

# **“I Am the Good Shepherd”**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

A. Shepherding is among the oldest occupations, beginning about 5,000 years ago in Asia Minor. Sheep were kept for their milk, meat and wool. Sheep were integrated in the family farm along with other animals such as chickens and pigs. To maintain a large flock, the sheep must be able to move from pasture to pasture. This required the development of an occupation separate from that of the farmer. The duty of shepherds was to keep their flock intact, protect it from predators and guide it to market areas in time for shearing. In ancient times, shepherds also commonly milked their sheep, and made cheese from this milk.

Unlike farmers, shepherds were wage earners, paid to watch the sheep of others. Shepherds lived apart from society, and were nomadic. It was mainly a job for single men. Shepherds were most often the younger sons of farming peasants who did not inherit any land. In other societies, each family would have a family member to shepherd its flock, often a child or an old man who couldn't help much with harder work.

Shepherds would normally work in groups either looking after one large flock, or each bringing their own and merging their responsibilities. They would live in small cabins, often shared with the sheep, and would buy food from local communities. Shepherding developed only in rugged, mountainous areas.

### B. Old Testament Prophecy of the Shepherd

1. Isa. 40:9-11; Jer. 31:10; Ez. 34:23

### C. New Testament Revelation of Jesus as the Shepherd

1. John 10:1-16; 1Peter 5:4; Heb. 13:20

## **I. JESUS IS OUR SHEPHERD**

A. He gave His life for us - Zech. 13:1, 6-7; Matt. 26:31; John 10:11, 15

1. By this, He offers eternal life to His sheep - John 10:28; 1John 5:11-13

B. He takes care of us - John 10:3; 2Thes. 2:13-14

1. He gathers us into one fold - John 10:16; Eph. 2:11-22

C. As our Good Shepherd:

1. He knows us - John 10:14, 27; 2Tim. 2:19

2. He feeds us - John 10:9; Psalm 23:1-2

3. He guides us - John 10:3-4; Psalm 23:3

4. He cherishes us tenderly - Isa. 40:11; Eph. 5:25-27

5. He protects and preserves - Jer. 31:10; Jude 24

## **II. WE ARE HIS SHEEP**

A. Heed His voice - John 10:2-3

1. His sheep follow Him because they know His voice - John 10:4

2. Jesus expects His sheep to heed His voice - Luke 6:46

3. We are called by His spokesmen - John 13:20; Acts 2:42; 1Cor. 14:37

B. Hold to His flock - John 10:16; Eph. 4:4

1. A unified flock - John 17:20-23; Eph. 4:1-3

C. Help His shepherds

1. 1Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17, 28; Heb. 13:17; 1Thes. 5:12-13

Conclusion:

A. Promises for those who follow Jesus our Shepherd - Rev. 7:13-17

B. Warnings for those who will not follow the Shepherd

1. John 10:26-27; Matt. 13:41-43, 25:31-34, 41