

THE LORD MY SHEPHERD

Jehovah-Rohi

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I. Introduction

A. Jehovah-Rohi (a title for God) is found:

Ps 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Ps 80:1 Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel,
(Gen 49:24; Eccl 12:11)

B. Definition

Jehovah = "I am all that you need Me to be when you need Me to be it"

Roh = "to feed, shepherd"

meaning "The Lord my shepherd" Ps. 23:1

C. God, as shepherd

The image of God as a shepherd points to his continual direction, guidance and care for his people. In casting God as a Shepherd, the Bible also casts believers as His sheep. This is hardly a flattering metaphor. Sheep are far from intelligent animals. The reason they need to be constantly accompanied by a shepherd is simply that sheep lack the sense required to care for themselves. Without constant supervision they will wander off to places where they might be lost, hurt, or captured by wild animals.

The first reference to God as a shepherd -

Gen 48:15 "God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,"

Jacob is the first person in Scripture to use this metaphor, identifying God as Shepherd, the Rock of Israel." (see also Gen. 49:24)

In the Old Testament Israel was God's flock

Ps 95:7 ... we are ... the sheep of His hand ...
(Ps 79:13; 100:3; Ezk 34:31)

In the New Testament the church is God's flock

1 Pt 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, ...
(Lk 12:32; Ac 20:28-29)

God gives leaders to be shepherds (under-shepherds) to His people

Abraham - Gen 13:7
Moses - Ex 3:1 Isa 63:11

Israel's kings were called shepherds.

1 Chr 17:6 "... whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying ...

They were charged by God to care for His people, to keep their hearts in tune with the Lord.

David - Ps 78:72 tells us that David "shepherded them (Israel) according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."

Cyrus - Is. 44:28 Cyrus, the Persian ruler, is called "My shepherd." (Cyrus would encourage the exiles of Israel to return from Babylon to Judah).

Amos - Am 1:1

Peter - Jn 21:15-17; 1 Pt 5:1

Church leaders (under-shepherds) are to have a Shepherd's heart

Ac 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Eph 4:11)

Church leaders are expected to feed the flock

Jn 21:15-17 Jesus restores Peter (after his denial) telling him to feed (tend, shepherd) My sheep.

Ezek. 34:1-10 God was going to give them shepherds that would care for the sheep and feed them.

A good shepherd is described as:

Faithful - Gen 31:38-40

Fearless - 1 Sam 17:34-36

Unselfish - Lk 15:3-6

Considerate Gen 33:13-14

Believing - Lk 2:8-20

A bad shepherd is described as:

Unfaithful - Ezk 34:1-10

Cowardly - Jn 10:12-13

Selfish - Isa 56:11-12

Ruthless - Ex 2:17-19

Unbelieving - Jer 50:6

II Jesus is the good Shepherd

A. Jesus is the Lamb of God

Jn 1:29, 36 Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ...
(Gen 22:7-8, 13-14; Ex 12:1-32; Isa 53:7; Ac 8:32; 1 Pt 1:19; Rev 5:6-8, 12-13)

B. Old Testament Prophetic Messianic Promise:

Eze 37:24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.

David is a picture of Jesus, the Shepherd/leader of God's people (2 Sam 5:2; 1Ch 11:2)
(Gen 49:24; Ps 78:70-72; Eze 34:23-24; Isa 40:10-11; Mic 5:4; Mat 26:31; Zech 13:7; Mat 2:6)

C. Jesus is called the "___ Shepherd"

"Good Shepherd"

Jn 10:11 "I am the good shepherd;" (Jn 10:14)

"Chief Shepherd"

1 Pe 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

"Great Shepherd"

Heb 13:20 ... who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep ... (Mic 5:4)

"Gentle Shepherd"

Isa 40:11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

"One Shepherd"

Jn 10:16 "...and they will become one flock with one shepherd." (Mt 25:31-46)

D. Shepherd's tasks - Job Description:

1. **The shepherd has a personal relationship with them individually**
Ps 23:1 the Lord is **my** shepherd (Jn 10:3-5, 14)
2. **The shepherd speaks to the sheep - Sheep must know his voice.**
Jn 10:3 ... the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
3. **The shepherd gives rest to the sheep**
Ps 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; (Jer 33:12)
4. **The shepherd waters the sheep**
Ps 23:2 He leads me beside quiet waters (Gen 29:2-1 the story of Jacob watering Rachel's sheep)
5. **The shepherd feeds (provides) them**
Jn 10:9 ... sheep will go in and out and find pasture. (Ps 23:1-2, 5-6; Ge 48:15; Hos 4:16; Mic 7:14)
6. **The shepherd secures pastures for the sheep**
Shepherds lived in the fields with their flocks much of the year. As the seasons changed, they had to find food, drink and shelter for the sheep (1 Chr 4:39-41).
7. **The shepherd searches for the lost, scattered or straying sheep**
Mat 18:12-14 ... and one of them has gone astray, ...
(Jer 31:10; Ps 119:176; Isa 53:6; Ezk 34:11-16; Lk 15:3-7)
8. **The shepherd gathers the sheep**
Jn 10:16 "I have other sheep ...I must bring them also ... (Isa 40:11)
9. **The shepherd leads and guides the sheep**
Isa 40:11 ... He will gently lead the nursing ewes. (Ps 23:2-3; Jn 10:3-4)
10. **The shepherd is gentle**
Isa 40:11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock ... (Lk 15:5; Mt 12:20; Ezk 34:23)
11. **The shepherd protects the sheep**
Zec 9:16 And the LORD their God will save them in that day as the flock of His people ...
(1 Sam 17:34-36; Jer 31:10; Eze 34:10; Jn 10:28; Ps 28:9; Ge 49:23-24)
12. **The shepherd counts (numbers) the sheep**
Jer 33:13 ... the flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who numbers them,' ...
"pass under the hands," is an expression of how the sheep are numbered.
(Lev 27:32; Lk 15:4-7; Mt 18:12-14; Jn 10:3-4)
13. **The shepherd judges the sheep**
Eze 34:17-22 ... Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another ...
(Eze 34:17-22; Jer 23:1; Zec 10:2-3; 11:16; Mt 25:32-46)
14. **The shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep**
Jn 10:11 I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
(Jn 10:15; Ac 20:28; Isa 53:6-8; Zec 13:7; Mt 26:31)
15. **The shepherd gives eternal life to the sheep**
Jn 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;

III. A closer look at Psalms 23

A. Five pictures

1) THE SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP (23:1-3)

The Lord takes care of his people like a shepherd cares for his sheep.

The Lord as Provider (the Lord's provision)

The rod and staff - The rod or club was used to drive off wild animals and enemies. The staff was used to give guidance to the flock and to lift them back on the pathway when they fell. The rod and staff in the hands of God comfort or give assurance.

2) THE GUIDE AND THE TRAVELER (23:3-4):

The Lord guides his people. along right paths

3) THE HOST AND HIS GUESTS (23:5)

The imagery of a lavish banquet hall with a gracious host (despite impending danger, the Lord spread out a lavish table of provision) This was in the presence of his enemies

The Lord takes care of his people like a host cares for his guests. As the Host, God has made complete provision for our every need. The host who would lay down his life for the guest

4) THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PATIENT (23:5)

The image of anointing the head with oil, (which was refreshing and soothing) harmonizes with the concept of a gracious host welcoming someone into his home.

As a physician He anoints his head with oil.

5) THE PROPHET AND THE PROMISED (23:6)

The image of his cup overflowing - his lot in life was abundant blessing from the Lord.

He shows them goodness and unfailing love.

God's goodness in the land of the living

(Ps 27:13; 31:19; 69:16; 86:17; 109:21; 116:12; 142:7; 145:7)

God's presence (the Lord's good loyal love) would go with him everywhere, through all of life
God's blessings on His people remain with them no matter what their circumstance may be.

I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

The house of the Lord referred to the sanctuary (tabernacle).

For the rest of his life (lit., "length of days") he would enjoy full communion with the Lord.

B. Four blessings comes from the Lord's leading:

First blessing - spiritual nourishment.

As a shepherd leads sheep to fresh grass, so the Lord leads His people. One who follows the Lord does not lack any spiritual nourishment. Food for the soul is the Word of God.

(see Heb 5:12-14; 1 Pt 2:2).

Second blessing - spiritual restoration.

A shepherd leads his sheep to calm waters for rest and cleansing, so the Lord restores or refreshes the soul. Here the spiritual lesson is clear - the Lord provides forgiveness and peace for those who follow Him.

Third blessing - guidance in the right way.

A good shepherd knows the right paths on which to bring the sheep home safely. So too the Lord loses none of His sheep, but guides them in the right way. He does so partly because of His reputation (for His name's sake).

Fourth blessing - protection.

If one finds himself in a valley of deep darkness (or shadow of death), he need not fear. The Lord is with him and will protect him.

The rod and staff are the shepherd's equipment to protect the sheep in such situations. Believers are never in situations the Lord is not aware of, for He never leaves or forsakes His people.

Heb 13:5 ...He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

C. The eight OT names of God seen in Ps 23:

Jehovah-Jireh, "The Lord will provide" (Gen 22:14);

v. 1 - "I shall not want."

Jehovah-Rapha, "The Lord will heal or restore" (Ex 15:26);

v. 3 - "He restores my soul."

Jehovah-Nissi, "The Lord our banner" (Ex. 17:15);

v. 4 - "Your rod and staff comfort me."

v. 5 - "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"

Jehovah-Kaddesh, "The Lord who sanctifies" (Ex 31:13)

v. 2-3 - "He makes me lie down in green pastures ,,for His name's sake."

Jehovah-Shalom, "The Lord our peace" (Jud. 6:24);

v. 4 - "I fear no evil."

Jehovah-Raah, "The Lord my shepherd" (Ps 23:1).

v. 1 - "The LORD is my shepherd."

Jehovah-Tsidkenu, "The Lord our righteousness," (Jer 23:6);

v. 3 - "He guides me in the paths of righteousness,"

Jehovah-Shammah, "The Lord is there," (Ezek 48:35);

v. 4-6 - "I fear no evil for You are with me, ... I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"

In other words, Jesus Christ is to His sheep all that they ever need. As the little child said when misquoting this psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd-what more shall I want?"

The following References were used in this study:

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