



The Eternal Shepherd

Index

1. The Shepherd who loved His sheep
2. The Shepherd who talks to His sheep
3. The Shepherd seeks and goes after His confused and wayward sheep
4. The Good Shepherd warns his sheep of false shepherds
5. The Great Shepherd of the sheep
6. The Chief Shepherd shall appear

Preface

Throughout the Old Testament, God has called Himself the Shepherd of Israel. In the New Testament, He is seen as the Messiah and the Shepherd of His heavenly people, the

Assembly. His shepherding consists of many different ways or attributes, which are seen in His relationship with Israel, then physically manifested in Jesus Christ. The nature of God is made known to us in His revealed characteristics as shown here: kindnesses, mercies, gentleness, perseverance, watchfulness, longsuffering, caring, and an undying love for His sheep. They are not discussed in great detail in this booklet because if they were, this would instead be a book.

The perfect standing of the sheep of Christ before God is founded on Christ's vicarious work (dying and suffering judgment for our sins). And through His completed work, His sheep enter into eternal rest of spirit and soul. Entering into this rest is accomplished by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Our faith and its increase in what God has told us is what frees the Holy Spirit to bring us into the benefit of this gift of God.

At the end of each chapter is a hymn; each one corresponds to the chapter in which it is written. The numbered hymns are from Spiritual Songs.

1. The Shepherd who loved His sheep

Israel

God chose Israel from among all nations of the earth to be a separate people unto Himself (Deuteronomy 14:2; 32:9-12; 1 Chronicles 16:13; Ezekiel 20:5; 34:11-12). He chose them to be a testimony to all the world, so that they could marvel at what God would do for Israel (Exodus 34:10). Furthermore, God chose them to be the people who would bring the Messiah upon the earth; the prophetic Scriptures revealed His coming appearance throughout many centuries (Genesis 22:18; Numbers 24:17, 19; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19; 2 Samuel 7:16; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Micah 5:2). Scripture also shows us the heart of God

toward Israel in that He loved His people and brought them out of the land of Pharaoh, King of Egypt (Malachi 1:1-2; Deuteronomy 7:7-8); and this was acknowledged by the nations (2 Chronicles 2:11; 9:8). God made his intentions clear regarding their future as His beloved people (Jeremiah 29:11).

The Church

Those who have put their faith in Christ as their Savior, comprise the church (Ephesians 5:25). God in Christ, came into this world in human form, to gather a people unto Himself (Ephesians 5:25). He called these people His sheep (John 10:27). As God chose Israel out of all nations of the earth to be His earthly people, likewise, He chose every person that is to be a sheep of Jesus and gave them to Him (John 6:37).

Christ has loved those who have and will become His sheep even unto the end (death) (John 13:1).

This love for His own, the church, is the same as it was for Israel - an everlasting love for all eternity (Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 5:25). His love was not only in words, for He came into this world to seek a people to be fully unto Himself. He did not come for righteous people (before God no one is righteous, Romans 3:10, 23) but for those who were far from God, whom He would seek out, and make the sheep of His fold (Luke 19:10). These recovered sheep would follow only Him, as the only true Shepherd of their souls.

Jesus was the good, tried and true Shepherd. He was like no other person in this world. He came into this world for the distinct purpose of dying for all people (1 John 2:2), benefiting eternally those who would believe on Him and become His sheep. This entailed giving His life as a ransom for His sheep, which meant He would bear the wrath of God in judgment and death (Isaiah 53:4-6, 12; Mark 10:45; John 3:16; 10:11, 14; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

This love that He has for His sheep has brought them into a place of receiving His gift of eternal life. This life the sheep have been given is totally under the Shepherd's care and protection (Philippians 1:6). No one can take this life from His sheep, nor will they ever lose it (John 10:28-29). As the Shepherd of His sheep, His desire and request to His Father, before He went to the cross, was that His sheep would be with Him where He is, forever (John 17:24). No prayer the Son prayed to the Father would the Father ever refuse (Psalms 2:8; John 3:35; 13:3; 16:15; 17:7).

Jesus gave up the riches of His eternal existence with His Father, to become a servant in this world. He did so to give life where there was none and bring His sheep into the riches of His kingdom (2 Corinthians 8:9). God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19), because the Father and the Son are One (John 10:30), and their purpose is fully One.

To complete and seal this eternal work of the true Shepherd, He laid down His life for the sheep; enduring the wrath of God for them (dying in their place) (John 10:11, 15). However, because no sin was in Him (the power of death is in sin, Roman 6:23), He had power over death to take His life up again (John 10:18). Therefore, He arose from the grave forevermore (John 20:16-20; Revelation 1:18). To insure that His sheep would be with Him forever, He sent the Holy Spirit to seal His sheep unto Himself until the day of redemption (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).

The love the Shepherd has for His sheep is unlike any other love we could know. His love is divine, giving without receiving and revealing the divine truth of His kingdom. It is an ever enduring love and a victorious suffering love that extended even unto His death on the cross. His love is seen in it's purpose; it reveals that He came into this world to die for His enemies (Romans 5:6, 8, 10) and to suffer the penalty of God's awful judgment that was rightfully theirs

(Isaiah 53:4-6). This means that the Shepherd came into this world to insure that no one has to be lost eternally (being eternally apart from God) unless they choose to be. He paid for all their sins (past, present, and future) by the shedding of His blood on the cross (Luke 22:20; Colossians 1:20).

This free gift of God is given to us (free to us, at great cost to Jesus) is without any works on our part, without money and without us paying a price (Isaiah 55:1; 2 Corinthians 9:15). And finally, the Shepherd who is love, came into this world to make his enemies (those who live outside of His kingdom) His friends, so they could sit in heavenly places in Him (Ephesians 2:6). He has given the sheep of His eternal pasture, a place with Himself to reign in His kingdom (2 Timothy 2:11-13; Revelations 5:9-10).

We'll sing of the Shepherd that died,
That died for the sake of the flock;

His love to the utmost was tried,
But firmly endured as a rock.

When blood from a victim must flow,
This Shepherd by pity was led
To stand between us and the foe,
And willingly died in our stead.

Our song then forever shall be
Of the Shepherd who gave Himself thus:
No subject's so glorious as He,
No theme so affecting to us.

Of Him and His love will we sing,
His praises our tongues shall employ,
Till heavenly anthems we bring
In yonder bright regions of joy.

T. Kelly #103

2. The Shepherd who talks to His sheep

“My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me” (John 10:27).

The Shepherd who loves His sheep also talks to them. He has brought them into intimate fellowship with Himself (1 Corinthians 1:9). In this place of intimacy He has taken them into His confidence and revealed the eternal plans of His Father (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). He speaks to His sheep and makes known to them His heart and plans (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). As sheep are easily confused, He has insured their stability by giving them His mind so they will not be confused or undecided in how to follow Him (1 Corinthians 2:16).

The Shepherd promised to give His sheep the spirit of truth (John 16:13). This He did on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) when the Holy Spirit was given to them. From that time forward the true Shepherd's voice could be followed into all truth concerning Himself. The

truths revealed by the Holy Spirit are the life-giving food for His sheep. Only by going through the Shepherd (who is the Door of the sheep fold), will His sheep continue to eat in His pasture and live by His life-giving diet (John 10:7, 9).

Sheep cannot live without water as water is life-giving. The Shepherd owns all the fountains of living water. As His sheep come to Him, He freely gives this living water (the Holy Spirit) to them (John 7:37-39). It is this water that brings the sheep into full dependence on the Shepherd and makes them completely His sheep (Romans 8:9). All other cisterns that are owned by others, which appear to be like the Shepherd's, are not life-giving.

The living water gives the sheep discernment of truth, strength, and the ability to hear the Shepherd's voice (John 16:13). This is true even when a sheep has drifted far from the flock (John 10: 4-5). His sheep are not confused, as to who their true Shepherd is. Even in a lost and

wayward place, inwardly, a sheep of His longs for their Shepherd's voice. Lot was such a man 2 Peter 2:6-9; also the Apostle Peter found himself in a far and wayward place from the Lord Jesus. Jesus prophesied to him that he was going to fall and go astray before it happened (Matthew 26:31-33; Luke 22:31-34). At the same time, Jesus prophesied that Peter would repent from going astray and return to follow Jesus again (Luke 22:32). Peter denied it, and said, "*...Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny You!...*" (Matthew 26:35). Later that same evening as Jesus had prophesied, Peter denied Him 3 times (Matthew 26:57-58, 69-70, 71-72, 73-75). At that point Peter became remorseful; then remembering the words Jesus had spoke to him, he wept bitterly (Matthew 26:75). Many days later, after Peter's recovery, he became the chief spokesman of the apostles, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40).

The Shepherd, in His desire to be one with His sheep, fulfilled this desire by coming to live in them on the day of Pentecost, and continues to do so till this present day (John 14:23). This act of the Shepherd has brought the sheep into absolute oneness in fellowship with Himself.

The Shepherd's voice is found only in the Living Water (the Holy Spirit). This Living Water will guide, teach and declare to His sheep all things that are His, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you”* (John 16:13-15). These things are necessary for the sheep to know, so they may have full knowledge of the Shepherd's mind and leading. The truths the Living Water brings, to quench the thirst of

the sheep, lead only into the true Shepherd's pasture. The true Shepherd is the doorway into His pasture (John 10:7, 9). All who enter in must go through Him. *"I am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture"* (John 10:9).

As sheep enter into the Shepherd's pasture, He tells them of their eternal inheritance in the heavens (1 Peter 1:4) and of the glories of His Father's house (1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 12).

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down thou weary one, lay down thy head upon My breast"
I came to Jesus as I was, weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place, and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
The living water to a thirsty one, stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus and I drank of that life giving stream,
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;

Look unto Me: thy morn shall rise and all thy day be bright,”
I looked to Jesus, and I found in Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

J. B. Dykes #336

3. The Shepherd seeks and goes after His confused and wayward sheep

“...If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety nine and go to the mountain to seek the one who is straying?” (Matthew 18:12).

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Israel

God has chosen the people of Israel for his peculiar earthly people, above all people of the earth (Psalms 135:4). However, they have rejected Him as their God (1 Samuel 8:7; Ezekiel 16:15-34; Hosea 4:6-19; John 19:15-16). He has not, however, permanently rejected them as His

people; His love for them has not diminished or been lost. He continued to reach out to them as His lost sheep because He is their Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:11-22). *But to Israel he says: “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people — A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face...”* Isaiah 65:2-3). He promised them a deliverer, even in their rebellion. He then sent David’s Son (Matthew 21:9) (the Messiah, Jesus Christ, their rightful King) as their Shepherd, to recover them and bless them (Ezekiel 34:23-31; Matthew 10:1-8; 15:21-26). They rejected Him, and for His kingly crown, they crowned Him with a crown of thorns and nailed Him to a tree. Yet He will come again in a future day and deliver them from their enemies, and will set up His kingdom and be their King to rule over them (Ezekiel 37:24-28). God has said to them: *“You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God, says the Lord God”* Ezekiel 34:31).

When Jesus was working the works of His Father, to recover Israel, He told the Syro-Phoenician woman, a Gentile who came to Him, *“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matthew 15:24).

When He sent out His 12 disciples to teach the kingdom of heaven, He told them not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans but to Israel alone (Matthew 10:5). But Israel rejected their King and Shepherd, *“He came to His own (His Jewish brethren) and His own did not receive Him”* (John 1:11). Therefore, God set Israel aside for now (Romans 11:1, 25-27), and turned to the Gentiles so that all who would believe Him could become His sheep (John 10:16; Romans 11:11-12).

The Church
consisting of Jew and Gentile

In this present dispensation, the sheep of Christ are everyone the Father has given to the

Son (John 6:37; 10:29). These are the sheep that Jesus came into this world to seek and save (John 13:18; 15:16). They are sheep which were not of the fold of Israel (John 10:16).

Jesus is the good Shepherd; He knows every one of His sheep (John 10:14; Galatians 4:9) and His sheep know Him and they follow Him and another they will not follow (John 10:5, 14). Before they became His sheep they had all gone astray and were far from the kingdom of God.

Because all of mankind has lived apart from the love of God and outside God's kingdom, the true Shepherd came to call all sinners unto Himself (Matthew 9:13; Romans 3:10-18; 1 Peter 2:25).

Scripture shows us that the Son has always been with His Father, from eternity past to eternity future (Micah 5:2; John 17:5; Revelation 1:10-18; 22:13). He is and has been in Oneness with His Father forever (John 10:30). As the Father desires that none in His creation should perish, the Son, and true Shepherd gave up the

riches of heaven to become a servant to His sheep (John 13:12-17). This includes Jew and Gentile alike.

The voice of the Shepherd leads His sheep out of the kingdom of darkness (this world) and into His kingdom of light (Colossians 1:12-14). The sheep brought into His kingdom are recipients of His eternal glory, forever; they shall never be taken into judgment or be separated from Him (John 5:24; 10:28).

He came to give life (because all mankind is dead in trespasses and sins Ephesians 2:1) that all might have His abundant life, which is revealed in this way “Christ in you” (John 10:10; Colossians 1:27). All whom He has sought and will seek, He has and will find.

I was a wandering sheep, I did not love the fold,

I did not love my Shepherd's voice,

I would not be controlled.

I was a wayward child, I did not love my home,

I did not love my Father's voice, I loved afar to roam

The Shepherd sought His sheep,
The Father sought His child,
He followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er deserts waste and wild;
He found me nigh to death, Famished, and faint, and lone;
He bound me with the chains of love,
He saved the wand'ring one.

Jesus my Shepherd is, 'Twas He that loved my soul,
'Twas He that washed me in His blood,
'Twas He that made me whole;
'Twas He that sought the lost, that found the wand'ring sheep;
'Twas He that brought me to the flock, 'Tis He that still doth keep.

No more a wandering sheep, I love to be controlled;
I love My tender Shepherd's voice,
I love the peaceful fold:
No more a wayward child, I seek no more to roam;
I love My heavenly Father's voice;
I love, I love His home.

J. Zundel #443

4. The good Shepherd warns His sheep of false shepherds

“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20)

The sheep of Israel

Israel suffered the fruit of being led by many false shepherds as seen in these Scriptures, Jeremiah 2:15-22; 23:1-2; 50:6-7, 17; Ezekiel 34:1-10; Micah 3:1-12. The continual warning of the prophets against the false shepherds in Israel is seen throughout Scripture. The discernment needed by the sheep to not be led astray by false shepherds was given to Israel in Isaiah 8:20. In the midst of Israel’s rebellion and suffering, the prophets of God prophesied of a true Shepherd who would come from the house of David. He would bring the righteousness of God to Israel (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 34:23-31).

This good Shepherd from the house of David came exactly when the prophet Daniel had prophesied (Daniel 9:20-26; John 10:11). As prophesied (Psalms 22), the false shepherds of Israel not only rejected the good Shepherd, but they had Him crucified (John 19:6).

The church, the sheep of the good Shepherd
the witness of truth

“It is written; man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4). “We (apostles) are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:6).

The good Shepherd warned His sheep of soon-coming false prophets who would come in sheep’s clothing, but were ravening wolves. Many false prophets would be seen in the future (Matthew 7:15; 24:5). He told them what the fruit of their ways would produce, and how to know

them, (by their fruit) (Matthew 7:16-20). False shepherds do not honor the good Shepherd's word or those that are His under-shepherds (the apostles). Their fruit is of Satan and man. He also told us what their final end would be. (Matthew 7:21-23). However, the sheep of the good Shepherd follow only Him (John 10:5).

The good Shepherd shows His sheep the true path of following Himself in Matthew 23:7-12 and in Luke 14:26-27.

Under shepherds of the good Shepherd

The under shepherds (apostles), warned the sheep throughout their labor in Christ of wolves in sheep's clothing, especially in the church (Acts 20:26-31; 2 Timothy 1:15). These false shepherds come teaching, preaching, counseling and leading in many other ways, to a pathway not of the good Shepherd. Their false message is seen as follows: giving a new revelation of God (1 Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelations 22:18-19); making the Shepherd's

word of little or no effect by changing it and putting the word of men in its place (Mark 7:1-13); and allowing the culture of the world to rule in the church through philosophy (Colossians 2:8). These wolves deny the Lord and speak evil of the truth (2 Peter 2:1-14); they are led by evil spirits (wolves) in sheep's clothing (1 John 4:1); and these same spirits are found in the professing church today (Jude 4, 8, 10-13, 16-19). Other deceivers walk after religious flesh to the destruction of themselves and those who follow them (Philippians 3:17-19).

Creation fallen under Satan's power.

Light obscured, sons of Adam firmly bound.

In depths of gloom without hope are held.

In this darkness, religion abounds, deception is found

False shepherds hidden in sheep's clothing

Sheep not following God's word are their prey

Powerless in sin's grip we could not see,

Rescued by Thee Lord Jesus wisdom of God

Good Shepherd, we long to be with Thee.

D. Neely

5. The Great Shepherd of the Sheep

“ Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

As seen in these verses, the great Shepherd of His sheep that began a good work in them will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). It is His Spirit that works in His sheep, both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). To insure the success of the sheep, the blood of Christ was shed, which brought them into an everlasting

covenant. This covenant is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit which has been given to them. He seals them into the great Shepherd's fold, completely and forever (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

The sheep have peace with God; not only because the Shepherd's blood (shed for them) has paid for their sins, but also because they have an eternal High Priest and Mediator who is perpetually their Advocate before God (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:14-28; 8:1-6). Because the great Shepherd is the High Priest and Mediator for the sheep, they have eternal rest (Hebrews 4:9-10; 14-16). He will keep His sheep in His fold in total safety and no one can take them from His care (John 10: 27-28).

A sheep of the great Shepherd may well endure much tribulation and distress in this world. The cost to the sheep who lives unto the great Shepherd is seen in this Scripture: *“Yes and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).* There

is only one answer to this hardship, *“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19).* For a sheep of Christ who continues to do good (believe and follow what God has told Him), the promise of the great Shepherd is *“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9).* Because this great Shepherd has been given all power in heaven and on earth, His promises are without failure (Matthew 28:18).

In His supremacy, the great Shepherd delivers His sheep from the world, the flesh and the devil; this deliverance is found in His grace. His love works through His Spirit to bring His sheep along the pathway of His grace. The sheep recognize and respond to His voice, which reflects His grace, and that is how they know Him. To accomplish His purpose in and for the sheep, His grace brings them through and

away from many dangerous wrong paths. His grace recovers a sheep wandering from the fold. The great Shepherd of the sheep is seen in the manifestation of His grace as He keeps His flock and will deliver them safe unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Grace taught our wand'ring feet
To tread the heav'nly road;
And new supplies each hour we meet
While trav'ling home to God's fold.

'Twas grace that wrote each name
In life's eternal book;
'Twas grace that gave the spotless Lamb
Who all our sorrows took.

Grace saved us from the foe,
Grace taught us how to pray;
And God will ne'er His grace forgo,
Till we have won the day.

May grace, free grace, inspire
Our souls with strength divine;
May every thought to God aspire,
And well deserves the praise.

Anon #47

6. The Chief Shepherd shall appear

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Peter 5:4).

“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

The Chief Shepherd has promised His sheep upon leaving this world, that He will come back for them and take them unto Himself. *“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white*

apparel, who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11). This same promise of the Chief Shepherd is repeated by the under-shepherd, the Apostle Paul. “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall

always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The desired fulfillment and heavenly hope of this promise is in the heart of every one of His sheep. This is not a fabricated hope or a misaligned hope, but one that is promised by the Chief Shepherd to His sheep.

“And behold, I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Revelation 22:12-13). Again, “He who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20).

Lord Jesus, come, Nor let us longer roam.

Afar from Thee, and that bright place

Where we shall see Thee face to face;

Lord Jesus, come.

Lord Jesus, come, Thine absence here we mourn;
No joy we know a part from Thee,
No sorrow in Thy presence see;
Lord Jesus, come.

Lord Jesus, come, And claim us as Thine own;
With longing heart the path we tread,
Which Thee to heav'nly glory led;
Come Saviour, come.

Lord Jesus, come, And take Thy people home;
That all Thy flock, so scattered here,
With Thee in glory may appear;
Lord Jesus, come.

G. Tremblay #324

D. Neely

11-29-10