**Shepherd**:

Shepherd was a standard term for a leader or king throughout the ancient world. In this sense it often appears in the Bible. (www.biblehub.com)

David was a shepherd and the son of a shepherd. Later he was known as the “Shepherd King” of Israel. He saw the relationship between God and man as a father to his children and a shepherd to his sheep. He was a model of a good shepherd, and a model of the coming Messiah: Ezek. 34:12; Jer. 12:4-5, Jer. 30:9; Hosea 3:5.

Jesus tells us that he is the *Good Shepherd.*

The word shepherd can mean one who leads, protects and feeds a flock, but it can also mean ruler or teacher. It is often used as a metaphor for the task of spiritual leadership.

The word ***pastor*** is *ra’ah* in Hebrew which means “to tend a flock; to graze literally or figuratively; to rule; to guard; to care for; to feed (Gesenius 7462).

A good shepherd as a leader “after God’s own heart”

Jer. 3:15; Is. 40:11; Jer. 31:10; Ezek 34:12

Jer. 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Is 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

Jer 31:10  Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock.

Ezek 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

The image of God as a shepherd points to his continual direction, guidance and care for his people. The shepherd saves those who are lost or scattered. The shepherd will give his life for his sheep.

[**From: Easton's Bible Dictionary - Shepherd**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/shepherd.html)

. . . a word naturally of frequent occurrence in Scripture. Sometimes the word "pastor" is used instead.

 ( [Jeremiah 2:8](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/2-8.html) ; [3:15](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/3-15.html) ; [10:21](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/10-21.html) ; [12:10](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/12-10.html) ; [17:16](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/17-16.html) ). This word is used figuratively to represent the relation of rulers to their subjects and of God to his people ( [Psalms 23:1](http://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/23-1.html) ; [80:1](http://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/80-1.html) ; [Isaiah 40:11](http://www.biblestudytools.com/isaiah/40-11.html) ; [44:28](http://www.biblestudytools.com/isaiah/44-28.html) ; [Jeremiah 25:34](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/25-34.html) [Jeremiah 25:35](http://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/25-35.html) ; [Nahum 3:18](http://www.biblestudytools.com/nahum/3-18.html) ; [John 10:11](http://www.biblestudytools.com/john/10-11.html); [John 10:14](http://www.biblestudytools.com/john/10-14.html) ; [Hebrews 13:20](http://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/13-20.html) ; [1 Peter 2:25](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/2-25.html) ; [5:4](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/5-4.html) ).

Heb. 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

I Pet 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

I Pet 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The duties of a shepherd in a country like Palestine were very onerous. "In early morning he led forth the flock from the fold, marching at its head to the spot where they were to be pastured. Here he watched them all day, taking care that none of the sheep strayed, and if any for a time eluded his watch and wandered away from the rest, seeking diligently till he found and brought it back. In those lands sheep require to be supplied regularly with water, and the shepherd for this purpose has to guide them either to some running stream or to wells dug in the wilderness and furnished with troughs. At night he brought the flock home to the fold, counting them as they passed under the rod at the door to assure himself that none were missing. Nor did his labours always end with sunset. Often he had to guard the fold through the dark hours from the attack of wild beasts, or the wily attempts of the prowling thief (see [1 Samuel 17:34](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-samuel/17-34.html) )."

The sheep in a shepherd’s flock heard their shepherd’s voice and followed only their own shepherd, even if there were competing voices that would try to distract the sheep.

**Some qualities of a good shepherd:**

* A sheep never actually wants or lacks for anything if he is in the Good Shepherd’s care.
* A shepherd cares for his flock.
* He labors to find the best grazing, the richest pasture, the cleanest water.
* He will protect his sheep from enemies and diseases and parasites to which sheep are susceptible.
* He will give his life for his sheep.
* He is ready from early dawn until late at night with selfless love; he is constantly alert to the welfare of His flock.
* He daily examines his sheep and can see instantly if they are content, fed, unmolested, or ill. He takes care of all their needs.
* He sleeps nearby with ‘one eye and both ears open’ ready to protect his own.
* For sheep to lie down they must be free from fear, tension, aggravation and hunger and only the shepherd can help them with those things.
* A sheep must have clean water and the shepherd knows the best places to find the water source.
* A shepherd owns his sheep and is not a hireling. A hireling is in it for the wages and will run away when times are tough, but a shepherd cares for his sheep always.