

Isaiah Described a “Divine Shepherd”

“Behold, the Lord God...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” (Isaiah 40:10-11).

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night” Luke 2:8. It was appropriate that shepherds were the first to receive the news that the “Great Shepherd” had been born in Bethlehem, that home town of David the shepherd king of Israel.

The ancient prophets often referred to the Lord as “The Shepherd” a description that was easily understood by the Hebrews who had always raised sheep (see Gen. 46:31-47:3). Joseph was aware that shepherds were disliked by the Egyptians and was careful to avoid the displeasure of Pharaoh. When David thought about accepting the challenge of Goliath, he informed Saul of what the Lord had enabled him to do as a protector of the sheep (I Samuel 17:34-35). Centuries later, when the Savior spoke to his followers, He said, “I am the Good Shepherd: The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Isaiah’s statement gives to us three wonderful word pictures.

1. The Shepherd Leading...Great Provision

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.” Throughout the Middle East shepherds live with their sheep; They are never separated. The flock follows the leader and each day is led to places where pasture is available. He knows them individually and they respond to his voice. Isaiah’s conception of the loving kindness of the Lord is a great source of comfort and assurance. Life resembles a wilderness and good sustenance is hard to find. It is the shepherd’s duty to seek green pasture and still waters. The older sheep can pick and graze some on their own but the younger ones had to be helped. The shepherd’s duty was to find...and the sheep’s duty was to follow.

2. The Shepherd Lifting...A Gracious Protection.

“He shall carry the lambs with His arm.” When newborn lambs could not travel as quickly as the rest of the flock, the shepherd lifted and cradled them in his arms. When they became exhausted in the wilderness, he would shade them by day and warm them in the night. Think about it, the Creator of the universe could be as tender as a shepherd boy who loved the lambs and led the flock. The same God that shook Mount Sinai, is that same God that takes His sheep in His arms and carries them.

3. The Shepherd Loving...A Glorious Power.

Isaiah 40:11 is between two expressions of the amazing power of the Lord. Isaiah said in verse 10, “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for him...” Then in verse 12, the prophet asked a very important question. “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span of his hand?” The emphasis is upon the strong arms of the Almighty. Between these two statements Isaiah mentioned the ministry of the “Divine Shepherd.” The same hand that controls the universe would also keep the sheep.