

## **Our Shepherd and Overseer**

### **1 Peter 2:25 (NKJV)**

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

It is not just God's people who are referred to as sheep.

Israel is often referred to as sheep.

In this passage Peter is referring again to Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:6 (NKJV)

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

We are like sheep in that in the beginning of our lives we were as sheep going astray.

But as he has already stated we have repented and put our trust in Jesus.

Or as he say "have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls."

I. We are likened to sheep.

- A. The Saints may be compared to Sheep in many respects: Sheep are harmless creatures, meek, sociable, contented with hard commons, very tractable, patient, fruitful, and very profitable, are made a prey to evil beasts, &c., upon all which considerations, and many others, the Saints are likened to Sheep, which is fully opened under the metaphor Flock, to which we refer you. *Benjamin Keach, Tropologia: A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1856), 729.*
- B. He knew that a sheep is prone to stray. A sheep is not strong, swift, or smart—if anything, it is somewhat stupid. If one sheep in a flock finds a hole in the hedge and goes through it, the chances are that all of the other sheep will do the same. *John Phillips, Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Pe 2:25.*
- C. We have returned:
  - 1. The verb rendered have returned (*epestraphete*) carries the connotation of repentance, a turning from sin and in faith a turning toward Jesus Christ. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 173.*

II. We need the Shepherd and the Overseer of our souls.

- A. A shepherd is essentially an overseer.

1. But they are not exactly the same.
- B. Jesus is our Shepherd and He will seek us out.
1. Luke 15:4–7 (NKJV)
    - a. <sup>4</sup>“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ <sup>7</sup> I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.
- C. He knows us personally and takes care of us.
1. Matthew 9:36 (NKJV)
    - a. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.
  2. John 10:11–16 (NKJV)
    - a. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
  3. He gives His life for the sheep.
    - a. 11 . . . The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.
    - b. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

4. This speaks of how dearly He loves us and what He is willing to do to keep us safe.
  5. There is a mutual knowledge between the sheep and the shepherd
    - a. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.
- D. They are so familiar with Him that they can recognize His voice over others.
1. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
  2. John 10:25–27 (NKJV)
    - a. <sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. <sup>26</sup> But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
  3. George Adam Smith gives this wonderful account. “Sometimes we enjoyed our noonday rest beside one of those Judæan wells, to which three or four shepherds come down with their flocks. The flocks mixed with each other, and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over, the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call; and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd, and the flocks passed away as orderly as they came. The shepherd of the sheep,... when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice, and a stranger will they not follow. I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. These words our Lord spake in Judæa.” *George Adam Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land (WORDsearch, 1906), 312.*
- E. He takes care of every need we have.
1. Psalm 23:1-6 (NKJV)
    - a. <sup>1</sup> The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. <sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the

days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
Forever.

2. <sup>1</sup> The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.
  - a. The sheep are unable to take care of themselves especially in Israel where David grew up.
  - b. The shepherd must guide the sheep to new areas of pasture.
3. <sup>2</sup> He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
  - a. The sheep only spend the early hours eating while it is cool.
  - b. They must chew the cud and need a quite safe place to rest and digest.
4. He leads me beside the still waters.
  - a. Sheep are afraid of running water so the shepherd must prepare a special place for the sheep to drink.
  - b. He will often use rocks to create a little dam up a fast moving stream so that the sheep feel safe and can get their drink.
5. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul;
  - a. Sheep are skittish animals and will bolt when they are frightened.
  - b. So the shepherd makes sure that the sheep have security.
6. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
  - a. The rod was a club like stick with which the shepherd would fight off predators that might come after the sheep.
  - b. The staff was used to guide the sheep and to keep them from trouble.
7. You anoint my head with oil;
  - a. This was a medicinal use of olive oil.
  - b. The climate is very dry.
  - c. Also the oil will keep down the pests that can bother the sheep.

### III. Jesus is the Great Shepherd and Overseer

#### A. Hebrews 13:20 (NKJV)

1. 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,

B. 1 Peter 5:1–4 (NKJV)

1. 1 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.

C. *Episkopos* is, therefore, a many-sided but always a noble word. It means the protector of public safety; the guardian of honour and honesty; the overseer of right education and of public morals; the administrator of public law and order. So, to call God the *episkopos* of our souls is to call him our Guardian, our Protector, our Guide, and our Director. *William Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated., The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 250–251.*

In the words of that great old hymn popularized by Ira Sankey, “The Ninety and Nine”:

Up from the mountains, thunder-riven,  
And up from the rocky steep,  
There arose a cry to the gates of heaven,  
“Rejoice! I have found my sheep.”  
And the angels echoed around the throne,  
“Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own!”

Not least among the stanzas of that eloquent hymn are the lines,

But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed,  
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,  
E'er He found His sheep that was lost.

*John Phillips, Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Pe 2:25.*

Salvation, what it cost:—“Mamma,” said a little child to her mother when she was being put to bed at night—“mamma, what makes your hand so scarred and twisted, and unlike other people’s hands?” “Well,” said the mother, “my child, when you were younger than you are now, years ago, one night, after I had put you to bed, I heard a cry, a shriek, upstairs. I came up, and found the bed was on fire, and you were on fire; and I took hold of you, and I tore off the burning garments, and while I was tearing them off and trying to get you away I burned my hand, and it has been scarred and twisted ever since, and hardly looks any more like a hand; but I got that, my child, in trying to save you.” I wish to-day I could show you the burned hand of Christ—burned

in plucking you out of the fire; burned in snatching you away from the flame. Aye, also the burned foot, and the burned brow, and the burned heart—burned for you. “By His stripes we are healed.” (T. De Witt Talmage.) Ye were as sheep going astray.— *Joseph S. Exell, The Biblical Illustrator: I. Peter (London: James Nisbet & Co., n.d.), 240.*

Psalms 119:176 (NKJV)

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.

Ezekiel 34:6 (NKJV)

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

Matthew 18:12 (NKJV)

12 “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?”

Psalms 100:3 (NKJV)

3 Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Isaiah 40:11 (NKJV)

11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

Ezekiel 34:11–16 (NKJV)

11 ‘For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD. 16 “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.”

Ezekiel 34:23 (NKJV)

23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.

Zechariah 13:7 (NKJV)

7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Shepherd is an apt title for the Savior since it conveys His role as feeder, leader, protector,

cleanser, and restorer of His flock. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 174.*

He is our Watchful Shepherd in heaven (v. 25). In the Old Testament, the sheep died for the shepherd; but at Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep (John 10). Every lost sinner is like a sheep gone astray: ignorant, lost, wandering, in danger, away from the place of safety, and unable to help himself. The Shepherd went out to search for the lost sheep (Luke 15:1–7). He died for the sheep! *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 407.*