

If Jesus “leads his sheep to a quiet place” (v31) and makes them lie down on the “green grass” (39) and feeds them until their “cup overflows” (v42-43), whose role is he playing from Psalm 23?

At the same time, what promise is he fulfilling from Ezekiel 34?

### **Feeding the Sheep, or Eating the Sheep?**

According to Ezekiel 34, the leaders of Israel were growing fat on the spoils of the people. Rather than caring for the sheep, the shepherds were consuming them. But God promised that he would come to his people, search for the lost, gather the strays, and feed them. He would send a “new King David”, who would care for his people.

Jesus is this new leader. And rather than leading as one who profits from his people, he leads as one who cares and gives.

a) From what you know of the ultimate ending of Mark’s gospel, how does Jesus show this most clearly?

b) What makes Jesus a leader worth following?

c) How should we respond to a shepherd who gives himself in our service and care?

d) What can Christian leaders learn from the example of the bad shepherds of Israel, and from the “good shepherd”?



Shepherdless **Sheep**  
**Mark 6**

# Pastor **Disaster**

We live in a world where leaders are treated with suspicion. And rightly so - because more often than not, they're in it for what they can get rather than what they can give. What examples of this can you think of from the media **this week**? Perhaps you can list some examples from politics, both at home and abroad...

## **Shepherds of Israel**

In the Old Testament, God says the leaders of Israel are "shepherds." Shepherds knew their sheep, cared for them and protected them from harm... at least, that was the theory. When King David wrote his famous 23rd Psalm, he went further - the ultimate shepherd, he said, is God.

Refresh your memory by filling a few gaps...

The Lord is \_\_\_\_\_, I shall lack \_\_\_\_\_

He makes me \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_,

He leads me beside \_\_\_\_\_, he restores \_\_\_\_\_ ...

Like God, the leader of God's people should be a shepherd, who leads, feeds, protects, and cares. Sadly, that's not the way it worked out.

## **Read Ezekiel 34:1-16.**

Who have the shepherds of Israel been looking after?

What has happened to the sheep who should have been under their care?

According to verse 5, **why** have the sheep been scattered?



What is God going to do about this?

What reminders of Psalm 23 do you see in verses 13 to 15?

Further thought: What new perspective do verses 4b, 11 and 16 throw on the parable of the lost sheep which Jesus tells in Luke 15? How does the parable reflect on the leaders of Israel?

## **Read Ezek 34: 20 to 24.**

Who is God going to send?

Why is good news for the sheep bad news for the corrupt shepherds?

Now turn to **Mark 6**, and read the account of Herod, King and Shepherd of Israel. (Mark 6:14-29)

What sort of shepherd is he?

Whose interests does he serve?

What sort of care is he providing for Israel?

In Mark 6:7-13, Jesus has sent out his disciples to preach repentance all around the villages of Israel. John the Baptist preached repentance too. What does Herod's treatment of John say about the reception the "kingdom message" will receive from the "shepherds of Israel"?

**Read Mark 6:30-34.** What phrase in this passage reminds you of Ezekiel 34? (Hint: 💡 )

In the light of the promise of Ezekiel 34, what are we expecting God to do next? Who do we expect JESUS to be?

Try to read the account of the feeding of the five thousand in **Mark 6v35-44** with fresh eyes.

In what ways does Jesus show his concern for his sheep? (Include the lead up from v30)

What "Ezekiel 34" style things has Jesus already done?

What "Psalm 23" style things does Jesus do here?