

Shepherds and the Good Shepherd (3) David



Like Moses, David was called from tending sheep to leading people. Both men were used mightily by God. Moses led the Israelites out of oppression in Egypt and formed them into a nation. David delivered them from the threat of the Philistines and other enemies and enabled them to establish themselves as a powerful kingdom in the Promised Land.

His accuracy with a slingshot was not the only ability David developed as a shepherd. The determination to tend his flock well and guide them to food, water and safety, coupled with the courage to defend them from marauding wild beasts, stood him in good stead when he became a ruler over people.

David was a great king who sought to follow God's will, and his reign was richly blessed. His royal line would continue, and, in the fullness of time, the Messiah would be born among his descendants, in his home town. Nevertheless, David was still a human being, with serious flaws to his character.

In Psalm 23, however, David portrays God as a perfect Shepherd and King. The way of the Lord is always right. He can be relied upon to lead His people to safety and desires what is the very best for them. His care for them is unending.

David was using an image as old as Israel itself. In Genesis 48:15, Jacob, as he blesses his grandsons, speaks of "the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day." It was an image that would be taken up by our Lord when He spoke of Himself as The Good Shepherd.

A prayer:

And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.

(Singing the Faith 481- Stuart Townend, b.1963)

- Rev John Barnett

Image: modern-day shepherd in the Middle East.