

יהוה

“YHWH-Ro’iy: The Lord Who Shepherds Me”

Introduction-

Ps 23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. KJV

This Psalm contains descriptions of many of the qualities exemplified in the redemptive names of God. “I shall not be in want” = YHWH-Jireh; “Leads me beside the still waters” = YHWH-Shalom; “Restores my soul” = YHWH-Rapha; “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” = YHWH-Nissi; “Thou art with me” = YHWH-Shammah; “leadeth me in the paths of righteousness” = YHWH-Tsqenuw; “anoints my head with oil” = YHWH-Mekaddishkem. But the one we are concentrating on today is YHWH-Ro’iy, the Lord who shepherds me.

If we look at that phrase as it stands in the KJV, we would dissect it in this way:

LORD is (my) shepherd
(noun) v (predicate nominative)

In this construct, shepherd simply becomes a noun which is descriptive of Lord. It is the same as if we were to say “Nikolas is a furniture installer.” Furniture installer becomes a name that replaces Nikolas. Now, if I were to say, “Nikolas installs furniture”, this is a much more active phrase. Now you get a sense in the language itself of what I do. In the Hebrew text there is no corresponding word in the verse for “is”. It would literally read “Lord shepherd”, which is what we actually have in the word YHWH-Ro’iy. But since Hebrew is a dynamic language and not static, these nouns take on action and could be translated as “The Lord shepherds me.”

If we were to dissect that sentence, it would look like this:

LORD shepherds me
(noun) verb (DO)

In this formation, shepherding is what the Lord does and I am the direct recipient of that action! This is why I have written the translation of the name as “The Lord Who Shepherds Me.” It isn’t simple who He is, the Shepherd, but what He does – He Shepherds His flock.

Phil 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: KJV

Rom 14:4

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. NIV

The Father deals with us continually. He continues to work good in us and causes us to stand, even as a faithful shepherd cares for his sheep.

*The analogy of Shepherd and sheep, God and His people, is abundant in Scripture. To understand some of the impact of what it means for the Lord to shepherd us, we are going to look at the nature of sheep, the nature of the shepherd, and finally we will see Jesus as **the** Shepherd.*

I. The Nature of Sheep

A. Wild and domestic animals

Gen 1:25

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. NIV

In the creation, God made a distinction between the animals that would live free and unto themselves and those that would be herded. That sheep have always been domesticated can be seen in the fact that the first prophet in the Bible, Abel, was a shepherd (Gen 4:2).

B. Helpless

Matt 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. NIV

Sheep need a shepherd. Left to their own devices, they scatter and are prey to every calamity.

Ps 44:22

Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. NIV

Sheep are helpless with no natural defenses. They cannot kick, bite, or hide. They can't even run away. Their normal body temperature is 103⁰ F. If they run very long, their thick wool coats will cause their bodies to overheat and they die!

C. Tend to stray

Isa 53:6

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. NIV

Without a shepherd, sheep wander off. Each begins to pursue its own appetite and is quickly led astray.

II. The Nature of the Shepherd

I believe the Lord made sheep to teach us about our dependency on Him. He is the shepherd of His people. He feeds them, protects them, and leads them.

A. He feeds His sheep.

Ps 23:1-2

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, NIV

Mark 6:34

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. **So he began teaching them many things.** NIV

John 21:15-17

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Feed my lambs."**

16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Take care of my sheep."**

17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, **"Feed my sheep."** NIV

The Great Shepherd's great concern is that His flock is fed. If we love Him, we should feed His sheep. Our teaching and sharing of the Word should not come out of some sort of self-righteous grand standing or intellectual one-up-manship, but out of a heart of love for Him.

B. He protects His sheep.

John 10:11-15

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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.

13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-

15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep. NIV

Because they cannot defend themselves, sheep need a shepherd to protect them. The flock suffers the persecution of three primary predators: lions, bears, and wolves.

1 Sam 17:34-35

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock,

35 I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. NIV

Each of these predators symbolize different dangers we will encounter in our Christian walk.

1. Lions

1 Peter 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. NIV

Eph 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. NIV

As our Shepherd, the Lord protects His flock from the attacks of the enemy. We are required to humble ourselves under God's hand (1 Pet 5:6) and be strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10).

2. Bears

Prov 28:15

Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people. NIV

Dan 7:5

"And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' NIV

Rev 13:2

The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. NIV

Bears are wicked men in authority who persecute the believers. We gain the Lord's protection as we submit to His authority and respond to those over us in a Christ-like manner.

3. Wolves

Matt 7:15-20

- 15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.
16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?
17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.
18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.
19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. NIV

Acts 20:29-31

- 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.
30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.
31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. NIV

Of all the predators, wolves are the most dangerous. They run in packs and sneak in among the flock, taking down the strays, the weak, and the infirm. False prophets and teachers have led many a sheep astray and then fed on their meat. We need to make sure that we stay attentive to the Shepherd's voice so that we are not led astray. We need to let the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts so that we do not begin to believe that the grass is greener on the other side.

C. He leads His sheep.

1. Leads them to pasture and water.

Ps 23:2

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, NIV

John 10:3, 8-9

- 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.
9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. NIV

Ezek 34:14-15

- 14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.
15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. NIV

2. Finds the lost.

Ezek 34:16

I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. NIV

Luke 15:1-7

1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.

2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3 Then Jesus told them this parable:

4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. NIV

3. Judges, reproves, and restores.

i. Judges

Ezek 34:17-22

17 "As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats.

18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

19 Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

20 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away,

22 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. NIV

Matt 25:31-34

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. NIV

ii. Reproves

If a lamb continues to go astray, a shepherd will lovingly break one of its legs and carry it while it is healing. Once the lamb's health is restored, he sticks close to the shepherd because they have bonded.

Ps 51:8

Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. KJV

Job 5:17-18 NIV

17 "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

18 For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

iii. Restores

Isa 40:11

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. NIV

Hos 6:1

"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. NIV

III. Jesus the Shepherd

A. The Good Shepherd (Redeemer)

John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. NIV

B. The Great Shepherd (Restorer)

Heb 13:20-21 NIV

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

21 **equip you with everything good for doing his will**, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C. The Shepherd and Overseer of Our Souls (Ruler)

1 Peter 2:25

For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. NIV

D. The Chief Shepherd (Rewarder)

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. NIV

It is the Lord Himself Who shepherds us. He guides us to green pastures and lets us drink the waters of peace. He protects us from the devil, cruel men, and false teachers. He finds us when we are lost, reproves us when we willfully go astray, and restores us to a place of plenty. He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, the Chief Shepherd under whom we serve. Blessed be the Name of the Lord forever! Amen.