

**CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS , Week 11****Shepherds according to God's Heart**

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:8; 3:15; 10:21; 23:1-4; Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-31; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Rev. 7:16-17

Jeremiah 2:8	The priests did not say, / Where is Jehovah? / And those who handle the law did not know Me, / And the <b>shepherds transgressed against Me</b> , / And the prophets prophesied by Baal / And followed after things that did not benefit them.
Jeremiah 3:15	And I will give you <b>shepherds according to My own heart</b> , who will feed you knowledge and understanding.
Jeremiah 10:21	For the shepherds are stupid / And have not sought Jehovah; / Therefore they have not prospered, / And all their flock is scattered.
Jeremiah 23:1	Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture, declares Jehovah.
Jeremiah 23:2	Therefore thus says Jehovah the God of Israel concerning the shepherds who shepherd My people, You have scattered My flock and driven them away and have not visited them; I will visit upon you the evil of your deeds, declares Jehovah.
Jeremiah 23:3	Then I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply.
Jeremiah 23:4	And I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they will no longer fear or be dismayed, nor will any be missing, declares Jehovah.
Isaiah 40:11	He will feed His flock as a Shepherd; / In His arm He will gather the lambs; / In His bosom He will carry them. / He will lead those who are nursing the young.
Ezekiel 34:11	For thus says the Lord Jehovah, I Myself, even <b>I, will search for My sheep and seek them out.</b>
Ezekiel 34:12	As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day when he is among his sheep which are scattered, so I will seek out My sheep; and I will deliver them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.
Ezekiel 34:13	And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the streams and in all the inhabited places of the land.
Ezekiel 34:14	<b>I will feed them with good pasture, and their dwelling place will be upon the mountains of the heights of Israel; there they will lie down in a good dwelling place, and on rich pasture they will feed upon the mountains of Israel.</b>
Ezekiel 34:15	<b>I Myself will shepherd My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, declares the Lord Jehovah.</b>
Ezekiel 34:16	<b>I will seek the lost one and bring back the one that was driven away and bind up the broken one and strengthen the sick one;</b> but the fat one and the strong one I will destroy-I will feed them with judgment.
Ezekiel 34:17	And as for you, O My flock, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats.
Ezekiel 34:18	Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture and trample down the rest of your pasture with your feet and drink the clear water and foul the rest with your feet?
Ezekiel 34:19	Meanwhile My flock must feed on what is trampled by your feet and drink what is fouled by your feet.
Ezekiel 34:20	Therefore thus says the Lord Jehovah to them, It is I who am about to judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep.
Ezekiel 34:21	Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted all the weak with your horns until you scattered them abroad,
Ezekiel 34:22	I will rescue My flock, and they will no longer be prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another.
Ezekiel 34:23	And I will set up over them one Shepherd, My Servant David, and He will feed them; He will feed them, and He will be their Shepherd.
Ezekiel 34:24	And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and My Servant David will be a Prince among them. I, Jehovah, have spoken.
Ezekiel 34:25	And I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish evil beasts from the land, so that they will dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.
Ezekiel 34:26	And I will make them and <b>the places around My hill a blessing</b> , and I will cause the showers to come down in their season; <b>there will be showers of blessing.</b>
Ezekiel 34:27	And the trees of the field will yield their fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure in their land; then they will know that I am Jehovah, when I break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.
Ezekiel 34:28	And they will no longer be prey to the nations, nor will the beasts of the earth devour them; but they will dwell securely, and no one will make them afraid.
Ezekiel 34:29	And I will raise up for them a planting place of renown, and they will no longer be consumed with famine in the land and no longer bear the disgrace of the nations.
Ezekiel 34:30	Thus they will know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, declares the Lord Jehovah.
Ezekiel 34:31	And you are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God, declares the Lord Jehovah.
John 10:11	<b>I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.</b>
Hebrews 13:20	Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, <b>the great Shepherd of the sheep</b> , in the blood of an eternal covenant,
Hebrews 13:21	Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 2:25	For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to <b>the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.</b>
1 Peter 5:2	<b>Shepherd the flock of God</b> among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
1 Peter 5:4	And when <b>the Chief Shepherd</b> is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Revelation 7:16 They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat;  
 Revelation 7:17 For **the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them** and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

### Day 1

#### I. Jehovah spoke through the prophet Jeremiah concerning the **shepherds**, the rulers—Jer. 2:8; 10:21:

- A. The shepherds, the rulers, **transgressed** against Jehovah; they **did not seek** Jehovah, and their flock was **scattered**—2:8; 10:21.
- B. The shepherds **destroyed** and scattered the sheep of Jehovah's pasture—23:1-2.
- C. Jehovah promised that He would gather the **remnant** of His flock and bring them back to their pasture and that He would raise up shepherds over them who would **shepherd them**, and they would be fruitful and multiply—vv. 3-4.
- D. Jehovah promised to give Israel shepherds **according to His own heart**; such shepherds would give the people of God proper knowledge and understanding of God—3:15.

Jehovah promised to give Israel shepherds according to His own heart; such shepherds would give the people of God proper knowledge and understanding of God. The proper shepherds, who are **according to God's heart**, feed God's people and give them the proper knowledge and understanding of God. By this kind of shepherding, we can know who God is as the Shepherd, what He is like, and what His characteristics are.... The Lord gains gifted persons who become **patterns of shepherding according to God**, and then these perfect many saints to do the same thing they do as shepherds. In this way, the Lord fulfills His promise that He will raise up shepherds according to His own heart. (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. 24, No.6, page 228*)

#### II. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal **Christ as the Shepherd according to God's heart**—Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11-31; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:16-17:

- A. As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, **Christ comes to be a Shepherd**; He cares for His flock by ruling and correcting His sheep and by feeding His flock, gathering the lambs in His arm, carrying them in His bosom, and leading those who are nursing the young—Isa. 40:10-11; Matt. 2:6; 9:36.
- B. Ezekiel 34:11-31 prophesies that the Lord Himself will come as the Shepherd to **search** for His sheep and **seek** them out:

### Day 2

1. As the Shepherd, the Lord will gather His people, His sheep, out of the nations and **bring them back** to the land of Canaan, which typifies the all-inclusive Christ as the allotted portion of God's people, to dwell on the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ—vv. 11, 14.
2. When the Lord Jesus comes as the **Shepherd to care for us**, He comes also as the **King to govern us**; the issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship and His throne within us—vv. 23-24.

### Day 3

- C. Christ is the **good Shepherd**, the **great Shepherd**, the **Chief Shepherd**, and the **Shepherd of our souls**—John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25:
  1. As the **good Shepherd**, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and may have it abundantly—John 10:10-11:
    - a. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish **redemption** for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.
    - b. He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may **eat freely of Him** and be **nourished** by Him—v. 9.
    - c. The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into **one flock** (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding—v. 16.
  2. God raised up from the dead "our Lord Jesus, the great **Shepherd of the sheep**, in the blood of an eternal covenant"—Heb. 13:20:
    - a. The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to **gain a flock**, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.
    - b. As the great Shepherd, the Lord is making real to us the **contents of the new covenant** and is leading us into the experience and enjoyment of all the positive matters revealed in the book of Hebrews—8:8-13; 1:1-3; 2:9-18; 5:6-10, 14; 7:16, 22, 24-26; 13:1, 8, 12-15.

### Day 4

3. As the **Chief Shepherd**, Christ shepherds His flock through the **elders** of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:
  - a. Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up—v. 2.
  - b. The elders' shepherding should be **Christ's shepherding through them**.
4. As the **Shepherd of our souls**, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—2:25:
  - a. He shepherds us by caring for the **welfare of our soul** and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.
  - b. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.
  - c. As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord **restores** our soul and gives **rest** to our soul—Psa. 23:3a; Matt. 11:28-30.

5. In eternity future Christ will be our **eternal Shepherd** guiding us to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:16-17:
  - a. As our eternal Shepherd, Christ will **lead us into Himself** as the **springs of waters of life** so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God—v. 17a.
  - b. The waters of life will be supplied, and the water of tears will be wiped away—v. 17b.
  - c. Under Christ's shepherding in eternity, there will be no tears, no hunger, and no thirst—only enjoyment—vv. 16-17.

In eternity future Christ will be our **eternal Shepherd** guiding us to **springs of waters of life**. In eternity future we will still need Christ's shepherding. By that time we will have become His wife, living a married life with Him. I am uncertain what time will be like in eternity future; however, even then, we will still need His shepherding. It may be that after five billion years with the Lord, He will still come to us as a Shepherd and say, "I want to bring you to experience the living water in a way that you have never experienced before. There will be no repeats, no reruns—only eternal shepherding." At that point He will no longer need to solve our problems; everything will have been taken care of. Every negative thing will be in the lake of fire. However, **He will still guide us to springs of waters of life**.

The **waters of life will be supplied**, and the **water of tears will be wiped away**. Revelation 7:17b says that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. To wipe away a tear from an eye is intimate, delicate, and tender work. For Him to wipe away our tears also means that He knows what that tear means, that He has dealt with the cause of that tear, and that now it has been wiped away. After that, the only water left will be the waters of life. (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. 24, No.6, page 234*)

### Day 5

#### III. In His heavenly ministry the Lord Jesus **continues the shepherding** that He began in His earthly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21:

- A. In John 21:15-17 the Lord **commissioned** Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens; this was to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd God's flock:
  1. What He was doing in the heavens, the apostles did on earth to carry out His heavenly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21; John 21:15-17.
  2. Regarding shepherding, the apostolic ministry **cooperates** with Christ's heavenly ministry—vv. 15-17.

In John 21:15-17 the Lord **commissioned** Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens; this was to **incorporate** the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd God's flock. The way the real shepherding will take place among us is that the Lord will increasingly produce a number of saints to be such shepherds. This will not be limited merely to the leading brothers, the co-workers, the ministering brothers, or even brothers. The Lord must produce **many saints**—brothers and sisters—**who are one with Him and correspond to Him as the real Shepherd**. This is how He will incorporate the New Testament apostolic ministry with His heavenly ministry and carry out on earth through His apostles and the members of His Body what He is doing in the heavens. He will do so by shepherding through us. (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. 24, No.6, page 236*)

- B. The apostle Paul is a **pattern** of shepherding the saints in cooperation with Christ's shepherding in His heavenly ministry—Heb. 13:20-21; 7:25-26; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Acts 20:20:
  1. Paul shepherded the saints as a **nursing mother** and an **exhorting father**—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12.
  2. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by **teaching** them "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20) and by **admonishing** each one of the saints with tears even for as long as three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).
  3. Paul had been enlarged in his heart to have the **intimate concern** of the ministering life—2 Cor. 7:2-3; 1 Thes. 2:8; Phil. 2:19-20.
  4. Paul **came down** to the weak ones' level so that he could gain them—2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20.
  5. As a lover of the church in oneness with the church-loving Christ, Paul was **willing to spend what he had**, referring to his possessions, and to **spend what he was**, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints in order to build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 11:28-29.

#### IV. Those who shepherd the flock of God should **shepherd according to God**—1 Pet. 5:2:

- A. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to **what God is in His attributes**—Rom. 9:15-16; 11:22, 33; Eph. 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:12.
- B. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to **God's nature, desire, way, and glory**, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.
- C. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become **God in life, nature, expression, and function**—John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4:
  1. We need to be the **reproduction of Christ**, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we **express God**, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities—John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19.
  2. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
  3. When we are **one with God**, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:2.

God is not a respecter of persons. Therefore, in our heart there cannot be any preference for one person over another. This is why Paul says in Philippians 2:2 that we must think the same thing and have the same love for one another. Saints who have suffered in society and elsewhere by being a minority and by being unjustly treated can sense when someone has a preference. To not have any preference and to have the same love toward others requires that we be fully according to God. In this way, no one is superior and no one is inferior. We do not have any self-interest and are not seeking to gain any benefit or appreciation. **We simply care for someone according to God**. In particular, it is a deep matter to be **according to God in our disposition**. Anyone who has been designated by God to be a leading brother, an elder, a co-worker, or a minister needs to have a deep breakthrough in their disposition and thorough experience of God's organic salvation not to express their own disposition. We need to receive grace to be willing for this to happen in us for the Body. What a glory it would be if when the saints observe us, they could realize that there is no preference—we simply love and treat all of the saints the same. This is to be **fully according to God's heart for His Body**. (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. 24, No.6, page 241*)

**V. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a [mutual shepherding](#)—1 Cor. 12:23-26:**

- A. To shepherd is to take [all-inclusive](#), [tender](#) care of the flock—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28.
- B. [All believers](#), regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding.

**Day 6**

- C. All of us need to be under the [organic shepherding of Christ](#) and be one with Him to shepherd others—1 Pet. 2:25; John 21:16.
- D. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the [Father's loving and forgiving heart](#) and according to the [Son's seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit](#)—Luke 15:4-24, 32.
- E. We are both sheep and shepherds, [shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality](#); through this mutual shepherding, the Body builds itself up in love—Eph. 4:16.

One aspect of the new revival is that the Lord will recover the **shepherding in mutuality**. When this becomes a reality among us, the clergy-laity system will be totally annihilated. This kind of shepherding will no longer be a mere doctrine; there will no longer be a clergy, and there will no longer be a laity. Today some may unconsciously regard the elders, the co-workers, and the ministering brothers as a kind of clergy, a professional class among us. We need to see, however, that the shepherding of which we are speaking here is one we all will participate in, with the apostles taking the lead to become patterns of such shepherds to us. Ephesians 4:11-12 shows the ascended Christ giving gifts to His Body in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers to perfect the saints by [supplying and perfecting them to become what they are in order to function as they do](#). Through this perfecting, although the saints may not be able to perform these functions to the same extent as the gifted persons, their functioning will be the same in nature. This word applies to all of us as members of the Body. Therefore, Christ's shepherding of us in His heavenly ministry is the continuation of His being the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls and causes us to [become the same as He is as the Shepherd](#). (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations Vol. 24, No.6, page 236*)