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

**"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters."**

Psalm 23
vs. 2

The Lord left the unimaginable splendors of heaven and the Divine glory of His Father's presence to condescend down to a lowly earth to be our good and great Shepherd. Without Him as the Shepherd, the sheep would have never left the barren mountains, found pasture, or the much needed provision of abundant water. When the Lord becomes our Shepherd, a great change comes into the life, because He brings us to the satisfying of our every need! Whatever was lacking before, the good Shepherd richly provides above and beyond all measure. We can fully and heartily declare - ***all we ever need is found in Thee!*** What a wonderful reality it is to know that we can fully trust Him to marvelously supply every need, and can say as the Psalmist - "I shall not want" (*therefore can I lack nothing*).

But sheep do not always know what they need. The mountain life dims the possibilities that lie ahead under the Shepherd's guidance. And so, the Psalmist brings to focus the first great provision of the Shepherd's abundance, namely, "green pastures." There are many "pastures" all lush with tender, digestible succulent herbs - plenty to feed upon - plenty for nourishment - plenty for growth. Plenty to sustain health and plenty for needed strength. No doubt the first pasture the Shepherd leads the sheep to is the most memorable. It is so different from the wasteland of the bleak barren mountains! How striking

it is for sheep to cast their eye upon the green pastures never seen before! How striking it is to taste the tender savory shoots! Oh, taste and see how good the Shepherd is!

But, there are yet more green pastures ahead to continue the sheep's nourishment and growth. As one great preacher of the past said, "The Lord hath yet more truth to break forth from His Holy Word!" If the first pasture was so good and grand, what abundance more lies ahead in other green pastures! The Shepherd himself leads the way to each one. He surely does not want us to feed in just one pasture only. There are yet more wonderful pastures with more truth ahead that the Shepherd desires to reveal to His sheep.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

One commentator says, "Pastures of tender grass ... is applied here ... as places where flocks and herds lie down in repose ... the idea is that of calmness ... it is that of flocks that lie down on the grass 'fully fed' or 'satisfied,' their wants being completely supplied ... a flock in young luxuriant grass, surrounded by abundance, and having satisfied their wants, lying down amidst this luxuriance with calm contentment." The picture is clearly viewed - sheep who have grazed to the point of satisfaction, find a comfortable spot to calmly rest, and this rest is assured by the Shepherd who is on guard to keep all enemies and predators away. "I shall not want" for He has provided nourishment and I can rest in a deep assurance that the Shepherd is watching over me. All the hunger pains are past. All the sleepless, restless nights are gone. I am in calm repose in pastures green.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters"

Accompanying the wonderful provisions of "green pastures" are the "still waters." The good Shepherd knows so well that His sheep are in great want of water. And so, He leads them to the ideal watering place where the water is deep, still, and refreshing. Oh, what a blessing it is to have thirst quenched at the fountain of living waters! No longer does the demand of thirst linger without being satisfied; it is now fully quenched - never to have such a thirst ever again!

But sheep are unaware of another need for such a water supply. They are unaware of the stench they bare due to the sweat that has built up in the fibers of their woolen covering. The years of the oil, fat, and grease has permeated the wool producing a filthy, dirty and smelly condition that must be addressed. The Shepherd bears the heavenly fragrance of the palace of the King of Kings. All His garments "smell of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia." He knows nothing of sweat that is part of the curse upon Adam and Adam's race. How unfitting it would be for dirty smelly sheep to follow such a sweet scented Shepherd! But, how fitting it is for that Shepherd to provide cleansing for this need!

It is here at the "deep waters of refreshment" with its deep cleansing power that washes away this filth and make the wool pure and clean. There is an initial thorough washing to purge out all the former grunge and grime. But, the sheep will continue to sweat. Its wool will continue absorbing the sweat. Thus, continual washings are needed to keep the wool clean. This consistent bathing will prevent the wool from its former filthy condition and the stench that was so repugnant. What dominates is no longer the odor of the sheep but the fragrance of the Shepherd!

The good Shepherd is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Can it then be of little wonder that the sheep seems so different; changed beyond former recognition? His wool is so clean that he is truly a new or renewed creature following the Shepherd. Yes, truly a new creation!

While the "green pastures" satisfy the old starving pains, there is the resting in peaceful repose assured by the Shepherd's protection. The "still waters" resolve the parched thirst that will never return again as there is a continual drinking at the fountain of living waters. But the accompanying provision, that of a cleansing of the mind, heart, soul, and life completely washes out the stench of the curse of sin, and sets the sheep not looking at the world that was left behind but to the journey that is ahead with his Shepherd.

Truly all we ever need is found provided by the Great Shepherd.
"Therefore can I lack nothing." Not even one!

Whiter Than Snow

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul,
Break down ev'ry idol, cast out every foe;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies,
And help me to make a complete sacrifice;
I give up myself, and whatever I know,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet;
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait,
Come now, and within me a new heart create;
To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidist "No,"
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

James Nicholson

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1)

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1)

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (Jn. *4:13,14)*

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I Jn. 1:7,9)

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their es, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:13,14)