

Introduction

As I sit and muse on this meditation of the Lord as the Shepherd, I cannot help but think of the many saints who at this moment are going through storms of such magnitude we wonder how do they manage. I think of a young husband whose wife suddenly had a stroke and is fighting for her life, how does he feel?; a mother whose son was murdered two days ago; those who have sat in a doctor's office to hear the dreadful word "cancer", or the words "I am sorry we did all we could do". What can be said to anyone going through such a whirlpool of waters whether it is emotional, mental, physical, fraternal, economical, or spiritual? It is only a saint who has known these darkneses who can come along side another, and while they are not able to fully experience what the afflicted one is experiencing, they can feel for them.

The Reminiscing of David

David was a man who had known affliction, hated by Saul, broken hearted because of a son, and it seems to me that toward the end of his days he is musing over the paths of his life and taking up his pen writes Psalm 23. I see him as he thinks back to his early days when watching the sheep and the bear and lion came, but he the shepherd protected the sheep. Then he learnt, "The Lord is my Shepherd" caring for me from the savagery of the lion and strength of the bear. There was a day when he went down into the valley of Elah and he faced Goliath. Thinking of that he wrote: "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me".

Time passed and David was anointed King over all Israel, subjecting all those who opposed him. In reviewing those times he could write: "Thou preparest a table before me . . . my cup runneth over".

Then one day David had the desire to build a house for the Lord, but the Lord informed him that not he, but his son, would build the house. David knew he would never see it, never enter its gates, but looking onward he wrote: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever".

I see him now an old man, and in reviewing his past he wrote: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" and with that thought in mind, he writes not only to comfort the saints by similarity of experience but by unveiling the greatness of the Shepherd.

The LORD is my Shepherd

In reading this single phrase some of its richness is seen when emphasis is placed on each word so that we read:

- 1) **The** Lord is my Shepherd which emphasizes His exclusiveness.
 - 2) The **Lord** is my Shepherd which emphasizes His Person.
 - 3) The Lord **is** my Shepherd which emphasizes His permanency as Shepherd.
 - 4) The Lord is **my** Shepherd which emphasizes my relationship to Him.
 - 5) The Lord is my **Shepherd** which emphasizes His character and work.
- 1) **The** Lord is my Shepherd which emphasizes His exclusiveness.
- a) There are various works that God uses angels and archangels for. It was an angel who came to bring the good tidings to man of the birth of the Lord, or several came to minister to the Lord in the garden and it was the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, came to Daniel and Mary. When it comes to the work of shepherding His people, God does not entrust that to any angel, archangel, cherub, or Seraph. It is a work only the Lord can do. Only He has the qualifications to meet the need of all the sheep, at all times, and in all places. This is not a work which he begins when we stray as the lost sheep (Lk. 15:4, 6), it is one that begins the moment we are saved. How precious to listen as He speaks to those who are young: "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. 40:11). To

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the older He says: “Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you . . . I will bear; even I will carry” (Isa. 46:4). He will carry us all the way home, and when we are so tired, He is still there holding us with His arm.

2) The Lord is my Shepherd which emphasises His Person.

- a) It is noticed that the word LORD is all in capitals. That signifies that on some 99% of the times the word is written that way, it is Jehovah. This is one of the great “trunk names of God for associated with it are a series of other terms.
- b) This is the name that indicates:
 - i) His Faithfulness - “They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee” (Psa. 9:10)
 - ii) He is the covenant keeping God who has the power to fulfill His promises. He promised Abraham He would take his people out of the land of Egypt (Gen. 15:14) and He did it alone showing His supremacy over the military might of Pharaoh, the stubborn willful resistance of Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt (Ex. 6:8; 12:12).
 - iii) It indicates His supreme sovereignty, being able to give permission and prohibition. “Ye shall keep my commandments . . . for I am Jehovah” (Lev. 22:31)
 - iv) It indicates Him as the moral governor and Absolute of the universe. To His people He had them remember: “I am the LORD (Jehovah) which sanctify you”. (Lev. 20:8)
 - v) It indicates His immutability. How comforting are the words of Malachi: “I am Jehovah, I change not” (Mal. 3:6). This glorious One is the one “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17), thus He is immutable in Himself, undeviating in His purposes.
 - vi) Such is the greatness of the Lord being Jehovah, when considering Him as my Shepherd I learn that He is also:

Expression	Reason	Reference
The LORD (Jehovah) is my Rock	I am secure in Him	Psa. 18:2
The LORD (Jehovah) is my Shepherd	I am cared by Him	Psa. 23:1
The LORD (Jehovah) is my Light and my Salvation	I can see and am delivered by Him	Psa. 27:1
The LORD (Jehovah) is my Strength	I am empowered by Him	Psa. 28:7
The LORD (Jehovah) is my defence	I am safe in Him	Psa. 94:22
The LORD (Jehovah) is thy Keeper	I am preserved by Him	Psa. 121:5
The LORD (Jehovah) is thy Shade	I am sheltered by Him	Psa. 121:5

- c) Such is the glory of My Shepherd I soon discover I have riches which can only be entered into as we see the expressions it is associated with. These are not all the expressions but only the ones relevant to this meditation.

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Aspect of Jehovah my Shepherd	Title	Truth indicated	Reference
His Character	Jehovah El	The LORD God of truth	Psa. 31:5
His Person	Jehovah Elohim	The LORD God	Gen. 2:4
His Activities	Jehovah Jerith	The LORD who sees and provides	Gen. 22:14
	Jehovah Ropheca\Rapha	The LORD that heals	Ex. 15:26
	Jehovah Mekaddishkem	The LORD God who sanctifies	Lev. 20:8
	Jehovah Asah	The LORD our Maker	Psa. 95:6
	Jehovah El Gemolah	The LORD God of recompence	Jer. 51:56
	Jehovah Shaphat	The Lord who judges	Jud. 11:27
	Jehovah Nissi	The Lord my Banner	Ex. 17:15
	Jehovah Shalom	The Lord our peace	Jud. 6:24
	Jehovah Rohi	The Lord's my shepherd	Psa. 23:1
	Jehovah Misgwab	The Lord our defence	Psa. 94:22

3) The Lord **is** my Shepherd which emphases His permanency as Shepherd.

a) It is very wonderful to realize that even if it did not say the “the Lord”, indicative of His deity, we would still know that the Shepherd was God for several reasons:

i) For Him to be the Shepherd in perpetually as indicated by the word “is”, requires Him having permanency of life, and thank God this is so for:

1. He is the unchanging God (Mal. 3:6), and is the Lord Jesus who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).
2. When Daniel saw the Lord He was revealed as the “Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22).
3. The writer to the Hebrews quotes writing: “thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb. 1:12).
4. He is titled in Revelation as: “The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. 1:8, 11).
5. How comforting to know that David, six hundred years B C, could say: “The Lord **IS** my Shepherd”. Peter, Paul, John, James, etc., all could say the same, the “church fathers could each say it, and today in 2013 I, with every other saint on the face of the earth and all those who ever will be, can assuredly say: “The Lord **is** my Shepherd”

ii) Furthermore, He would have to know the condition of every saint which would indicate His omniscience. The wise man informs us that the shepherd must know the state of his flocks (Prov. 27:23), our Lord informs us: “I know My sheep” (Jn. 10:14). The Lord knew all our ways intellectually, but as He has wrestled with us He has gotten to know our ways by experience. In Genesis the man who is the Lord wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32:24), so He does so often with us. He knows what lies ahead of me and what I have done. I thank God for that for since He knows the temptations and trials which lie ahead, and the struggles I

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experience, He comes to me in His Melchizedek priesthood to strengthen, and when I fall He is there as my Advocate with the Father.

iii) Being the Shepherd to all the sheep at all times requires His omnipresence for every saint irrespective of where they are. It matters not if they are high in an aircraft or on the open seas, if in the cold frozen wastes of Siberia or the tropical islands of the South Pacific, in major cities of the world or a cottage isolated from the nearest neighbor, alone in a prison cell or with a Biblical convention of thousands, each can look upward and say: "The LORD **is** my Shepherd". What a blessedness!

iv) Therefore, having a shepherd who lives in perpetuity and knows every saint and all about them, could not be anyone other than a divine Person. Having said that, I give thanks it does say: "The LORD **is** my Shepherd"

4) The Lord is **my** Shepherd which emphasizes my relationship to Him.

a) When reading Psalms 22 and 23 it is observed that personal pronouns are used extensively in them, but with a difference.

1. In Psalm 22 they refer to the Lord. Note the words: "My" (v.1, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 25); "me" (v.1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 21); "I" (v.2, 6, 10, 14, 17, 22, 25).

2. When turning to Psalm 23 the personal pronouns refer to the believer. Note the words: "My" (v. 1, 3, 5, 6); "I" (v.1, 4, 6); "me" (v.2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

How blessed to know that had there been no other, He suffered to be My Shepherd.

5) The Lord is my **Shepherd** which emphasizes His character and work.

a) The Lord stands unique and without parallel for He is the "Good Shepherd" (Jn. 10:11), the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. 2:25), the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4), and the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20). David walked through the valley of the shadow of death but never went into death (1 Sam. 17:19; 21:9), Jonah went in to the valley of death but it was not physical death (Jon. 2:2-6), but the Lord did not just go into the valley of death, He of His own volition entered death, and He has been glorified in a way none other ever was. God has raised Him from the dead (Heb. 13:20).

I have a Shepherd, One I love so well;
How He has blessed me tongue can never tell;
On the cross He suffered, shed His blood and died,
That I might ever in His love confide.

Refrain:

*Following Jesus, ever day by day,
Nothing can harm me when He leads the way;
Darkness or sunshine, whate'er befall,
Jesus, the Shepherd, is my All in All.*

Pastures abundant doth His hand provide,
Still waters flowing ever at my side,
Goodness and mercy follow on my track,
With such a Shepherd nothing can I lack.

When I would wander from the path astray,
Then He will draw me back into the way;
In the darkest valley I need fear no ill,
For He, my Shepherd, will be with me still.

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When labor's ended and the journey done,
Then He will lead me safely to my home;
There I shall dwell in rapture sure and sweet,
With all the loved ones gathered round His feet.

. . . . *Leonard Weaver*

. . . *Rowan Jennings*