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

Psalm 23
Postscript

The Good Shepherd/Lamb of God has brought His flock to His heavenly home to dwell with Him forever. Oh, what unspeakable and inexpressible glories that are yet to be revealed! No earthly tongue, no earthly language, no earthly articulation can adequately form any meaningful description because it excels all of man's power of comprehension. The intellect can never grasp its complication. It plunges deeper than all of the affections of the heart. It is broader than any expression of the soul. If His sheep have ever been overwhelmed at the majesty and magnitude of God's love and grace, all previous experiences fade compared to what the Shepherd has in store for His sheep. He has pointedly prepared this holy residence for His flock.

All along earth's journey the Good Shepherd has been preparing His sheep for His home. Since He is holy, and the place He has prepared is holy, He wants His sheep to be holy too. He came down to the awful cesspool of our uncleanness and sin. He lifted us up out of wreck, ruin, and depravity. Once He has rescued us out of our miry pit of sin and its outward pollution, He then wants to rescue us from our inward pollution. The Good Shepherd feeds, waters, washes, cleanses, and perfumes His sheep so that the beauty of holiness can clothe His flock. He changes our ashes to beauty, our sinfulness to holiness, and our uncleanness to purity of heart.

The journey of the Shepherd with His sheep does not end when earth's journey is completed. Neither does the Good Shepherd cease to be Shepherd upon arrival at His home in heaven. In Revelation 7, there were those who came out of the Great Tribulation who had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb. The Scripture states, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." These words indicate that the Lamb in the throne shall shepherd them and guide them unto fountains that are gushing forth with waters of life. In the future He will be Governor (one who heads the way), and He will be Ruler (one who shepherdizes His people) just as prophesy of Scripture proclaims, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, ... for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

The eternal journey only opens a completely new dimension without any shadows of death, without the presence of enemies, without any human infirmities or frailties. There will be no limitations, or troubles, or trials that plagued earth's journey. This is where God will wipe away all tears. A land to explore beyond imagination for this is a land where the Lamb is all the glory! This is Emmanuel's land!

All those who never personally knew the Lord as Shepherd on earth, such as, those who died before the age of accountability to God's law, or those who trusted in Christ as Savior while dying, will know the Good Shepherd for heaven's journey. He will feed them, water them, and guide them into the glories of heaven. He is their Shepherd too!

There is a counterpart to the work of the Good Shepherd that is important. What role does the sheep play in the journey? In other words, does the Good Shepherd ***force*** His sheep by means of driving them to His home or does He draw them in love while leading the sheep? Are the two sheepdogs of goodness and mercy used to ***force*** the sheep to obey His commands? When the sheep are led to green pastures and still waters are they ***forced*** to eat and drink? When the Shepherd delivers the sheep from the desolate mountains of sin are they ***forced*** to follow the Shepherd? The answer to these questions are answered when God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt's bondage through the provision of the Passover Lamb and the leading of Moses out of Egypt's slavery. The children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and witnessed "the salvation of the Lord." They were led through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud

by day and a pillar of fire by night. In their midst was the blue covered Ark of the Covenant where the presence of God dwelt. But when they came to the very outskirts of their destination, the Promised Land, they refused to go any further. They claimed that the people who dwelt in Canaan were great giants so that they appeared as grasshoppers. In the end that doubting unbelieving generation died in the wilderness. They were miraculously delivered from the slavery of Egypt, but refused to go any further with the Lord. The Lord did not ***force*** the children of Israel to enter Canaan. They were neither submissive nor obedient but rebelled against God.

How sad to be delivered by the Shepherd from the past desolation and yet refuse to follow Him to His home! The Shepherd does not force His sheep to eat, to drink, or to follow Him. He does not force them against their will to journey with Him. The great proof that He is our Shepherd is the submissive life of persevering all the way to the end and entering into His home - totally willing to do so.

The contemporary view of Psalm 23 often misses the important central view concerning the Good Shepherd for a subjective view that inspires self assurance, temporary comfort, and a false soothing of a troubled soul. Such a view never intends to know the Good Shepherd or to follow Him. It is only the Lord Jesus, the Shepherd, who ***alone*** can satisfy the heart and bring perfect peace to the soul. Thus, the Psalmist wanted the reader to know of his personal Shepherd - the LORD. The Psalmist wanted the reader to know what the Shepherd has done, how the Shepherd undertakes for His sheep, and what was the sheep's final destination. In compliance with the wonderful work of the Shepherd, the Psalmist reveals the complete surrender of the sheep to the will of the Shepherd.

And yes, there awaits a final rest beyond description - a land joyous with those with clean hands and a pure heart. Dear reader, Is the Lord God your Shepherd? Can you see how good He has been through the many miles of earth's journey? Do you not know what He has brought about in your life in the many changes of your own heart, soul, and mind that to be without Him is death itself. Have you not dedicated your life to follow Him all the way to His home in heaven? Whatever the need is for your heart, may you find the answer in Christ Jesus as the Shepherd of your soul! May your journey end with the Shepherd saying, "Well done!"

The Fold Above

There is a fold whence none can stray,
And pastures ever green,
Where sultry sun, or stormy day,
Or night is never seen.

Far up the everlasting hills,
In God's own light it lies;
His smile its vast dimension fills
With joy that never dies.

One narrow vale, one darksome wave,
Divides that land from this:
I have a Shepherd pledged to save
And bear me home to bliss.

John East, 1836

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." *(Isa. 40:10,11)*

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." *(Heb. 13:20, 21)*

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." *(Rev. 22:1-6)*