



The Sharon Star

Perfect Peace

By Albert Hannigan

How thankful we are for the peace that we have in Jesus Christ. He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Today there is so much unrest in the world. The words that Jesus spoke, describing the conditions in the last days, are happening in the earth. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars : see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places" (Matt 24:6, 7). To listen to the news can be quite discouraging, because the spirit of the enemy is so obvious. Men's hearts are failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth. Peoples and governments are in such conflict, trying to figure out which way to go. But these things are not in the realm of the Kingdom. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

There is a place of peace and rest. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust" (Psalm 91:1, 2). How often do we have to run and hide in the shelter of His wings. And He has provided a shelter and a hiding place in the midst of his body, the church. We call for the elders to come and pray for us in times of sickness, and we make our needs known to the members of the body. We intercede for one another, for we love one another

and are deeply concerned. We weep with those who weep, and we rejoice with those who rejoice. We are so closely knit together.

God has provided a shelter for us. In the days of Noah, He had Noah prepare an ark, in which Noah and his family, and the many animals could be safe when the floods came. Today Jesus is that Ark of safety. He is our hiding place. Jesus said to Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings" (Matt 23:37). Praise God, that hiding place is available to you and me today. The people in Jerusalem disregarded that shelter, but you and I can most surely run to that hiding place.

Abraham's and Lot's men were in conflict over the pasture for their cattle. Lot made sure his cattle had the best pasture. But Abraham did not worry over the financial value, but had confidence that the One who called him to walk with Him would take care of the situation. And God told Abraham about all that was in store for him. You and I can be so concerned about the natural that we lose sight of the spiritual. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If

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any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). Of course we must provide a living for our family, and that means hard work and wisdom from the Lord. But if we put God first, He so bountifully provides for us. Nevertheless, we may be tested along the way. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which come your way. What a test that was for Abraham when God asked him to sacrifice his son of promise on the altar. May God help us to have our sights on the eternal as did Abraham. “For the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John 2:17).

It seemed that Peter had a problem with the natural and carnal mind. Don't we all? When Jesus mentioned the trials and the suffering that lay before Him, Peter rebuked Jesus, and said that that would not be. But Jesus said, “Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt 16:23-25).

How we love to justify ourselves in every situation. But Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for

they shall inherit the earth” (Matt 5:3,5). May we, with the help of the Holy Spirit have the same mind that Jesus had as written in Phil 2:3-9, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.”

The patriarchs of old and the apostles did not fight back when they were persecuted, or when the fiery trials came their way, but they committed themselves unto the grace of God, for they knew that their eternal rewards would far outweigh the trials of today. This is the day when we may enter into His rest, His peace, His joy, His great love. Let not our hearts be troubled, but let us rejoice in the Lord day by day. The joy of the Lord is our strength. May the peace of God which passeth all understanding fill our hearts and minds.

God richly bless you.

The Lord is My Shepherd

By Dale Hoffman

Throughout history, God has resided among men toward the goal of redeeming mankind unto Himself. The scriptures are full of His many works which would ultimately bring about the promised kingdom that will never pass away. Under that kingdom order, the power of the world, Satan, and even the flesh will be utterly crushed and swept away into history. The kingdom, however, will never be lost to history. The establishment of that special kingdom is a necessary part in God's plan for the total redemption of fallen man.

How blessed we are in these last days to see the order of the everlasting kingdom in operation. The establishment of the home seems so small and insignificant, but it is powerful to guard against and cut off the hands of evil that continually reach into our homes. A mother and father ruling the home in

unity and the fear of the Lord will impart a lasting joy and peace that may continue to influence generation after generation.

God in His wisdom has made that same kingdom authority and protection available to us in our local assemblies. His love and mercy is evident in His choosing shepherds who will exercise that same love and care that was shown when He sent the Son to dedicate Himself wholly to the flock. That Son's name is Jesus, who had not even the dignity to be born in a human dwelling. Rather, He was born in a stable among the livestock, and attended by shepherds because He was sent to us as a sheep. This Lamb, through the testimony of His life, would show men by example the submission and self-sacrifice necessary to bring about the enduring kingdom through which His fellow man should be made

perfect.

This Lamb is also known as the good Shepherd. One of the mysteries of the everlasting kingdom is that a sheep can also be a shepherd. Only the Holy Ghost can call a sheep to be a shepherd. John 21:15, “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” Here Jesus is referring to the fish they were eating, for Peter was a fisherman by profession. At the end of this verse, after Peter had affirmed his love for Jesus, Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” The scriptures are very clear in that when a man is called to be a shepherd, he must foremost, even above his own livelihood, love the Shepherd—the owner of the sheep

A relevant scripture can be found in the book of Genesis, during Abram’s pilgrimage. Genesis 13:7, “And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdsmen of Lot’s cattle...” Genesis 13:8, “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren.” Here note that the sheep do not belong to the herdsmen, but to Abram. The herdsmen, however, love Abram so much that they would even quarrel on his behalf for the well-being of the sheep. Applying these scriptures to the gospel of the kingdom, we can see Abram as a type of our local elders, and the herdsmen a type of our local deacons. The flock of God is entrusted to the elders, and with the elders is where the authority is placed. Take notice how our deacons—sturdy pillars in the local assembly—stand ready to assist our elders. One of the qualities evident in these men and their wives is a selfless love and reverence for that Shepherd, the Lord of lords, who is the ultimate owner of the flock.

Another worker among the sheep that is mentioned in the scriptures is the hireling. John 10:12, “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” The hireling was employed by the herdsmen to help with tending the sheep. The primary reason for the hireling to watch over the flock is money, and not because he loves the Shepherd. When danger threatens, or if money is no longer available, the hireling will abandon the flock. Contrarily, shepherds and herdsmen will stand resolute through any manner of adversity, defending the

Shepherd’s property with their lives if necessary. Our local elders and deacons receive no monetary payment for the responsibility they carry. Even in the natural our fathers and mothers received no material gain for all the labor they endured in raising us to adulthood. In these last days, currency all over the world has become dangerously unstable. When money loses its potency, the true shepherds and herdsmen are immediately distinguished from the hirelings. Our elders are known as fathers, because they stand by their charge regardless of the difficult circumstances.

King David’s calling and his walk with God can teach us much about Kingdom authority. In I Samuel chapter 16 it is recorded how seven of David’s brothers passed before Samuel, that God may decide which of them was to be the next king of Israel. I Samuel 16:7, “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” Reading on in that chapter, David was overlooked because he was simply the caretaker of the sheep. Where men were looking for a warrior, God wanted an overseer who would care for His flock.

In those days David’s brothers were at war with the Phillistines, and a certain giant named Goliath continually cursed God and threatened the children of Israel. When David heard these evil sayings, he asked the warriors how they were going to deal with this. David sensed that the camp was fearful. Indeed, Goliath must have been a terrible sight. He was a giant, towering over the largest man in the camp. Having six digits on each hand, and carrying weapons that a normal man would strain under, he must have appeared to the armies of Israel as a great, ugly monster. But David was first a shepherd, and so saw the situation from that perspective. To him, the situation was no different from a predator of the field threatening his father’s lambs. I Samuel 17:36, “Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.” David approached the enemy of the sheep boldly, and he would act in the same manner with this enemy of Israel. History unfolded, and David brought down the greatest of the Phillistine warriors with nothing more than a shepherd’s tools. It was simply a shepherd’s heart that put the entire Phillistine army on the defensive, and brought the first in a series of great victories for the armies of God.

The Holy Ghost is working in this same manner today through kingdom authority. We need not appear greater than our brothers and sisters to be able to beat down spiritual wickedness. The way to tackle the enemy is simply through submission to kingdom order. We must submit to authority in our homes as well as in the church. This includes recognizing and respecting the ministry of our brothers and sisters. The ministry of our elders also should be respected. Elders are set by the Christ as shepherds in the assembly. David knew very well that a shepherd leads the sheep. Driving sheep like cattle will only scatter the flock. It is the nature of sheep to recognize the security that the shepherd represents, and simply follow him. In the same manner, our elders will never push with the authority given them. Kingdom authority is placed in them by God, and as the flock of God, we must learn to humbly recognize that authority as would a lamb follow the shepherd.

In the natural, the army with the strongest soldiers and greatest firepower emerges victorious. In these last days the great threat is a spiritual enemy which natural weapons cannot touch. Where physical and technological powers are useless, submission to one another's gifts and ministries will ultimately lead to casting out those dark powers that have usurped the heavenly throne which God had reserved for man. In Jesus the victory has already been won. We need only drop our weapons, become as sheep, and follow Him.

Even though they were written under the law, a

close look at David's writings can teach the church of the last days much about the order of the kingdom. Psalms chapter 23 is a potent chapter. David, having been a shepherd in his youth, was familiar with the way of shepherds and sheep in the natural. The Holy Spirit has taught the church how this applies in the gospel of the kingdom.

Psalm 23:1, "The LORD is my shepherd..." David begins the song by identifying with the Shepherd, even though he was a shepherd himself. By proclaiming that the Lord is our shepherd, we become followers, effectively laying aside the nature of that selfish, carnal man that we have inherited. By becoming as sheep, we also find our identity in Christ who is the good Shepherd. Psalm 23:1 continues, "I shall not want." If the Lord is indeed our Shepherd, then we must begin to learn to rely on Him. Sheep have no natural defense, and rely completely on the shepherd for protection. In the spiritual realm, alone and without the body of Christ, we are completely defenseless against the enemy of our old, dead nature. When we follow Christ, we recognize that we have no want, because by faith we know that He provides for us all the protection and nourishment that we have need of. The old nature continually devises his own ways and solutions—which ultimately lead to sin and death. When we become followers of the Shepherd, however, our will is lost to our trust in the Shepherd's provision.

Psalm 23:2 begins, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures..." Sheep are timid animals, and will not lie down if conditions are not right. Here David refers to the peace and rest that the Shepherd provides—for there can only be peace if the Shepherd's authority is continually recognized. There are many ways that the flock can be left unsettled: the fear of danger or predators; poor social behavior or friction between the sheep; pests, such as flies or other parasites; and hunger.

In the day we are living in, our enemies lurk all around us. These dangers constantly threaten our happiness, finances, health, and home to name a few. Since the Lord is our Shepherd, we must, like sheep, trust in the authority of the Shepherd to protect us from these enemies. Because of our identity in Jesus, we can rest even in the middle of the battlefield, knowing He is in full command. That same authority and care is placed in our elders and deacons. Following simple guidelines set by the overseers in the church will help us to completely avoid the most common pitfalls. An assembly that can submit to that authority of the overseeing shep-

IMPORTANT DATES

Feast.....	April 5th - 8th, 2012
Henry, Illinois	Corrected Date - May 4th - 6th, 2012
North Battleford Camp.....	July 1st - 8th, 2012
North Carolina Camp.....	July 22nd - 28th, 2012
Pinelaw (Washington) Camp....	August 6th - 12th, 2012
Caribbean Camp (Trinidad)	August 5th - 12th, 2012
Park Valley Labour Day	Aug. 31st - Sept. 3rd, 2012
Winkler Family Camp	Aug. 31st - Sept. 3rd, 2012
Hidden Acres Family Camp.	Aug. 31st - Sept. 3rd 2012

herds will find great peace and contentment.

The scripture speaks of green pastures. An experienced shepherd would lead his flock into green pastures where the sheep were kept fed and content. And, when sheep fought and butted amongst each other, a watchful shepherd would be nearby to settle the dispute so there would be peace in the flock. All these attributes of the ancient shepherd have been amplified through Christ, taking on spiritual power, and given to the local elders to comfort His church in these last days. We, as sheep, can be content and lie down to rest in Him.

Verse 2 continues, “he leadeth me beside the still waters.” A responsible shepherd would lead his flock to places where the water is still. Sheep are poor swimmers, and by nature are more comfortable drinking water that is not fast flowing. If the flock was led to a river to drink, the shepherd would shape a pool in the river bank with his hands so the sheep could drink still water. This is another of the ways the shepherd can minister to the flock.

Being followers of the Shepherd, we must learn to recognize these many ways that the God-given shepherds in the church minister peace to us. As we ponder this love and care it is much easier for us to abandon our selfish old nature, fall into order with the flock, and submit to the gifts and ministries that are Christ in and among us.

Another trait that elders in the church all have is that they are given the ability, not only to watch over the flock, but to be able to see beyond natural sight. Our elders continually pray for us, and the Holy Spirit gives them an insight into problems in our lives. In the scriptures we are encouraged to call on the elders of the church for counsel and prayer. It is important to think and pray on the advice we receive from our shepherds, because God will bless us for leaning on the kingdom order that He has established. Also, when we bring a problem before the elders, we may find they already had a concern for us. By laying out the problem, we may also bring peace to the elders for they will know better how to pray for us. And let us not forget that the same hands that were put on the elder were put on his wife. Our sisters in the flock can feel comfortable in approaching the elders’ wives, for they will exhibit the same confidence, love, care, and insight that is shown by their husbands.

The ability of the elders to not only see, but also foresee trouble is one of the great benefits of the kingdom order. In ancient times, David knew that shepherds were watchful. For example, if a shep-

herd saw scavenger birds circling the pastures, he would immediately begin to look for a sheep that was ailing or dying. Psalm 23:3 reads, “He restoreth my soul.” Related verses are Psalm 42:5&6, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. (6) O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar.” In chapter 42 David writes of the source of his help when he is cast, and in chapter 23 he refers to a sheep being restored. A problem with pregnant ewes, or sheep that are full after feeding, is that they may lie down and be unable to right themselves. This is known as a cast condition. It then becomes completely unable to help itself and can only rely on the watchful shepherd to find it and restore it. In this case the shepherd must hold it in an upright position until its circulation is sufficiently restored for it to support itself.

Harboring bitterness in our hearts can slowly grow into a great problem. Before we realize it, this bitterness can bring us down—spiritually cast. Depression is another issue for which the kingdom order has a remedy. A member of the body who is down in depression may continue to spiral downward until there is no hope for restoration but to completely yield to the Shepherd’s power to restore.

Continuing in Psalm 23:3, “...he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Many brothers and sisters who have endeavored to walk in the way of the kingdom for many years can think with amazement about how their lives have unfolded. We may find many years later that we have taken right paths. In following the Shepherd, of course, we cannot take the credit for the wise choices we have made. Rather, the glory must be given to Him. Alone we have no ability to live a good Christian life, and are completely vulnerable to traps and dead ends. But, by continuing in submission to the shepherds in the church, we can effectively make right choices that will keep us close to the Shepherd and out of trouble. This applies especially in our youth, when even the smallest decisions can heavily impact our entire future. Our parents and elders are set as shepherds. We should stay close to these overseers in our lives. The better they know us, the more able they are to foresee danger and give good counsel—especially when we are young and have little experience.

The righteous path may not always seem right to the natural eye. Psalm 23:4 begins, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me....” Psalm 37:23&24 reads, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. (24) Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.” Let us not be ashamed that we stumble from time to time, as God’s grace is there to steady us and help us. That path, though it is right, is not always the easy way. If we were to follow the flesh, we may take the wrong path because it appears to be easier. Because of this, there are times when the advice or direction of elders seems foolish. If the input of our overseers causes us to put our guard up, prayer and fasting is key. In a case where an immediate decision or action is necessary, it will never hurt us to ask the elders very direct questions. In the end, knowing that the words of the elders are blessed as the same source as the great Shepherd, simply acting through trust in Him will not lead us to a wrong path. Often the Holy Spirit will even reveal to us, at a later time, why the advice was so given. We give the glory to Jesus for that foresight and wisdom being handed down through His kingdom order.

The Valley of Death, or the Valley of the Shadow of Death refers to an actual location that David was familiar with. This gorge was a narrow valley with difficult footing. Though it was a dangerous path, it was worth the trouble because beyond that valley were the lush, green table lands of the mountains. If a predator were to draw near in the valley, there was little room to maneuver. Also, there were crevices along the path that the smaller or weaker of the sheep could stumble on. This is why David continued in Psalm 23:4, “...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

The shepherd’s rod was an instrument of both offense and defense. Moses used a rod many years before David was even born. That rod brought horrid plagues across an entire land, yet also parted the waters toward deliverance. In the shepherd’s application, the rod was used in the protection and comfort of the flock, but also as a formidable weapon against a predator. Shepherd’s rods were often studded with spikes. From a very young age, a shepherd boy would continually practice casting the rod until he was able to throw it over a lamb’s head with no injury to the lamb. Note that the rod was never used on the sheep. This instrument was only put into use when an enemy of the flock threatened. Our

local elders have also been given this rod. When there are problems amongst brothers and sisters in the church, the elders will handle it very graciously. However, if an outside influence threatens to scatter the flock, the rods might come out.

If the shepherds in the local church are obliged to apply God’s authority in this manner, it is important for the flock to stay as far away from it as possible. Foremost, we should make sure we are in no way involved. Talking or gossiping about how the local elders deal with a situation will only serve to broaden the reach of the enemy that the elders are seeking God’s wisdom to stop. Rather, let us pray for these elders throughout the difficult situation they are responsible for, then wait on the peace that is promised through God’s authority which fortifies that rod of comfort.

The other instrument noted in verse 4 is the staff. This long staff had a hooked top. The shepherd could slip the hook under a lamb to assist it in moving over some obstacle. Some sheep were too young, or too weak to traverse the gaps through the Valley of Death. The shepherd could physically stand in the gap and, with his staff, assist the young or feeble sheep to the other side. There was a day when the man had unhindered access to his Creator. However, when the man disobeyed, it created a great gap between him and God. Jesus, our God-sent Shepherd, stands in this gap. The Holy Spirit is His staff which assists us, once again bridging that void between God and man. When we yield to authority in the church, though we stumble, that staff—the Holy Spirit, the Comforter—will be there at the elder’s hands to lift us to safety.

Psalm 23:5, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies....” Shepherds of old found green pasture in the lush table lands in the mountains. These are not the mountain peaks. The tables are places where the terrain plateaus and provides excellent grazing for the sheep. The experienced shepherd would visit these areas before bringing the flock. He was sure to note the areas where there may be patches of bad grass, or other plants that might make the sheep ill. The preparation was either in noting the areas to avoid, or to go through and pluck out any potentially harmful things. Again, this was done before the sheep were even led there. Also he may look for other areas to avoid, such as places where predators can easily ambush the flock. God has imparted this watchfulness and foresight into our local elders. They will not lead us where we can easily be snatched up or

scattered by the enemy. Furthermore, they will not expose us to teaching which has not been revealed through this kingdom order in the present truth. Mixtures of foreign teachings only serve to weaken and maim us. For this reason we should avoid the suspect grass that is growing in other pastures. Our shepherds have led us to good table land. As the Lord is our Shepherd, we can always be at peace in knowing that we have been given the choicest of land to pasture in.

This pure teaching that we refer to is given through our traveling ministry, who have the responsibility as shepherds over the churches throughout the world. By His sovereignty, God has revealed many truths through the traveling ministry for the benefit of the church in the last days. It is not given to local shepherds to interpret scripture or to receive new revelation. Rather, it is the responsibility of the traveling ministry to receive the teaching, travel throughout the earth, and impart the Truth throughout the towns and villages as the Holy Spirit directs. Another responsibility that Christ gives these traveling ministries is to set elders in the manner recorded in the scriptures. Once these local shepherds are set, the traveling ministries are then responsible to submit to these overseers. When traveling ministries are sent to visit an assembly, they will often seek out the elders first, submitting to the charge the shepherds have over the flock of God in that location. The local elders in turn do submit to the traveling ministry for the scope of oversight they have been given. We continue to submit ourselves to the authority of our elders, who are in submission one to another. It is this enduring atmosphere of reverence and submission to one another wherein the Holy Ghost can do His most extensive work in our local church, in our homes, and in our individual lives.

Psalm 23:5 continues, "...thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." As the sheep came through the door of the sheepfold, the shepherds would inspect each sheep. If a sheep had sores, oil was applied to soothe the wound. This oil is a type of the Holy Spirit in the latter days. Under the able hands of the elders, His anointing can flow for the healing of physical bodies as well as to remedy broken lives.

Also, a cup full of water stood nearby. This cup was a piece of pottery large enough to submerge a sheep's head into. To encourage evaporation and cooling, this pot was not glazed. A sheep that had running eyes or appeared feverish would be ministered to at this cup. The caring shepherd would dip

the animal's head into this cool water—causing the cup to overflow—cleaning and soothing the ailing sheep. Here in verse 5, David is referring to that special attention that is given by the Lord who is our Shepherd, and likens it to the anointing with oil, and the overflowing of the cup. The scriptures are very clear about the importance of going to our elders for prayer or advice. The local elders are not always highly educated or experienced; however, there is a blessing to be found in submitting to the kingdom order. Through our elders, God will minister to the very root of our needs simply because we are obedient to the shepherds He has placed among us.

There are basically two sheepfolds mentioned in the scriptures. One is near the village where the sheep are guarded by night, and the other is in the fields where the sheep are guarded by day. Both are referred to in John chapter 10.

At night in ancient times the sheep were kept in a pen with a door. The door was locked by a guardian who kept the key. John 10:1, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." There may have been more than one flock guarded in this pen. When a shepherd approached and spoke, only the sheep that belonged to that shepherd would leave the sheepfold and follow the shepherd. Sheep are wary animals and will follow only one whom they recognize as a personal caregiver. As God's flock, we must be close with our parents and elders to be always familiar with the teaching we receive from them. There are many voices in these last days. If we begin to follow too many voices, the voice of the Shepherd through our parents and elders may become unrecognizable. This leads to uncertainty in our lives, and wandering about in strange pastures.

Notice in verse 3 that Jesus calls us by name. Our parents gave us a name that we can identify one another by. However, Jesus is talking about a name that is not merely a title, but who we really are. He knows each of us by our unique ministry. Truly he is our Shepherd, and worthy to be followed.

When the sheep emerged from the sheepfold in the morning, they took up a certain order behind the shepherd. Being animals of order, whenever

the shepherd moved, the sheep always took the same place amongst the members of the flock. We, like sheep, will avoid much tension and butting by remaining faithful to the order that is initiated by the step of our shepherds. One ministry in the church cannot step ahead of another and follow the Lord at the same time. As we reverence Him in one another, much jostling and difficulty—traits of the world—will be avoided, and He will flow freely in and amongst us.

The other type of sheepfold is located away from the village. This pen has no door. Rather, there is a small opening, low enough for sheep to move under, and wide enough for only one sheep to pass through at a time. As the sheep passed through in a single file, the shepherd was able to look over the condition of each animal, and minister to each as necessary. When all the sheep were safely in the sheepfold, the shepherd could sit in front of, or lay across the opening. In John 10:7, Jesus refers to this sheepfold. “Then said Jesus to them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.” In order to have access to the flock, one would have to first come by the shepherd. Effectively, the shepherd is the door. John 10:9, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” Our responsibility is to remain attentive to His voice through the shepherds He has set for us. There is peace and protection there.

We should continually proclaim, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” for Psalm 23:6 reads, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Traveling Deacons in Africa

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Jan. 18, 2012

Jim Griffith
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Feb. 7, 2012

North Battleford Feast and Camp Reservation 2012

Please send reservations in for rooms for feast or camp to nbreservations@gmail.com or phone the office at **306-445-2733** **NO PETS** in any dorm rooms please.

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