd. Praise Him for all He does as your Shepherd. Ask Him to show you any areas in your own life in which you are not shepherding others as God intended.

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<sup>2</sup> Kay Arthur, *How Can I Live: A Devotional Journey with Kay Arthur* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1982), 176.

### **DAY 3: THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Yesterday we looked at characteristics of the false shepherds. They did not care for the flock as true shepherds should have. Today we will look at the contrasts between the false shepherds and the good Shepherd. Give thanks to God, the good Shepherd.

#### **LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD**

1. Read Ezekiel 34:11-31. Make note of anything that stands out to you.
2. List the "I wills..." of God, the good Shepherd.
3. What words are repeated? What would be the significance of the repetition?
4. What contrasts are made in this passage?
5. Of what are the false shepherds guilty?
6. Which attributes of God are evident in this passage?
7. What point do you think God was trying to get across in verse 31 when He said, "As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God"?

## LOOKING UPWARD

8. Jesus told Peter to tend and shepherd His sheep in John 21:15-17. Peter later exhorts leaders in the church to shepherd the flock of God. However, some abuse their role as shepherd. What are some examples of false shepherds today in the church? What is their motivation?

## LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

Write out the following verses and meditate on them:

Psalm 100:3

Isaiah 40:11

Jeremiah 31:10

“The welfare of sheep depends solely upon the care they get from their shepherd. Therefore, the better the shepherd, the better the sheep. When you see sheep that are weak, sickly, and infested with pests, you can be sure that their shepherd really does not care for them.”<sup>3</sup>

- We are His sheep. He is our Shepherd, *Yahweh Rohi*. How have you seen Him shepherd you this week? Perhaps He has redirected you, or protected you from something harmful; or He has provided a need. Write down your thoughts below.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 177.

## DAY 4: JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Read John 10:1-18. This chapter begins with an illustration or parable about shepherds and sheep. John provided two aspects of the illustration: the “door” or “gate” in verses 1-3, and the “shepherd” in verses 3-5. The “gate” or “door” is interpreted in verses 7-10, and the “shepherd” in verses 11-18. This passage reminds us of the imagery in Ezekiel 34. The prophet predicted that the true Shepherd (the Messiah) would come and shepherd His people (the sheep).
2. List your observations about the false shepherd in verses 1-6.
3. List your observations about the good shepherd in verses 1-6.
4. What does He mean by, “enters by the door” in verse 2?
5. What is His point in verse 9 when He says, “I am the door”?
6. Contrast the good shepherd with the “hired hand.”



7. List all the “benefits” that the sheep who follow the good shepherd receive. Look also at John 10:27-30.

8. Who are the “other sheep” in verse 16?

### **LOOKING UPWARD**

9. What heart attitudes are required in order for one to lay down his life for his sheep?

### **LOOKING REFLECTIVELY**

- Are you in danger of listening to the wrong shepherd’s voice?
- Are you in tune with the true Shepherd and listening to Him?
- How can you grow in the area of trusting your Good Shepherd, *Yahweh Rohi*, in every circumstance of your life?
- Spend some time thanking Jesus, the Good Shepherd, for laying down His life for you.
- In what ways can you lay down your life for Him?

“The sheep benefit from the presence of the Shepherd; therefore, when they hear His voice, they seek to follow Him. As we learn to live in the presence of the Lord, we discover the intimacy of His shepherding nature.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hemphill, *The Names of God*, 174.

## DAY 5: STUDYING ON YOUR OWN

### LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Today you are going to do some study on your own. Instead of giving you verses to read or look up, I want you to look up the word “shepherd” in a concordance (you may have one in the back of your Bible or you can go online). Jot down some of the verses. You might want to do a word search on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) or [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org). What new insight do you gain? Does anything in particular stand out to you from these verses?

## LOOKING UPWARD

2. What are some “lessons for life” that you have learned from this week’s study? How does knowing God as your Shepherd impact your life?

## LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

- Are you feeling stressed about something today? Life is full of stress and tension, and to be honest, the stresses of life aren’t going away any time soon, if at all. Your stress may be a result of something at home, a health issue, a relationship, work, or a ministry situation. There are days that the stress seems unbearable. It’s in these times of stress and tension in life that the name, *Yahweh Rohi*, God, my Shepherd, is so special. Stay close to the Shepherd and rest in His protection and guidance. Use Revelation 7:9-17 to lead you through a time of praise to the Lamb of God, your *Yahweh Rohi*, your Shepherd.