

# The Lord is my Shepherd

God's people are referred to as sheep a number of times in the Bible – both in the Old and the New Testaments. Abel, Abraham, Lot, Moses and David are some of the shepherds mentioned in the Bible. The metaphor of a shepherd and sheep is used throughout the Bible.

The Lord knew that we're like sheep in a number of ways and are in need of a shepherd to take care of us. Not any shepherd – The Lord who is our shepherd.

Psalm 23

## 1) Our need of a shepherd

- The Lord uses the analogy of us being sheep because He made us and is very aware of how like sheep we are and in need of a shepherd.
- Sheep tend to wander off and go astray.
  - Isaiah 53: 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.
  - A good shepherd will go find the sheep that has wandered off and will bring it back to the flock.
  - Remember Jesus told a parable of a shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep and went to search for the one lost sheep.
  - We so easily wander away from God and all that He has for us.
- Sheep need provision
  - Sheep generally can't look after themselves and depend on the shepherd to take them to pastures where they can eat.
  - Sheep are generally always hungry and are eager to eat.
  - We need a shepherd who will provide our needs for us.
    - In this day and age when the unemployment rate is at 26.7% don't take your work for granted. Thank God that He's your shepherd who provides for you.
- Sheep need guidance
  - Left to themselves sheep can kill themselves as they blindly follow each other.
    - In 2006 in Turkey about 400 sheep were killed when one tried to jump across a steep ravine and the rest followed.
    - He guides us for His glory and our good.
- Sheep need protection
  - Sheep are vulnerable to predators and are dependent on a shepherd for protection.
  - There are so many spiritual predators in the world today waiting to devour the flock of God.

## 2) The Lord Himself is our shepherd

- At the time of Jesus it was common for people to hire someone to look after their sheep for them. Jesus called them hirelings or hired servants
  - Hirelings aren't true shepherds and won't look after the sheep as a true shepherd would.
  - John 10: 12 – 13 The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.
- However the Lord, YHWH, is our shepherd. He hasn't left hired workers to take care of us.
- Jesus is YHWH who became flesh and He said:
  - John 10: 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
  - John 10: 14 – 16 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father —and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.
- The Lord Himself has come down to shepherd His people, to lay down His life for us so that we might belong to the true shepherd – the Lord Himself.
  - 1 Peter 2: 24 – 25 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- He lay down His life for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, that there will be one flock with one shepherd – Himself.

- His sheep know His voice
  - There's a personal intimate relationship between the sheep and the shepherd.
  - We wondered why His disciples just left their boats, money table, and families to follow Him when He called them. His sheep know His voice.
  - Jesus said in John 10: 27 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
  - Do you know His voice?
  - Are you following Him?
- Those who aren't His sheep don't know His voice and don't believe.
  - John 10: 25 – 26 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep."
- Not only did He lay down His life to bring us back to Himself but He also protects us from the wolves that would come to devour us.
  - He keeps and sustains us in every way.
  - His care of us is complete.
- We should be grateful that we have the Almighty God Himself who is our Good Shepherd and takes care of us.

### **3) The Lord is always presently our shepherd.**

- The Lord is my Shepherd – present tense.
- The present tense is used for habits and routines.
- He was our shepherd in the past, He is our shepherd in the present and He always will be our shepherd.
  - Hence we will always know Him as our present Shepherd throughout every stage of our lives.
- We can rely on Him because He is always present in the present moment.
  - Psalm 46: 1 – 3 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.