The Pilgrim's Quest

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and ***confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*** *on the earth. For they that say such things* ***declare plainly that they seek a country.***" (Heb. 11:13,14)

Pilgrim's Quest Bible Church
Pastor Garry E. Huff

"The LORD *is* my Shepherd; I shall not want."

Psalm 23
vs. 1

Oh, what plight sheep are in when they have no shepherd! Isaiah, the prophet, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit personifies humanity as "sheep." But, because we were all born in sin and "shapened in iniquity," "we all like sheep have gone astray." And yes, each and every soul among the human race has "turned every one to his own way." It matters not whether rich or poor, educated or ignorant, royal or peasant, we all are lost sheep who have wandered far away to the mountains dark, bleak, and bare.

The wilderness mountains consists of a barren, dry land where food is sparse and water scarce. Only tidbits can be found among the dominate bramble, thorns, and thistles. Most water sources are stagnant pools. At rare occasions thunderous downpours bring swift torrential streams dashing over cliffs and across the desert ground. The dry, thirsty ground drinks up the water so quickly that it disappears as suddenly as it came. And thus, the restless sheep must constantly hunt, seek, and search for something to satisfy their insatiable hunger and thirst.

But this "far country" land is a dangerous and a treacherous land. Its landscape being mountainous has rocks smooth and slippery. Stones can easily be disturbed and overturned from their place. Cliffs are many. The gullies are deep. The ravines are thick with briars and

thorns. There are caves harboring many unwelcomed and unfriendly creatures. It is a landscape unsuited for hooves. The thick underbrush easily entangles the wool, holding the sheep as a prisoner. Its short legs hinders the ability to recover from likely falls. And so, the terrain is a constant threat, just as deadly by day or by night.

Such a wilderness is the home to many of the sheep's enemies- the bear, the lion, the wolf, to say nothing of hovering birds of prey, each ready at any moment to pounce upon its unsuspecting victim. Added to the sheep's disadvantage is the odor that is produced from the sweat that is absorbed in the wool in such a hot humid climate. The scent of the sheep becomes a luring attraction to its many enemies. Wherever the sheep may be, wherever it may hide, its scent is ever present.

While the sheep lives in a land where sustenance is scarce, where the land is treacherous, where predators are all around closing in, its own nature of timidness and dumbness adds to its helplessness. Sheep are prone to be spooked by their own shadow and yet, be undisturbed by the presence of wolves which creep ever so close near by.

What can such a helpless creature do? Where is the quickness of foot to escape? Where are the horns to protect itself? What can wash away the odor it constantly emits? Who can help in helpless situations? Who can calm and bring rest to such a restless creature?

We, like sheep, are in desperate need of a good and great Shepherd! It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed! We all should have perished multiple of times again and again. And yet, it takes the work of God's Spirit to reveal this condition to a dumb and foolish lost sheep. It takes God's Spirit to reveal the need of a ***one-of-a-kind*** Shepherd! It takes God's Spirit to reveal who this Shepherd is.

The Psalmist draws our attention to the fact that he pointedly and assuredly has a shepherd. But he also boldly asserts that his Shepherd is none other that the **LORD God** himself. God has chosen not to send one of His mighty angels to be the Shepherd although there may be many guardian angels around us. God did not choose to send one of the Patriarchs or a Prophet. But because of God's great love for ***one*** lost sheep, He chose to leave the "many" in heaven and the glory which He had in the presence of His own beloved Father to come to the lowly

parched land of a wilderness to rescue a single lost sheep. He came to the very spot where death and destruction abounds all around the sheep. He came among the many enemies of the lamb. That place may have been a slippery cliff or an ensnaring thicket of a dark ravine. It may have even been out of the mouth of a lion or a bear. The LORD, the Shepherd, came seeking, searching, rescuing, delivering, that darling lamb that is so precious in His sight.

The LORD God left the glories of heaven in all of its unspeakable splendors for ***one*** lost sheep. If you or I were that one and only lost sheep on planet earth, the love of the LORD is so great he would have left behind the eternal delights unimaginable to seek us out. He would have descended into this lowly world of woe, to be "wounded for our transgressions," "bruised for our iniquities," so that the "chastisement of our peace" would be "upon him" in order that we might be "healed!"

What a wonderful glorious statement to proclaim, The **LORD** is my Shepherd. The LORD ***IS*** my Shepherd. The LORD is ***MY*** Shepherd. The LORD is my ***SHEPHERD.*** And thus .....

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD!

We must note that the word "is" is italicized. We could say the "LORD my Shepherd." This would indicate that He "shepherdizes" me. His actions towards me is that of a constant present guiding Shepherd. He not only rescues me out of the mountainous wilderness of a sinful life, but He leads me to places and paths He knows and sees. He does this by His own personal presence daily with love and grace attending to my every need. Because of His constant presence I come to know His voice. I see His giving hands. I am able to follow His footsteps. How then can I ever be restless? How can I ever be in need ever again? "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found, T'was blind but now I see."

John Newton

He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions

He was wounded four our transgression,
He bore our sins in His body on the tree;
For our guilt He gave us peace,
From our bondage gave release,
And all our sin, and all our sin
And all our sin was laid on Him.

He was numbered among transgressors,
We did esteem Him forsaken by His God;
As our sacrifice He died, That the law be satisfied,
And all our sin, and all our sin,
And all our sin was laid on Him.

We had wandered, we all had wandered
Far from the fold of "the Shepherd of the sheep";
But He sought us where we were,
On the mountains bleak and bare,
And brought us home, and brought us home,
And brought us safely home to God.

Who can number His generation?
Who shall declare all the triumphs of His Cross?
Millions, dead, now live again,
Myriads follow in His train!
Victorious Lord, Victorious Lord,
Victorious Lord and coming King!

Thomas O. Chisholm

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa 53:6)

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (Jn. 10:11)

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep,* than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." (Mt. 18:11-13)