

Lesson 22 - The Good Shepherd

David the Shepherd King, from Psalm 51, 2 Samuel 7; paraphrase of Psalm 23

The Jesus Storybook Bible - pgs. 130 -135

Lesson

The search for a true king absorbs much of the history of God's people. As they continually fall away from submission to the rule of God, they become slaves to their own desires or to other nations that oppress and enslave them. Both the successes and the failures of all Israel's leaders point to the need for a true king.

Eventually the tension between the brokenness and depth of sin and the power of the liberator-king becomes overwhelming: Moses leads the exodus out of the land of bondage, but fails to obey God at the rock in the wilderness; David slays Goliath, but sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. No human leader measures up, and the kingly qualifications described in Isaiah and the Psalms are so matchless that only the coming of the Lord himself can fulfill them. The question is: How can any king be powerful enough to liberate us from slavery and bondage this great? The answer: Only one who is God himself.

King David, who is described as a "man after God's own heart," was guilty of murder, adultery, false witness, theft, and coveting. He had broken half the Ten Commandments in one awful enterprise. But in Psalm 51 David takes full responsibility for his actions. In verse 3 he says: "I know my transgressions." In verse 4 he admits that his sin is primarily against God. "Against you, you only have I sinned." This is striking and even shocking. Think of how he had wronged Uriah and Bathsheba and had even made Joab an accomplice in evil. Moreover, he betrayed the trust of his people as their king, abusing his power. Yet David says his sin is against "God only."

David is saying that his sin against God is so much more fundamental and serious that it is, in a sense, the only sin. Without this sin, the others would not have happened. David could only commit adultery if either he made himself his own god — assuming he was wiser than the God who made the laws — or made Bathsheba into an idol more important than God. Or he could have done both at the same time. In any case, David had to sin against God first, putting something else in God's place.

Other than the king motif and the search for a true king, another theme runs through these stories — that of the shepherd. David was a shepherd. Jesus is the King, but he is also described as the Good Shepherd. Why? Sheep are particularly non-self sufficient creatures. They are utterly dependent on the shepherd for absolutely every area of their lives. In short, shepherding is comprehensive. The shepherd serves as protector, physician, provider, leader,

and owner. But a shepherd also lays down his life for his sheep to protect them from thieves or wild animals. That is why Jesus, when he was going to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, said in John 10:14 – 15, “I am the good shepherd . . . I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Memory Verse

Psalm 16:8 - "I keep my eyes always on the Lord. I will not be shaken."

***Lesson taken from *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*, written by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas.

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