

The Great Shepherd

8-17-25

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This is a great closing to the book of Hebrews. It summarizes the complete work of God and HIS purpose for those who trust HIM. As stated in this closing of Hebrews, it is through Jesus and the shedding of HIS blood that we now have an eternal covenant with God. We have the “better covenant” which Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, is the mediator. The use of shepherd and sheep is very descriptive. Sheep are one of the most vulnerable and defenseless of all God’s creatures. (I have a little personal experience.) They cannot survive the dangers of this world without the protection of a shepherd. Therefore, identifying Jesus as the Great Shepherd and that we are HIS sheep is very appropriate.

Many times, in the OT, God is identified as the Shepherd and believers as HIS sheep.

Psalm 79:13 (ESV)

But we YOUR people, the sheep of YOUR pasture, will give thanks to YOU forever; from generation to generation, we will proclaim YOUR praise.

These people understand who their Shepherd is and that they live in HIS pasture. They are so thankful because their very survival depends on the Shepherd and HIS pasture. Therefore, we as believers, the sheep of HIS pasture, declare:

Psalm 95:6–7 (NIV)

⁶Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷for HE is our God, and we are the people of HIS pasture, the sheep under HIS care.

Revelation: We have a Shepherd, and we are the sheep of his pasture, the sheep under HIS care. The world is blind to the lush pasture in which we live and the powerful Shepherd that protects us. Therefore, as HIS witnesses, we declare to a dark world what we know.

Psalm 100:3 (ESV)

Know that the LORD, HE is God!

It is HE who made us, and we are HIS;
we are HIS people, and the sheep of HIS pasture.

We are so secure because we have a Great Shepherd and live in the safety of HIS pasture. Jesus said that HE would never leave us or forsake us. Jesus has clearly identified HIMSELF.

John 10:11 (ESV)

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The one who died for us will not reject us. The Good and Great Shepherd not only protects and provides but also teaches and empowers us. As stated in Hebrews 13:21, God will “equip us” with everything good for doing his will. And at the same time, HE is also working in us to accomplish HIS purpose. The Apostle says:

Philippians 2:13 (ESV)

It is God who works in you, both to will (give you the desire) and to work for HIS good pleasure.

With God equipping us and working through us, we transcend the limitations of this world. With Jesus as our Great Shepherd, we live in God's kingdom under God's protection and direction. **Therefore, this is our world:**

Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV) NO/OH

¹The LORD is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. ⁶Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

All this is through the Great Shepherd, Jesus.

Again, we transcend the limitations of this world.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."