



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -
GRAND THEMES 23 - SHEEP &
SHEPHERDS I

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, and the bottom-right corner is a vertical bar extending upwards. The rest of the frame is implied by the corners.

WELCOME TO “GRAND THEMES”

Each week we will trace a major theme through the
whole Bible.









Sheep & Shepherds




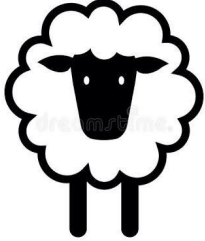
Theme gallery



					
TEMPLE	COVENANT	EXODUS	L&D	KINGDOM	ORDER & CHAOS

Theme gallery



					
NATIONS & CALL	SHEEP & SHEPHERDS				



Introduction to Sheep

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πρόβατον



What do we know about sheep from the Bible?

- Flocks are a sign of wealth, blessing and prosperity
- Sheep need shepherds
- Vulnerable to being eaten by wild animals
- Gather in flocks.
- Easily scattered
- Get lost
- Used for wool and meat
- Are sheared by shearers.
- Sheep dogs.
- Know the sound of the shepherds voice.
- Appreciate good pasture.



Sign of wealth and blessing



- (Gen 24:34-35) So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him **sheep** and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.
- (1 Sam 25:2) A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was **very** wealthy. He had a thousand goats and **three thousand sheep**, which he was shearing in Carmel.
- (Job 1:1-3) In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned **seven thousand sheep**, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.
- (Job 42:12-13) The LORD blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had **fourteen thousand sheep**, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters.



Day in the life of a sheep

- (Gen 29:1-3) Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. There he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.
- (Gen 29:6-9) Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?" "Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep." "Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture." "We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep." While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd.
- What else do we learn here about sheep and shepherds?



Flocks and wells



- (Gen 29) Jacob flees after his deception of his father and Esau, has an encounter with God, travels to a distant land (eastern peoples, Haran) meets shepherds, but does what they didn't do, overcomes obstacle (roll the stone away) waters his relative's sheep (Laban) and leads to hospitality and marriage (Rachel). Meets brother on way home. Asks for God's name.
- (Ex 2) Moses flees after killing the Egyptian, travels to a distant land (Paddan Aram), sits down by a well, women come to water the sheep of their father's (Reuel) flock. Moses waters the sheep and rescues the women from some shepherds. Leads to hospitality and marriage (Zipporah). Moses has an encounter with God later (burning bush). Asks for God's name. Meets brother on way home.

Wells



- (John 4) – Scene: Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in the middle of the day.
- When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this **living water**? Are you greater than our father **Jacob**, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- What kind of shepherd is Jesus?
- What is the significance of the woman being a Samaritan?
- Is there a flock here? Is that significant?
- What is John trying to say?

Roll the stone away?



- (Gen 29:8) When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would **roll the stone away** from the well's mouth and water the sheep.
- (Mk 16:3) Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “**Who will roll the stone away** from the entrance of the tomb?”
- Both stories involved women, rolling stone away, life (water and resurrection)
- What would a first century Jew have heard in the words of Mark?
- Bit of a stretch? What do you think?



Day in the life of a shepherd



- (Gen 31:19) When Laban had gone to **shear** his sheep,
- (Gen 46:34)...for all shepherds are **detestable** to the Egyptians.
- (1 Sam 25:7) Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.
- (Gen 32:38-40) I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not **miscarried**, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. I did not bring you animals torn by **wild beasts**; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was **stolen** by day or night. This was my situation: The **heat** consumed me in the daytime and the **cold** at night, and sleep fled from my eyes.
- Breeding – Jacob in Gen 30. [[article](#)]
- David (1 Sam 17:34-35) But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a **lion** or a **bear** came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.
- Sheep dogs! (Job 30:1) But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my **sheep dogs**.



Psalm 23



¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.

³He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake
of His name.

⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; for You
are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort
me.

- Devotional: what thoughts and pictures come to mind for you as you read this? What comforts you?



Psalm 23



⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

- And here?



Sheep and sacrifice



- First mention of “sacrifice” in the Bible:
- (Gen 22:2) Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. **Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering** on a mountain I will show you.
- (Gen 22:7-8) Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “**but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?**” Abraham answered, “**God himself will provide the lamb** for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.
- How did Isaac know about the idea of a lamb as a burnt offering?
- How does this story strike you?



Sheep and sacrifice



- (Gen 22:12-14) But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son. ”Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a **ram** caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.
- Remember “only son”, “lamb”, “offering”, “God providing” ...

Sheep and sacrifice



- (Heb 11:27-29) By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.
- (Jn 1:29) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
- (Acts 8:32-33) This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”



Reflection



- How has the image of the “sheep” in the Bible rounded out for you from our discussion?
- What do you think about all the Biblical hyper-links we talked about?
- Will you use Psalm 23 devotionally do you think?



NEXT TIME...THE SHEPHERD
AND THE SHEEP II