

23rd PSALM, 2020 - SECTION 1, PART 1

THE LORD MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23:1

A Psalm of David. The LORD [Yahweh] is my shepherd; I shall not want.

shepherd (rō·‘î)

Verb - To tend a, flock, pasture it, in, to graze, to rule, to associate with

When most of us think about this Psalm WE SEE JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD (I used to)
... Of course, He is. But remember **Jesus was an icon – the personification of the Father.**

- He said to Philip, *‘If you have seen me, you have seen the Father ...’* (John 14:9 Contemporary English Version)
- **John 8:19** Berean Study Bible *‘... If you knew Me, you would know My Father as well.’*
- **Hebrews 1:3** NIV *‘The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being ...’*

DID YOU EVER CONSIDER THE FATHER GOD AS A SHEPHERD? NO? AND YET ...
DAVID HERE STATES THAT YAHWEH – GOD THE FATHER - IS HIS SHEPHERD.
GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SHEPHERD.

GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SHEPHERD.

God didn't just call Himself a Shepherd as an illustration so we could better understand Him ... **BEING A SHEPHERD HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF GOD'S EXPRESSION** – IT SIGNIFIES THE WAY GOD LEADS, FEEDS & LOOKS AFTER HIS PEOPLE. IT'S A PART OF WHO HE IS.

JACOB WAS THE FIRST ONE TO EVER ACKNOWLEDGE GOD – YAHWEH - AS SHEPHERD.
JACOB'S BLESSING OVER JOSEPH WAS **THE FIRST MENTION** OF GOD AS A SHEPHERD -

Genesis 48:15 NASB **SLIDE**

*He blessed Joseph, and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God **who has been my shepherd all my life to this day ...**”*

JACOB REVEALS THAT GOD LED & FED HIM AS A SHEPHERD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE.

Genesis 49:23-24 Good News Translation **SLIDE** (Further blessing **over Joseph** from Jacob)

His [Joseph's] enemies attack him fiercely and pursue him with their bows and arrows.

²⁴ *But his bow remains steady and his arms are made strong by the power of the Mighty God of Jacob, **by the Shepherd, the Protector of Israel.***

One old translation says, *‘From thence where dwells the Shepherd’* that is, Joseph's triumph came from God, who is the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel. **THE SHEPHERD IS ALSO ONE WHO PROTECTS US ...**

In Psalm 80:1 Yahweh is called **‘The Shepherd of Israel’** -

Psalm 80:1 English Standard Version

*Give ear, oh **Shepherd of Israel**, You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!*

SLIDE DAVID SAID, THE LORD IS MY 'SHEPHERD**'**

SO WE SEE DAVID ALSO HAD THIS GREAT REVELATION OF GOD AS HIS SHEPHERD.

David saw that God – Yahweh - is not only **the Creator of the World** ... not only **the Law-Giver** ... etc **BUT THAT HE IS ACTUALLY A SHEPHERD TO HIS PEOPLE, ONE WHO ... LOVES ... LEADS ... CARRIES ... CARES ... COMFORTS ... PROVIDES ... PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE -- ALL THE DAYS OF THEIR LIVES HERE ON THE EARTH.**

NB: PSALM 23 **IS NOT WRITTEN ABOUT THE AFTER LIFE BUT ABOUT, THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES HERE ON THE EARTH** (**Psalm 23:6** '... All the days of my life ...')

DAVID THE SHEPHERD ... UNDERSTOOD 'GOD THE SHEPHERD'

**DAVID HIMSELF HAD BEEN A SHEPHERD ... IT'S AS THOUGH DAVID RECOGNISED
GOD'S HEART FOR HIS PEOPLE IN THE WAY HE HIMSELF TENDED & LOOKED AFTER HIS
SHEEP**

*It's like **God spoke to David** after he had been caring for his sheep saying –*

Hey David, see how much you love your sheep!

Well, that's how I am with My people ... but even more.

See how you know them by name ... their personalities ... their idiosyncrasies ...

And how you've grown to like them ... just as they are ...

Well, that's how I am with My people ... but even more.

See how much you care for them ... you feel for them ... you want to help them ... you love to be with them and protect them ... how much you look out for them to make sure they are well ...

See how much you tend to their wounds ... how much you put up with their self-will and independence ... how much you go out of your way to bring one stray back to the fold ...

Well, that's how I am with My people ... but even more.

See how willing you are to protect them at the cost of your own life ...

Well, that's how I am with My people ... but even more.

WOW,' SAYS DAVID, 'JUST AS I'VE BEEN WITH MY BELOVED SHEEP ...

SO GOD IS THE SAME WITH ME ... AND EVEN MORE ...

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD ... He has a tender heart toward me ...

He dwells with His sheep ... He perpetually leads His sheep ... He constantly feeds His sheep

DAVID ALSO SOOTHED & COMFORTED HIS SHEEP ...

I believe he grew to be a great musician on the hills of Israel ... serenading the sheep ... praising God ...

**SO GOD SAID, 'I WANT THE PEOPLE THAT LEAD MY PEOPLE
TO BE SHEPHERDS TO MY PEOPLE ... JUST AS I AM.'**

Jeremiah 3:15

Then I will give you *shepherds after My own heart*, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

SO GOD CHOSE DAVID BECAUSE DAVID WAS AN ACTUAL SHEPHERD TO SHEEP & HAD **THE HEART OF A SHEPHERD ...**

Psalm 78:70-71 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

He chose David His servant and [He] took him from the sheepfolds; ⁷¹ from tending the ewes He brought him to be shepherd of His people Jacob, of Israel His inheritance.
(See 1 SAMUEL 16:7-13)

GOD CHOSE DAVID TO LEAD ISRAEL ... NOT IN SPITE OF HIM BEING SHEPHERD ... BUT BECAUSE HE WAS A SHEPHERD ...

DAVID'S SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP WAS IN THE FIELDS OF ISRAEL LOOKING AFTER NEEDY SHEEP ... CARING FOR THEM ... COMFORTING THEM ...

SHEEP WITHOUT SHEPHERDS

YET WHEN JESUS CAME ... AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD (John 10:11,14), HE LOOKED OUT OVER THE LAND OF ISRAEL, GOD'S PEOPLE, AND SAW THEM AS *sheep not having a shepherd ...*

Matthew 9:36 Berean Literal Bible **SLIDE**

And having seen the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were wearied and cast away, as sheep not having a shepherd.

THEY HAD LEADERS / TEACHERS OF LAW / BUT no shepherds ...

TODAY MANY PASTORS DO NOT HAVE A HEART FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

*So it is today ... many, many of God's people remain unfed ... uncared for ... driven, not led ... used up and discarded ... unloved and unwanted.
So many go astray and are taken by wolves ... and of course there is NO SHEPHERD TO LEAVE THE 99 AND SEEK THEM OUT & BRING THEM BACK ...*

MANY PASTORS HAVE TAKEN IT UPON THEMSELVES TO BE CHIEF PASTOR

I've seen pastors of churches burn out trying to be THE SHEPHERD EVERYBODY NEEDED.

A pastor is not called to try and be the chief shepherd but to watch over God's flock ...

SLIDE A TRUE GOD-CHOSEN PASTOR KNOWS HE'S NOT THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

A TRUE GOD-CHOSEN PASTOR WILL ALWAYS LEAD YOU TO THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

A TRUE GOD-CHOSEN PASTOR WILL WATCH OVER YOU ON BEHALF OF THE CHIEF SHEPHERD

1 Peter 5:2-4 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

Be shepherds (poimane) of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness;
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. (Chief Shepherd = Archipoimenos)

Note carefully whose flock it is - **IT IS GOD'S FLOCK** ...

And ministers are called by God to only be **under-shepherds** (verb) to God's flock -

NOT TO OWN THE FLOCK OR TAKE IT ON AS THEIR OWN

NO MAN OR WOMAN OWNS THEIR FELLOWSHIP ... THEY ARE UNDER-SHEPHERDS.

A PASTOR IS A SHEPHERD ... BUT NOT THE SHEPHERD

Hebrews 13:20 ... That great Shepherd of the sheep ...

TODAY, JESUS IS THE GREAT SHEPHERD & IT'S HIM WE NEED TO BE SHEPHERDED BY.

WE SHOULD RECEIVE GOD'S DESIGNATED MINISTERS WITH HONOUR, BUT NEVER LEAN ON THEM. LEAN ON JESUS ... HE'S YOUR GOOD SHEPHERD.

A TRUE GOD-CHOSEN PASTOR WILL NOT LEAD YOU INTO RELIGION BUT INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHIEF SHEPHERD.

THE LORD JESUS HASN'T GONE BACK TO HEAVEN AND LEFT YOU IN THE HANDS OF A MINISTER ...

NO! JESUS IS WITH YOU PERSONALLY & THE MINISTER IS THERE TO TEACH, ENCOURAGE AND ENHANCE THAT.

SLIDE DAVID SAID, 'THE LORD' IS MY SHEPHERD

DAVID DIDN'T SAY ... **THE PROPHET SAMUEL IS MY SHEPHERD**, EVEN THOUGH SAMUEL ORDAINED HIM & BROUGHT GOD'S CALLING TO HIM ...

HE DIDN'T SAY **THE PROPHET NATHAN IS MY SHEPHERD**, EVEN THOUGH NATHAN HELPED GUIDE & CORRECT HIM ...

HE SAID, THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The problem is ... many of us have been looking to the under-shepherds and expecting them to be THE GREAT SHEPHERD, AND THEY WILL ALWAYS LET US DOWN ...

Revelation 7:17 Berean Study Bible

For the Lamb in the centre of the throne **will be their shepherd**. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

SLIDE DAVID SAID, THE LORD IS 'MY' SHEPHERD

THIS SHEPHERD IS MY **PERSONAL COMPANION THROUGH LIFE**

John 10:14 NIV **SLIDE**

I am the good shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.

HE KNOWS YOU PERSONALLY ... INDIVIDUALLY

YOU ARE NOT JUST ONE OF A CROWD

THE LORD IS YOUR PERSONAL SHEPHERD

As Christians we know the Lord is **OUR** Shepherd ...

But like David, do we know that Jesus is our **Personal Shepherd** ... One who is with **'ME'** through all life's joys and tragedies?

King David said, 'The Lord is **MY** shepherd ...'

THIS GOES BEYOND CHURCH LIFE ... THIS IS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ...

In church life, it's so easy to feel like I'm just **A PART OF 'THE WHOLE'** and not an important individual **MYSELF** – to get swallowed up in the crowd and not see myself as a separate person whom Jesus loves, speaks to, and wants to hang out with.

Years ago I went to a mega Church in Sydney just so I would escape God's gaze.

IT'S EASY TO GET LOST & LOSE YOURSELF IN A CROWD OF CHRISTIANS ...

DO YOU KNOW JESUS KNOWS YOU PERSONALLY?

DO YOU FEEL IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO HAVE THE GREAT SHEPHERD'S PERSONAL ATTENTION?

David knew His Lord personally, one on one. He knew He cared for **HIM** as an individual. So it is with you ... Even though you are a part of 'the whole', the Lord wants you to know **YOU ARE A SIGNIFICANT PERSON OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO HIM**. He wants you to know **YOU** are known of HIM ... **THAT HE CARES ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY ... THAT HE'S THERE FOR YOU PRIVATELY ... THAT HE UNDERSTANDS YOU COMPREHENSIVELY ...**

HE KNOWS YOU BY NAME ... HE KNOWS YOUR PERSONALITY ... HE ACTUALLY LIKES YOU – ALL YOUR IDIOSYNCRASIES ... ECCENTRICITIES ... QUIRKS ... FOIBLES ... WEIRDNESS ...

YOU ARE NOT JUST ONE OF A CROWD ...

SAY, 'THE LORD IS **MY SHEPHERD'.**

SOMETIMES WE TRY & HIDE FROM THE SHEPHERD ...

IT IS SO EASY TO HIDE IN THE CROWD. Sometimes you want to hide in the crowd ...

Years ago, I enrolled my young teenage daughter into a Christian school.

I had a meeting with the Principal, Stewart Cadel, a lovely, caring man.

Before I left, he said, 'Let me show you around the school before you leave'.

It just happened to be lunch time and all the students were out of class in the school grounds.

So, as Stewart led me through the crowds of kids I heard him talk to them.

The first thing I noticed was he called them by their Christian names. He knew them all.

And as he spoke gently to them his face lit up with a smile or a compassionate instruction.

'Katie, where's your hat?'

'Are you ready for your recital James?'

'Congratulations on your great score Shirley' etc ...

HE KNEW THEM & HE KNEW WHAT CONCERNED THEM ...

I was amazed at how the students responded to his kindness ... his love ... HIS SHEPHERDING ...

I said to myself ... 'This man is a true shepherd. He knows his sheep and they know him. They hear his voice'.

SLIDE I SHALL NOT WANT

THIS SHEPHERD HIMSELF IS MY PERSONAL PROVISION

The Lord is MY Shepherd ... I don't want for anything ... HE PROVIDES EVERYTHING WE NEED IN LIFE. You have the Shepherd, You have everything you need. **Don't SEEK THINGS, SEEK HIM.**

When my daughters were little, they didn't need any money at all. Why ..?

Because they had their father. I provided everything they needed,

JUST LIKE A SHEPHERD DOES FOR HIS SHEEP.

They could have said, 'CHRIS IS MY FATHER / SHEPHERD ... I SHALL NOT WANT'.

They didn't have to work for food ... I fed them ...

They didn't have to pay rent ... I housed them ...

THEY HAD ME AS THEIR FATHER & EVERY NEED was TAKEN CARE OF.

SO IT IS WITH THIS SHEPHERD.

Isaiah 40:11 SLIDE

*He will **feed** His flock like a shepherd (provision);*

*He will **gather** the lambs with His arm (nurture and special attention),*

*And **carry** them in His bosom (comfort and intimacy),*

*And **gently lead** those who are with young (CONSIDERATION and understanding).*

HE UNDERSTANDS OUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS & MINISTERS TO US ACCORDINGLY