

## Summary Handout

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# The Shepherds of Israel

Lesson

43

Summary

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*Ezekiel 18; Men shall be punished for their own sins—Sinners shall die, and the righteous shall save their souls—A righteous man who sins shall be damned, and a sinner who repents shall be saved.*

*Ezekiel 34; The Lord reproves those shepherds who do not feed the flock—In the last days, the Lord will gather the lost sheep of Israel—The Messiah shall be their Shepherd—The Lord will make his gospel covenant with them.*

*Ezekiel 37; Israel shall inherit the land in the resurrection—The stick of Judah (Bible) and the stick of Joseph (Book of Mormon) become one in the Lord's hand—Israel shall be gathered and cleansed—The Messiah shall reign over them—They shall receive the everlasting gospel covenant.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Becoming Part of the Flock:** Each week that I sit at the Mount of Beatitudes with visiting guests, I relate the account of a shepherd who daily used to lead his flock out of the once nearby farm house. He would lead the sheep out in the morning and back again at the close of day. Once, as we were seated on several large rocks and as we were about to read the simple scriptural account, the shepherd began bringing his flock back to the farm house. As he approached us, he stopped and let the flock disperse as they nibbled the green blades of grass around us.

**Shepherd's Voice:** We heard an occasional ringing of bells. There were about a dozen older sheep, kept from the previous year's flock that were the "lead sheep" and they were fastened with bells. After about ten minutes of the flock spreading out and milling around us, I noticed that almost everyone had tears in their eyes. We were in the midst of experiencing a Biblical metaphor. The shepherd began speaking. I looked around, wondering whom he was addressing when the older lead sheep immediately responded by running toward the shepherd, their bells ringing. This seemed to alert the rest of the flock because a moment later, they began to file behind the lead sheep who were following the shepherd.

**Reaching Out:** With a smile, the shepherd boy walked away probably unaware that he was performing a pattern we were about to read. He walked a few paces and then picked up a stone. Knowingly, he looked back to see a few sheep just over the crest of the hill who remained instead of following. Skillfully, he threw the stone in their direction, catching their attention. They looked up and immediately began to run to catch up with the rest of the flock. There went the shepherd, his lead sheep and the flock. We began to read the account of Jesus (the Shepherd) leaving the multitudes (the flock), going to the mount, and teaching just the disciples (the lead sheep) lessons that they would then teach the multitudes. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying," (*Matthew 5:1-2*)

**Signals of Readiness:** In ancient times, when the Temple was functioning, the High Priest would signal his readiness for another sacrifice by burning the fire and throwing incense in it. (This would offset the odor of parts of the animal that needed to be consumed by the fire.) The plume of smoke would signal the twelve lead priests to ready themselves. When they were ready, they rang bells that alerted the multitude to gather close to participate in the sacrifice. The imagery is obvious, the shepherd, the lead sheep and the flock.

**Ezekiel's "Double" Vision:** Another image that this particular lesson emphasizes is in Ezekiel 37. Latter-day Saints usually start at verse fifteen that begins reference to the "two sticks." However, an even greater meaning comes by combining the account of "dry bones" (verses 1-14) with the "sticks." Three elements are identified in Ezekiel's first vision in this chapter, bones, flesh/skin and the breath. The bones are brought back together, they are covered with flesh and skin and then the breath of life brings them alive. The imagery is likened to the

gathering of Israel, recognizing "I AM" who opens graves and then it leads into the "two sticks" vision. The second vision is a double emphasis of the first.

**Like the Body, True Religion is Resurrected:** The Hebrew word for breath, wind and spirit are the same (Ruach). The Hebrew word for sticks or wood is "ETZ." The word for bones, "ETZEMOT" could be considered the plural of "ETZ," or in other words, the sticks of the body. It is likely that Ezekiel wants you to consider the ancient body of true religion as having died, leaving a skeleton - the "sticks" of the body. Judaism with its "Old Testament," is what is left, the stick of Judah the skeleton of true religion. The old covenant was true and yet it died. In latter-days the skeleton is clothed with a new body, the Book of Mormon, and breath (the Spirit of the Lord) is given so that the true religion is resurrected. The body is alive again, never to die. The covenant is restored anew, never to die again, "The New and Everlasting Covenant!"

**Accepting the Gospel Covenant:** "The gospel is the new and everlasting covenant by means of which God, on his own terms, offers salvation to man. Baptism is the formally appointed means and ordinance which the Lord has provided so that man can signify his personal acceptance of all of the terms and conditions of the eternal gospel covenant. Thus in baptism, which as part of the gospel is itself a new and an everlasting covenant (D. & C. 22), man covenants to abide by all of the laws and requirements of the whole gospel." (*Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, Pg.69*)

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at [www.HolyLandsRevealed.com](http://www.HolyLandsRevealed.com). (Just click "LDS SUPPLEMENTS")

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