

A SHEEP IN GOD'S FLOCK

Why does God compare His people to Sheep?

- **Sheep Are "Clean" Animals.** This means that they are acceptable to God. Our acceptance comes only through the merits of Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Ephesians. 1:6](#)) The nature of the creature determines its appetite, and it is the nature of the sheep to desire the pasture and not the "garbage dump." [2 Tim. 2:19](#), "Let everyone that named the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
- **Sheep Know Their Shepherd.** [John 10:14](#), "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and are known of Mine." The sheep know the shepherd's voice and obey it, but they will not follow if they hear another. There are many "voices" calling today, and some sound religious. The child of God will not follow when he hears the voice of strangers ([John 10:5](#)) God's voice to us today is the Word of God, taught by the Spirit of God. It is encouraging to know that Christ knows each of His sheep by name.
- **Sheep Desperately Need A Shepherd.** Without the loving care of a shepherd, the sheep would be helpless. Unless we follow our Shepherd, we will go astray ([1 Peter 2:25](#)) **For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

Sheep Are Useful Animals The Good Shepherd has every right to expect His sheep to be useful. In return for all He does for us, we should be useful to Him. We should be giving our all to the Lord ([Rom. 12:1-2](#)). **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

- **Sheep Flock Together.** It is the nature of sheep to want to be with the flock; and it is the nature of the believer to want to be with one another. The New Testament knows nothing of isolated Christian living. We need to be identified with God's people. We need to be steadfast. We need to be in the Lord's house ([Heb. 10:25](#)). The isolated sheep is always in danger.

II. THE SHEPHERDING MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS

The Bible presents the shepherding ministry of the Lord Jesus from three different perspectives.

1. As the Good Shepherd, He died for the sheep ([John 10:11, 15, 17-18](#));

2. As the Great Shepherd, He lives for the sheep to perfect them ([Heb. 13:20-21](#)) **20 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, 21 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.**

- **The Great Shepherd** ([Heb. 13:20-21](#); Psalm. 23) One of Jesus' present day ministries is one who perfects His people. He is ministering as our great High Priest ([Heb. 4:14-16](#); [8:1-2](#)) He is our Advocate ([I John 2:1-2](#)) The phrase "make you perfect" in [Heb. 13:21](#) is a translation of the Greek word *Katartidzo*, an unfamiliar word today, but one familiar to the Greek speaking people of the early church. To the soldier it meant "to equip an army for battle," and to the sailors, "to outfit a ship for a voyage." The Great Shepherd wants us to be complete in Himself. He wants to equip us for battle. He uses the Word of God ([2 Tim. 3:16-17](#)) The purpose of this perfecting ministry is so that we can be better service to Him. He wants to work in us so He can work through us to accomplish His will on the earth. [Psalm.23:6](#) impresses on us the fact that the Great Shepherd will take care of us. Jesus has promised to take our burdens and our cares. He is "My Shepherd." We must stay close to Him and He will stay close to us. We must obey Him. He cares for us.

(3) and as the **Chief Shepherd**, He will return to gather His sheep and take them to Heaven ([I Peter 5:1-4](#)). **The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords 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 does not fade away.**

These three titles tell about His ministry to us in the past, present and future.

- **Psalm. 22** describes the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep; **The Good Shepherd** (John 10; Psalm. 22) He willingly gave His life for the sheep
- **Psalm. 23** describes the Great Shepherd's provision to us "all the days of our lives."
- **Psalm. 24** is a victory Psalm that announces the arrival of the King, the Chief Shepherd, who will defeat His enemies and reward His people. **The Chief Shepherd** ([I Pet. 5:4](#); Psalm. 24) One day he will return and gather His sheep and take them to Heaven. ([John 14:1-3](#); [I Thessalonians. 4:13-18](#))

III. WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE CHIEF SHEPHERD TO RETURN

While we are willing for Him to return, we have some responsibilities to fulfill.

- A. We Must Keep Alert To The Voice Of The Shepherd.** We discover His leading as we study the Bible, meditate, pray and obey what he reveals to us. We must follow Him one step at a time, one day at a time.
- B. Second, We Must Stay Close To The Shepherd** no matter whether He leads us to the green pastures or to the dark valley. He is with us in both places. We must always have our eyes on the Savior ([Heb. 12:1-2](#))
- C. Third, If We Do stray, We Must Call For The Shepherd's Help** He will forgive if we will ask Him.
- D. Finally, We Must Be Useful To The Shepherd.** Each member has a gift. We must use it. All can do something for God. We must find our talent and use it for the Lord.