

WEAVER STUDY GUIDES

Hireling VS Shepherd

Study Guide

Church Government

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A lesson-by-lesson companion for reading, discussion, and written responses.

Downloadable classroom edition | 8.5 x 11 inches

Name / group

Date

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Using this guide

Read the corresponding chapter, then work through the themes, arguments, and Scripture references.

Write your responses before discussing the questions with others. Use the application pages to identify a practical next step.

The study material is retained from the existing lecture study guides. Added writing prompts provide space for your own response.

Print at Actual Size / 100% on US Letter paper. Single-sided and double-sided printing are both suitable. Lessons begin on the next available page; no blank pages are inserted.

Reading assignments refer to the September 30, 2026 edition of the companion book. Online lecture links and QR codes are collected at the end.

LESSON 1

Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd

Part One of Three

February 19, 2020

Read Chapter 1 in the companion book, pages 5-21.

Major Themes

Contrast between hireling and shepherd

The hireling works only for money and abandons the sheep in danger, while the shepherd genuinely loves, feeds, and protects the sheep.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'The shepherd loves the sheep. He feeds the sheep. He protects the sheep. The hireling is only there for money.' (John 10:11-15)

Biblical qualifications and roles of pastors

Pastors are elders, bishops, and shepherds - terms describing the man, office, and work. They are under-shepherds under Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

Lecture support: Weaver explains Greek words *presbyteros*, *episkopos*, and *poimēn*, and cites Acts 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 3:1; Ephesians 4:11.

Decline of bold, biblical preaching

Modern preachers lack the courage of biblical prophets and historical figures, opting for political correctness and shallow messages.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'We have politically correct preacherettes who preach their sermonettes... There's no declaration of the truth.'

Building people versus building buildings

True ministry focuses on making disciples (gold, silver, precious stones) rather than attracting crowds with cheap materials (wood, hay, stubble).

Lecture support: Weaver expounds 1 Corinthians 3:11-17, emphasizing that pastors are builders and believers are the building.

The ministry as a divine trust, not a career

The gospel is a sacred trust; seeking human honor undermines faith. Hirelings betray this trust for personal gain.

Lecture support: Weaver cites 1 Timothy 1:11 and John 5:44, and shares anecdotes of pastors who view ministry as a job.

The shepherd's duty to warn

As a watchman, the shepherd must warn of spiritual and physical dangers; failure brings blood guilt. Preaching the whole counsel of God clears the conscience.

Lecture support: Weaver reads Ezekiel 3:17-21 and Acts 20:26-27, stressing the need to declare all of God's word.

The shepherd's duty to feed, not exploit

Shepherds feed the flock willingly, not for money. False shepherds are condemned for feeding themselves and neglecting the sheep.

Lecture support: Weaver references 1 Peter 5:1-4, Isaiah 56:11, and Ezekiel 34:1-11.

Key Arguments

A hireling abandons the sheep; a shepherd protects them

The hireling flees when the wolf comes because he does not care for the sheep, while the shepherd risks his life for them.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.' (John 10:13)

Pastors are under-shepherds accountable to Christ

The terms elder, bishop, and shepherd describe one office under the authority of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'The word "elder" describes the man. The word "bishop" or "overseer" describes his office. The word "pastor" or "shepherd" describes his work.'

Modern preachers lack biblical boldness

Unlike Elijah or Elisha, today's pastors avoid confronting sin in leaders and preach watered-down messages.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts Elisha's rebuke of the king of Israel and notes, 'We have half men that preach half truths.'

True success is building people, not buildings

God chose shepherds, not pharaohs, to lead His people. Pastors must decide whether to build with eternal materials or perishable ones.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'We need shepherds, not pharaohs... I'd much rather build people and families than buildings.'

Seeking human honor makes faith impossible

When pastors desire praise from men, they cannot truly believe or serve God faithfully.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes John 5:44: 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?'

Preaching the whole counsel of God removes blood guilt

Paul declared himself pure from the blood of all men because he did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God.

Lecture support: Weaver reads Acts 20:26-27 and explains, 'You get free from the blood of all men by preaching the whole counsel of God.'

False shepherds feed themselves and neglect the flock

Ezekiel 34 condemns shepherds who eat the fat and clothe themselves with wool but do not strengthen, heal, or seek the lost.

Lecture support: Weaver reads Ezekiel 34:2-6 and says, 'These did not do it. They just simply did the opposite.'

Scripture References

John 10:11-15

Jesus declares Himself the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, contrasting with the hireling who flees.

Psalms 80:1

God is called the Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Jesus is called the great shepherd of the sheep, brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

1 Peter 2:25

Believers were as sheep going astray but have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

1 Peter 5:4

When the chief Shepherd appears, believers will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away.

Acts 20:17, 28

Paul calls the elders of the church at Ephesus and tells them the Holy Ghost made them overseers to feed the church of God.

1 Timothy 5:17

Elders who rule well are worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

Titus 1:5

Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain elders in every city.

James 5:14

The sick are to call for the elders of the church to pray over them.

1 Peter 5:1

Peter exhorts the elders as a fellow elder and witness of Christ's sufferings.

1 Timothy 3:6

A bishop must not be a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

1 Timothy 3:1

If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.

Ephesians 4:11

Christ gave some as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers.

John 21:15-17

Jesus commands Peter to feed His lambs and sheep, using words for feeding and shepherding.

Hosea 8:14

Israel forgot its Maker and built temples; God will send fire upon its cities.

Genesis 46:34

Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.

1 Corinthians 3:11-17

Paul describes building on the foundation of Christ with gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, stubble; each man's work will be tested by fire.

Zechariah 4:10

Do not despise the day of small things.

John 5:44

Jesus asks how the Pharisees can believe when they receive honor from one another and do not seek the honor that comes from God.

1 Timothy 1:11-13

Paul says the glorious gospel was committed to his trust, and he thanks Christ for putting him into the ministry.

Study notes

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Discussion Questions

1. What are the key differences between a hireling and a shepherd according to John 10:11-15?

Consider: Weaver opens the sermon by reading this passage and explaining the contrast.

2. How do the biblical titles of elder, bishop, and shepherd help us understand the role of a pastor?

Consider: Weaver explains that these terms describe the man, the office, and the work.

3. In what ways have modern preachers departed from the boldness of biblical prophets and historical figures?

Consider: Weaver contrasts today's politically correct preaching with Elijah, Elisha, and Revolutionary War chaplains.

4. What does 1 Corinthians 3 teach about the materials pastors use to build the church?

Consider: Weaver expounds the passage to show the difference between gold/silver/precious stones and wood/hay/stubble.

5. Why does seeking human honor make faith impossible, according to John 5:44?

Consider: Weaver applies this verse to pastors who desire recognition rather than God's approval.

6. How does preaching the whole counsel of God relate to being free from the blood of all men?

Consider: Weaver explains Paul's statement in Acts 20:26-27 about declaring all of God's will.

7. What are the marks of a false shepherd according to Ezekiel 34?

Consider: Weaver reads the chapter to show how hirelings feed themselves and neglect the flock.

8. How can a pastor determine whether he is building with gold, silver, and precious stones or with wood, hay, and stubble?

Consider: Weaver challenges pastors to evaluate their ministry focus on people versus buildings.

Applications

Evaluate whether you are a shepherd or a hireling

Pastors must examine their motives: do they serve for money and recognition, or out of love for Christ and His sheep?

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'They must determine whether they're going to be hirelings or shepherds.'

Preach the whole counsel of God

Faithful shepherds must teach all of Scripture, not just popular topics, to be free from blood guilt.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'You get free from the blood of all men by preaching the whole counsel of God.'

Warn of spiritual and moral dangers

Like a watchman, pastors must alert the flock to wolves, false teaching, and societal threats.

Lecture support: Weaver reads Ezekiel 3:17-21 and says, 'It is the watchman's responsibility to warn of danger.'

Feed the flock, not yourself

Ministry should be done willingly and not for financial gain; avoid the greed condemned in Ezekiel 34.

Lecture support: Weaver cites 1 Peter 5:2: 'Feed the flock of God... not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.'

Build people, not just buildings

Focus on making disciples who will last for eternity rather than constructing impressive facilities.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'I'd much rather build people and families than buildings.'

Seek God's honor, not man's

Desiring praise from people undermines faith; pastors must seek approval from God alone.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes John 5:44 and applies it to the danger of seeking recognition.

Pray for God to raise up shepherds

The church needs men who will boldly proclaim truth and care for the flock; believers should pray for such leaders.

Lecture support: Weaver closes in prayer: 'Raise up men that will cry out and warn of danger. Raise up men that will feed the flock of God.'

Study notes

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Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 2

Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd

Part Two of Three

February 19, 2020

Read Chapter 2 in the companion book, pages 23-41.

Major Themes

Shepherd vs. Hireling

The true shepherd protects and defends the sheep, even at the cost of his life, while the hireling abandons them for personal safety or gain.

Lecture support: Our Lord, in this passage, makes a clear distinction between a hireling and a shepherd. The hireling does not care for the sheep at all. In fact, he refuses to defend the sheep even when they're attacked.

Pastoral Responsibility to Protect

Pastors are required not only to feed the flock spiritually but also to guard and protect them from physical and spiritual dangers.

Lecture support: The under-shepherd then has a responsibility not just only to feed, but to guard and protect as well.

Cowardice and Compromise in Modern Pastors

Many contemporary pastors avoid hard truths due to fear of offending congregants or losing financial support, leading to a lack of substance in churches.

Lecture support: A large percentage of our pastors are afraid to speak out on controversial topics because they might offend someone.

Boldness in Preaching Truth

Jesus and historical pastors modeled fearless proclamation of truth regardless of offense, and modern pastors should emulate this courage.

Lecture support: Our Lord just simply said, 'Tough stuff.' I mean, that's all there is to it. If the blind lead the blind, they're both going to fall into the ditch.

Historical Pastors as Fighters

Pastors in early America and the Confederacy actively trained and fought alongside their congregations, viewing physical defense as part of their shepherding duty.

Lecture support: When Pastor Clark was asked by his guests whether the people would fight, he replied, 'Yes, I have trained them for this very hour.'

Inseparability of Civil and Spiritual Liberty

Civil liberty is so intertwined with spiritual liberty that the loss of one inevitably leads to the loss of the other.

Lecture support: Religious liberty is so blended with civil liberty that if one falls, it is not expected that the other will continue.

Biblical Justification for Fighting

Scripture shows that God makes war on sin and enemies before peace is proclaimed, and Christians are called to fight against all forms of wickedness.

Lecture support: You cannot publish peace when there is war. You cannot publish peace when there is wickedness.

Ignorance of Biblical Civil Government

Most pastors have not studied what the Bible teaches about civil government, leading to an inability to stand against tyranny.

Lecture support: Do you realize that most pastors have never studied civil government in the Bible? They never really studied Romans 13.

Key Arguments

The hireling abandons the sheep, but the shepherd defends them.

Jesus' words in John 10 clearly distinguish the self-sacrificing shepherd from the self-preserving hireling.

Lecture support: The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Pastors must both feed and protect the flock.

The biblical model from Genesis 2:15 and John 21 shows that shepherding includes guarding and preserving, not just teaching.

Lecture support: Adam had a twofold responsibility. He had to dress the garden and he had to keep the garden.

Fear of offense and financial pressure silence pastors.

Surveys and observations reveal that many pastors self-censor on moral issues to avoid losing members and income.

Lecture support: Most United States churches are shrinking and more than a hundred die every week. In a day and age where pastors are judged by attendance numbers and budget levels, scaring people away is bad for business.

Jesus was not concerned with offending the religious elite.

Christ's response to the Pharisees' offense demonstrates that truth must be spoken regardless of human reaction.

Lecture support: Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? ... Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Historical pastors trained their people to fight physically.

Examples like Jonas Clark and James Caldwell show that pastors in America's founding era saw armed defense as part of their duty.

Lecture support: He had not only trained them theologically and mentally and emotionally, he'd help train them physically as well.

Civil and spiritual liberty are interdependent.

The loss of freedom to preach against sin directly impacts civil freedoms, as seen in attempts to criminalize criticism of politicians.

Lecture support: If someone is a corrupt, thieving, lying, immoral, reprobate, if I can't call him that, I not only do not have spiritual liberty, I have no civil liberty.

God's peace follows His judgment on enemies.

Nahum 1 and Isaiah 52 teach that good tidings of peace are only possible after God has destroyed the wicked, implying Christians must oppose evil.

Lecture support: How can there be good tidings? And how can there be peace? And the answer is God has judged and destroyed the enemies of his people.

Ignorance of biblical principles leads to national destruction.

Failure to study and apply God's Word to civil matters results in self-inflicted ruin for individuals and nations.

Lecture support: In our ignorance, in our disobedience, in our rebellion, we bring death upon ourselves, our families, our societies, our states, and our nation.

Scripture References

John 10:11-15

Jesus contrasts the good shepherd who lays down his life with the hireling who flees.

Genesis 2:15

Adam's duty to dress and keep the garden illustrates the pastor's twofold responsibility.

John 21:15-17

Jesus' command to Peter to feed and keep His sheep shows the pastoral role.

Acts 20:28

Elders are made overseers to feed the church of God.

1 Timothy 3:1

Desiring the office of a bishop is a good work.

Ephesians 4:11

Pastor-teachers are given for the equipping of the saints.

Matthew 15:12-14

Jesus is unconcerned that the Pharisees were offended by His teaching.

Proverbs 29:2

Gad Hitchcock used this text to preach on righteous vs. wicked rulers.

Romans 13

Charles Turner expounded this passage to argue clergy must interfere when liberties are assailed.

Nahum 1:15

Good tidings of peace are published only after God destroys the wicked.

Nahum 1:1-14

God's vengeance and judgment on Nineveh precede the proclamation of peace.

Isaiah 52:7-10

Beautiful feet bring good tidings of peace after God has made bare His arm in judgment.

Isaiah 52:13-15

The suffering servant is exalted after being marred, pointing to Christ's atonement.

Revelation 19:11

Christ judges and makes war in righteousness.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Hosea 13:9

Israel destroyed itself, but help is found in God.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways might modern pastors act like hirelings rather than shepherds, and how can we discern the difference?

Consider: Based on the contrast in John 10 and the sermon's application to contemporary church leadership.

2. How does the fear of offending people or losing financial support affect the preaching in our churches today?

Consider: Weaver cited a Barna survey showing many pastors feel limited in speaking on controversial issues.

3. What can we learn from Jesus' response to the offended Pharisees about how to handle rejection of truth?

Consider: From Matthew 15, Jesus essentially said 'tough stuff' and let them alone.

4. Should pastors today train their congregations to be prepared for physical defense as Jonas Clark did? Why or why not?

Consider: Clark trained his men to fight, and they died defending Lexington Green.

5. How are civil liberty and spiritual liberty connected, and what happens when one is lost?

Consider: Weaver argued they are so blended that if one falls, the other cannot continue.

6. What does Nahum 1 teach us about the relationship between God's judgment and the proclamation of peace?

Consider: The passage shows that good tidings of peace come only after God destroys the wicked.

7. Why is it important for pastors and Christians to study what the Bible says about civil government?

Consider: Weaver claimed most pastors have never studied Romans 13 or the Constitution.

8. How can we balance the call to be peacemakers with the biblical examples of God's people fighting against evil?

Consider: The sermon presents God as a warrior and pastors as fighters, yet also speaks of publishing peace.

Applications

Pastors must courageously preach the whole truth.

Pastors should not shy away from controversial topics but boldly proclaim God's Word regardless of offense.

Lecture support: Where are the pastors today that speak the truth and let the chips fall where they may?

Congregations should support bold preaching, not pressure pastors to compromise.

Church members must not be the reason pastors feel limited in addressing moral and social issues.

Lecture support: Pastors are much more likely to say that they feel limited by those inside the church rather than those outside.

Christians should be trained to defend themselves and their families.

Following the example of early American pastors, believers should be prepared physically as well as spiritually.

Lecture support: He had not only trained them theologically and mentally and emotionally, he'd help train them physically as well.

Recognize the link between spiritual and civil liberty.

Defending religious freedom necessarily involves defending civil liberties, and vice versa.

Lecture support: You cannot have civil liberty without having spiritual liberty.

Study biblical principles of civil government.

Pastors and Christians should educate themselves on what Scripture teaches about government to stand against tyranny.

Lecture support: Most pastors have never studied civil government in the Bible.

Oppose all forms of sin, including societal and governmental wickedness.

Sin is sin whether in the church, home, or civil government, and must be resisted.

Lecture support: Civil wickedness is just as bad as spiritual wickedness? What about societal wickedness? ... It's all sin.

Trust God's judgment, not human approval.

Like Jesus, believers should not fear offending those who reject truth, but leave them to God.

Lecture support: There is no hope for anyone who refuses and rejects truth. You can't help them.

Prepare for spiritual and physical battles.

Just as pastors of old trained their flocks, modern Christians must learn to fight spiritually and be ready for physical threats.

Lecture support: It's astounding today that most Christians do not even know how to fight spiritually.

Study notes

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 3

Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd

Part Three of Three

March 06, 2020

Read Chapter 3 in the companion book, pages 43-61.

Major Themes

The Shepherd as Protector and Fighter

A true shepherd, unlike a hireling, is willing to fight and even die to protect the sheep. This is modeled by David and ultimately by Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'Shepherds by nature must be fighters because there are wolves, there are bears, there are lions...' and references David's fight with the lion and bear (1 Samuel 17).

God as a Man of War

God is portrayed as a warrior who leads His people in battle array. The exodus and the organization of Israel in Numbers reveal God's martial character.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Exodus 15:3, 'The Lord is a man of war,' and explains that Israel went out 'harnessed' (in battle array) from Egypt.

Biblical Militia vs. Standing Army

The Bible presents a model of decentralized, family-based militias rather than a professional standing army. This structure is seen as a safeguard against tyranny and perpetual war.

Lecture support: Weaver explains from Numbers that each tribe had multiple armies (family militias) and argues, 'If you have militias, you cannot have perpetual wars.'

Fathers as Primary Trainers

Fathers have the God-given responsibility to teach and train their families, including in matters of self-defense. Failure to do so is a moral failure.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'The husband and the father is biblically the appointed head of the house... it is primarily the father's responsibility to teach and to train his children.'

Pastoral Authority and Accountability

Pastors are called by God, set over the congregation, and will give an account for their leadership. They are to be obeyed and esteemed as they watch for souls.

Lecture support: Weaver references 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and Hebrews 13:17, emphasizing that pastors 'have the rule over you' and must give account.

Moral Duty to Protect and Train

It is morally wrong to fail to prevent evil when one has the ability to do so. This duty requires training and readiness, not just good intentions.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Norman Geisler: 'To permit murder when one could have prevented it is morally wrong... Any man who refuses to protect his wife and children against a violent intruder fails them morally.'

The Necessity of Ongoing Training

Skills and physical abilities degrade over time. Believers must continually train and reassess their capabilities to effectively defend their families and communities.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'You cannot now do what you used to do... If you fail to train, there is no way in the world today at 60 or 70, you're going to defend your family.'

Key Arguments

The hireling-shepherd distinction demands a fighting shepherd.

Because the hireling flees and the shepherd protects, a true shepherd must be prepared to fight physically, as David did, not just spiritually.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Shepherds by nature must be fighters... It's the shepherd who always protects the sheep and is willing to give his life for the sheep.'

Israel's military organization was a militia, not a standing army.

The numbering and arrangement of Israel in Numbers shows a decentralized, family-based military structure, which is the biblical pattern for defense.

Lecture support: Weaver points out that each tribe had 'many armies' made up of family clans, and that 'Israel did not have a professional army. What they had was a militia.'

Militias prevent perpetual wars and tyranny.

A standing army can be sent anywhere by a ruler, but a militia of citizens will only fight when directly threatened, thus limiting unjust wars.

Lecture support: Weaver argues, 'If you have a standing army, you can have perpetual warfare. If you don't have a standing army, you cannot have perpetual warfare.'

The Second Amendment secures the militia and the right of self-defense against tyranny.

The founding fathers and constitutional scholars saw the right to keep and bear arms as essential for a well-regulated militia and as a check on government usurpation.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes John Norton Pomeroy: 'To preserve this privilege, and to secure to the people the ability to oppose themselves in a military force against the usurpations of government... that government is forbidden... to invade or destroy the right to keep and bear arms.'

Fathers are biblically mandated to train their households in self-defense.

As heads of the home, fathers must teach their wives and children to defend themselves; failure to do so is a dereliction of duty.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'The husband and the father is biblically the appointed head of the house... it is primarily the father's responsibility to teach and to train his children.'

Pastors have a God-given authority to lead and train the congregation, including in physical defense.

Pastors are 'over' the flock and will give account; therefore, they should lead in training for protection, just as Pastor Jonas Clark did at Lexington.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Hebrews 13:17 and says, 'Obey them that have the rule over you... How in the world will a community defend itself... Who will lead you? Who will train you? And the answer should come back: It should be the pastors.'

Moral obligation requires practical training and readiness.

It is not enough to own a weapon; one must be trained to use it effectively under stress. Churches and families must function as trained teams.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Just because someone has a weapon... does not mean that that person can use that weapon effectively... Can your family function as a team? Can your church function as a team?'

Aging and changing circumstances demand continual reassessment and training.

Physical abilities decline with age; past proficiency does not guarantee current capability. Believers must honestly evaluate and maintain their defensive skills.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'You cannot now do what you used to do... Your eyesight is not as good... Your reflexes are much slower... If you fail to train, there is no way... you're going to defend your family.'

Scripture References

John 10:11-15

Weaver reads the passage as the foundational text for the series, contrasting the good shepherd who gives his life with the hireling who flees.

1 Samuel 17:34-37

David recounts killing a lion and a bear to protect his sheep, demonstrating that a shepherd must be a fighter.

Proverbs 28:15-16

A wicked ruler is compared to a roaring lion and a ranging bear, connecting tyrannical government to the predators a shepherd must fight.

Psalms 94:20-21

The psalmist questions whether a throne of iniquity that frames mischief by law can have fellowship with God, illustrating governmental wickedness.

Proverbs 28:28

When the wicked rise, men hide themselves, showing the effect of wicked rulers on the righteous.

Proverbs 29:2

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people mourn.

1 Samuel 17:45

David confronts Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, introducing the theme of God as a warrior.

Exodus 13:18

Israel went up 'harnessed' (in battle array) out of Egypt, showing God's military organization of His people.

Exodus 15:1-6

The song of Moses declares the Lord is a man of war, who dashed the enemy in pieces.

Numbers 1:1-4

God commands Moses to number all males able to go to war by their armies, establishing the militia structure.

Numbers 1:44-46

The total number of fighting men was 603,550, indicating a large, organized force.

Numbers 2

The tribes are arranged around the tabernacle with their hosts (armies), showing the order of the camp.

Numbers 10:14-25

The tribes set forward according to their armies, with each tribe having multiple armies under a head.

Numbers 26:2-7

The second census lists families within tribes, showing the clan-based militia structure.

Numbers 1:16

The princes were 'renowned' (called out, appointed) of the congregation, heads of thousands in Israel.

Judges 3:1-3

God left nations in Canaan to teach the generations of Israel war, showing the necessity of training for combat.

Jeremiah 51:20

God calls His people His battle axe and weapons of war, indicating their role in spiritual and physical conflict.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Believers are to know and esteem those who labor among them and are over them in the Lord, referring to pastoral authority.

Hebrews 13:17, 24

Obey those who rule over you, for they watch for your souls and will give account; salute all who have the rule over you.

Isaiah 41:15

God will make His people a sharp threshing instrument to thresh mountains, symbolizing empowerment for battle.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. How does the distinction between a hireling and a shepherd in John 10 apply to modern pastoral ministry and church leadership?

Consider: Weaver emphasizes that a shepherd protects and fights for the sheep, while a hireling flees. This raises questions about the responsibilities of pastors today.

2. In what ways does the biblical portrayal of God as a 'man of war' challenge or affirm your view of self-defense and the use of force?

Consider: Weaver cites Exodus 15:3 and the military organization of Israel to show that God is a warrior.

3. What are the practical implications of the militia model in Numbers for how families and churches should organize for protection today?

Consider: Weaver explains the family-based militia structure of Israel and argues it is the biblical pattern.

4. How do you reconcile the command to 'obey them that have the rule over you' (Hebrews 13:17) with the responsibility to personally ensure your family's safety?

Consider: Weaver teaches that pastors have authority and should lead in training for defense.

5. What steps can fathers take to fulfill their biblical duty to train their families in self-defense, especially if they lack experience?

Consider: Weaver states that fathers are primarily responsible for teaching and training their households.

6. How should churches balance trust in God's protection with the practical need for security teams and armed members?

Consider: Weaver discusses the rise of church protection teams and the need for proper training.

7. In light of Norman Geisler's quote, how do we determine when intervention is morally required versus when it might be unwise or unlawful?

Consider: Weaver quotes Geisler on the moral evil of failing to prevent harm when possible.

8. What does the example of Pastor Jonas Clark training his congregation for battle teach us about the role of the church in times of societal crisis?

Consider: Weaver concludes with the story of Lexington and Clark's preparation of his men.

Applications

Fathers must train their families in self-defense.

Fathers are biblically responsible to teach their wives and children how to protect themselves, including the use of firearms and defensive tactics.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'The husband and the father is biblically the appointed head of the house... it is primarily the father's responsibility to teach and to train his children.'

Pastors should lead in training the congregation for protection.

As under-shepherds who watch for souls, pastors should ensure their flocks are trained to defend themselves and function as a team.

Lecture support: Weaver asks, 'How in the world will a community defend itself... Who will lead you? Who will train you? And the answer should come back: It should be the pastors.'

Believers must be armed and trained, not just armed.

Owning a weapon is insufficient; regular training is necessary to use it effectively under stress and to avoid harming innocents.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'Just because someone has a weapon... does not mean that that person can use that weapon effectively... Can your family function as a team?'

Churches should establish trained protection teams.

Given the reality of threats, churches should have teams that are properly trained to respond to active shooters or invasions.

Lecture support: Weaver notes the high percentage of churches with protection teams and warns that untrained teams may cause more harm.

Continually reassess and maintain defensive skills.

Aging and changing circumstances require honest evaluation of one's abilities and ongoing training to remain effective.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'You cannot now do what you used to do... If you fail to train, there is no way... you're going to defend your family.'

Recognize the moral duty to protect others.

Failing to prevent harm when able is morally equivalent to committing the harm; love for neighbor demands readiness to intervene.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Geisler: 'To permit murder when one could have prevented it is morally wrong... Any man who refuses to protect his wife and children... fails them morally.'

Support the Second Amendment and oppose disarmament.

The right to keep and bear arms is essential for a free state and a check against tyranny; believers should resist laws that infringe on this right.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Pomeroy: '...that government is forbidden by any law or proceeding to invade or destroy the right to keep and bear arms.'

Prepare the next generation for spiritual and physical warfare.

Just as God left enemies to teach Israel war, parents must ensure their children are trained to face both spiritual and physical threats.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Judges 3:1-3, where God left nations 'to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof.'

Study notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

Online Lecture Resources

Scan a code or select the lecture link in the PDF. The original lecture identifiers and destinations are preserved.

Lesson 1: Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd - Part One of Three

Lecture JW01567

[Open the formatted lecture online](https://weaverbiblecollege.com/transcript.php?library=weaverbiblecollege&lecture=JW01567&transcript=ai&pc_view=formatted)



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Lesson 2: Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd - Part Two of Three

Lecture JW01568

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Lesson 3: Pastor John Weaver - Hireling VS Shepherd - Part Three of Three

Lecture JW01569

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Source information

Study material: existing Major Themes, Key Arguments, Scripture References, Discussion Questions, and Applications from the corresponding Weaver Bible College lecture records. Original lecture titles and provenance are retained in those source records.

Layout upgraded September 30, 2026. Original manuscripts, study-guide data, and previous PDFs have not been changed.