

THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12

Introduction

The Bible says that we are like sheep who need a shepherd.

When David began one of the most beloved Psalms, the 23rd Psalm saying, “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*” he was not only saying something about God, he was saying something about us.

1. David was saying that **we all are like sheep**—
 - a. We can’t find our way on our own.
 - b. We are prone to wander and stray into areas of danger.
 - c. We are an easy target for the predators without someone to protect us.

The Prophet Isaiah put it this way in *Isaiah 53:6*—“*All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; ...*”

2. David was also telling us that **we are like sheep in that we need**—
 - a. Someone to direct our path and help us find our way.
 - b. Someone for daily provisions.
 - c. Someone to protect us.
 - d. i.e. Someone to care for us.

Thank God we have **the Good Shepherd** who is also **the Great Shepherd!**

When the Lord Jesus came into this world the first time, He is recorded to have said in *John 10:11* “*I am the good shepherd: The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.*”

Unfortunately, we are also like sheep in another way—**we don’t always have sense enough to realize how desperately we need the Shepherd.**

Our human nature tends to want to be self-sufficient: “*I don’t need anybody else! I can take care of myself!*” But the truth is we are like sheep, and we desperately do need a Shepherd!

That is the position that the prophet Zechariah says Israel was in!

THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12

In fact, that is the message of Zechariah 10, a message which is summarized in vs. 2-3!

Tonight I want us to see Israel’s need for the Good Shepherd and think about the ways WE should be depending on OUR Shepherd!

I. ISRAEL NEEDED THE GOOD SHEPHERD TO SUPPLY THEIR NEEDS! (v. 1-2)

People who lived in a great time of need such as the Great Depression are prone to stock up on things where it appears to the casual observer that they have more than enough!

The society we live in today doesn’t know very much about hard times! Many folks in our nation have so much **they don’t think they need to depend on anyone else for their needs!**

Then there are other folks who have grown accustomed to **depending on the government** or **some other handout** for their daily needs.

Both these positions are wrong—That is, thinking we don’t need anyone else and depending on the wrong someone else! By and large, Israel had depended on someone or something other than the Good Shepherd for their needs!

Remember how our Lord taught His disciples and us to ask God our Heavenly Father to “***Give us this day our daily bread.***” (*Matt 6:11*)

Israel was the LORD’s sheepfold who needed the Good Shepherd to provide for their needs!

In vs. 1-2, Zechariah urges the LORD’s people, Israel to, “*Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.*” (i.e. in the spring)

Why in the world would they need to pray for rain—especially in the spring? Why should they involve the LORD in all of that?

Well, the answer is as obvious as the nose on your face!

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

It is because only God who brings the bright clouds...who brings the showers of rain...and who brings forth the grass in the fields. (v. 1b)

Only God gives the rain that waters the crops that gives us the food to keep us alive! Zechariah was saying that Israel needed to depend on God to supply their needs!

On the other hand Zechariah says in vs. 2, idol worshipers—i.e. those who depend on **anything or anyone** else but the LORD—were holding on to false hopes!

They were denying the truth that the LORD supplies their needs!
They were approaching gods who were no gods to supply their needs!
They were going to fortune tellers to find their way, only to be led astray!

They were believing the lies when truth was available—lies which brought no comfort or assurance that their needs would be met!

They were denying the need of the Good Shepherd! They were relying on false shepherds! They believed that everybody was on their own to meet their own needs the best way they know how.

Therefore the people went their way like sheep—They were in trouble [afflicted] because there was no shepherd among them!

Remember Zechariah is speaking to Jewish refugees rebuilding the Temple. They need to know they can and must depend on their Good Shepherd to meet their needs.

Yes, they have to work, they have to cultivate the land, they have to do what they could, but in the end, it was God Who they needed to depend upon so they could be sure they would have what they needed.

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

Depend on your Shepherd Zechariah was saying for He alone will supply your needs!

But what about us? Do we depend on the Good Shepherd to supply all of our needs? Or are we like the people of Israel?

Sadly, too many who name the name of Christ tend to be either self-sufficient—to depend on what we do— or we tend to be dependent on someone or something else other than our Good Shepherd! (e.g. The government or some other person or thing to supply our needs.)

Our pipeline of supply flows pretty good here in America, but Who keeps the supply line flowing? We better not forget that God does! He is the Source of all our blessing, and all of our supply. Whether we all realize it or not, God supplies all of our needs!

At supper one night, young boy asked his dad why he thanked God before eating food that had come from the grocery store. The father picked up a roll and asked, “Where did this come from?”
“From the store,” the boy said. “Where did they get it?”
“I dunno. From the bakery?” “Where did they get it?”
“They made it.” “From what?” asked the father.
“From flour.” “Where did that come from?”
“From wheat.” “Where did the wheat come from?”
“The farmers.” “And where did the farmer get it?”
“He grew it,” said the boy. “From what?”
“Seed.” “And who made the seed?”
“God, I guess,” said the boy.
“And that,” said the father, “is why we thank Him.”

I don't imagine many of us (if any us) are worrying tonight about how our food will be supplied. By the way, we ought not to worry, but we should be thankful to and depending on our Good Shepherd!

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

But I wonder how many of us have other needs tonight, just as important to us, and just as important to God.

We are sheep, and the best way to handle our needs is to depend on our Good Shepherd to supply our needs. He has plenty to give us, if we will ask and believe!

Philippians 4:19—“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Depend on your Shepherd to supply your needs!

**II. ISRAEL NEEDED THE GOOD SHEPHERD TO
STRENGTHEN THEM! (v. 3-7)**

Corrie Ten Boom writes: A woodpecker tapped with his beak against a tree just as lightning struck the tree and destroyed it. He flew away and said, "I didn't know there was so much power in my beak!"

Don't be a silly woodpecker. Know where your strength comes from!

It's easy for us to overestimate our own strength. Most of us may not think we're superman or superwoman, but we think we're strong enough to handle most of what life throws at us!

We don't like to think about our weakness, and when something happens that shows up our weakness, it can be traumatic.

We think we're pretty strong and healthy, then sickness or an accident puts us on our backs where we have to look up to the LORD!

Some believe they've got a good grip on life until their boss hands them the pink slip, or their spouse asks for a divorce, or they have to bail their kids out of jail for breaking the law.

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

It's on the days when things get out of control that we discover how weak we truly are, and how desperately we need strength from our Good Shepherd!

Zechariah asked Israel (and us) to consider the question:

Where does your strength come from?

The answer is in vs. 3-5: He told them that they must learn to depend on the Good Shepherd for their strength!

Israel's plight was due to those who governed them!

V. 3 describes how the Shepherd transforms His flock into royal horses for battle—from a weak sheep into a powerful war horse.

Israel's blessing and her inner and outer transformation will be on account of the returning Messiah and Israel's trust and confidence in Him!

From the kingdom of Judah, decimated by the Babylonian exile, **vs. 4 says God will bring a Someone Who is the corner, the nail, and the battle bow!**

The Corner (i.e. The Cornerstone)—He is the essential One Who makes everything fit together. (1 Peter 2:6-8)

He was the stumbling stone at His first coming!

Romans 9:32—“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;”

But all that will change when He comes again!

At His return, He will be the culmination and fulfillment of all the promises God made to Israel's fathers!

The Nail (i.e. Tent Peg)— He is the One Who provides security and stabilizes the whole tent! The nail refers to the

Tabernacle and the cornerstone to the Temple.

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

The glory of both the Tabernacle and the Temple were the glory of the Messiah Himself!
He alone is the true stability for the house of Israel.
In Him is the fulfillment of ALL the promises of God!

Isaiah 22:22-23

The Battle Bow—He is the Ultimate Conqueror!

He will overcome ALL of Israel's enemies at His return!
(Revelation 19:11-16)

He is the Ruler of all Rulers—The King of Kings.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate conquering Strength and True Shepherd of God's People!

Notice the change when the Messiah is in the mix! (Vs 5)

In vs. **6-7a**, Zechariah goes on to say God will ...strengthen the house of Judah... and ...those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man...and their heart shall rejoice as through wine.
(i.e. God's strength in them will make them drunk with joy)

Again, it's important to remember the context here. Zechariah is speaking to people who have **little or no political power, barely enough weapons to fend off their enemies, and barely enough people to fill the walls of the city.**

By every worldly standard these people are weak, and yet Zechariah says **with God on your side, you are mighty! You can depend on your Shepherd for your strength!**

Where does your strength come from?

In our society, we all have some power available to us, in ourselves, or through other people.

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

Few in number see themselves as completely helpless or without strength. But apart from God that's exactly what we are when it really counts!

Warren Wiersbe said this: *"If we trust people, we get what people can do; if we trust money, we get what money can do; if we trust ourselves, we get what we can do; if we trust God, we get what God can do."*

Isaiah 41:10—"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Do you need God's strength in your life tonight?
When you are at your weakest, He is at His strongest!

Israel (and us) need to Depend on the Good Shepherd to provide for their needs, and to give them strength, and finally:

III. ISRAEL NEEDED TO DEPEND ON THE GOOD SHEPHERD TO LEAD THEM! (v. 8-12)

In Lewis Carroll's classic Alice in Wonderland, Alice comes to a junction in the road so she asks the Cheshire Cat, *"...would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"*

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go to," said the Cat. *"I don't much care where,"* replied Alice. *"Then it doesn't matter which way you go."*

Let me ask this: **Where do you want to go?** Does it really matter? To most of us, it does matter. And if it doesn't matter to you, then you would be the definition of a fool!

Taking the wrong road—making the wrong choices—can be very costly and painful! Go the wrong way and you may even end up at a dead end!

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

How do you know which choice is best, which road is right, which direction to head out in? Follow the Shepherd!

“I will hiss for them and gather them...” Zechariah says in vs. 8.

The word translated “hiss” means “to be shrill, that is, to whistle or hiss (as a call or in scorn).”

In the same way you whistle for a dog to come to you, so the LORD will whistle for His sheep, and they will follow Him.

Vs. 9-10 say He gathers them together to redeem them, to bring them back from where He scatters them, calling them back from Egypt and Assyria, back through the waters of affliction and trouble (**v. 11**) just as He once brought them through the Red Sea.

Then **verse 12** says that God will strengthen them in the LORD! It says they shall walk up and down in His Name!
(i.e. They will walk in the will and way of their Shepherd!)

From beginning to end, they hear their Shepherd whistle for them, and they follow His voice, in His footsteps, wherever He leads them!

Zechariah tells the Jewish exiles and us who read these words in this 21st century—Follow Your Shepherd! Depend on Him to lead you!

John 10:27—“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”

We need guidance!
Our ability to choose the right road is hindered by our inability to see the future.

Our human wisdom can take us only so far, but no further.

**THE NEED FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
ZECHARIAH 10:1-12**

Making the right choices, choosing the right way is no better than flipping a coin, unless you depend on the Good Shepherd to lead you!

But, some might ask, “How does God lead us?”

God’s leading can come in a variety of different ways and means, but if you want the one absolutely reliable means of guidance, **it comes through His Word, the Bible.**

He can influence you through circumstances, through other people, or through His Holy Spirit that lives within!

But whatever means He uses, it must ALWAYS line up with His Word! The Word is the LORD’s voice, speaking to us and telling us which way to go!

Just like Israel needed so desperately to depend on their Shepherd, we too must depend on the Good Shepherd for guidance—

We must listen to His Voice!

We must walk in His ways!

He’ll never steer us wrong!

A.T. Pierson said these words, **“To go as I am led, to go when I am led, to go where I am led ... it is that which has been for twenty years the one prayer of my life.”**

Is that the prayer of your life? It will be when you depend on the Shepherd to lead you! May we make this the prayer of our lives also!

Mark 6:34—“And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd.”

Just like Israel, we all need to depend on the Good Shepherd:

- 1) To Supply Our Needs!
- 2) To Strengthen Us!
- 3) To Lead Us!