

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

Psalm 23:1

Introduction: This psalm speaks of the Lord God as being a "shepherd." The typical Eastern shepherd was a man who endured countless hardships and dangers as he had the life and welfare of ALL the sheep charged to him. His only equipment was a wooden staff with which he protected and cared for all the sheep. Every morning he would lead the entire flock to a place of pasture and water, watching over all of them all day long, then at evening time he would bring the flock back and count every single one to make sure they were all there, then sit/stand/lie guard all through the night. Therefore the psalmist declared that the Lord was his shepherd.

So WHO is the "Lord?" What gives Him the right to be "Lord?" and how does one come to be under His "Lordship?"

I. THE "LORD" CREATED ALL THINGS

1. In Genesis the creation is outlined and described.
2. The galaxy around the earth is beyond comprehension.
3. A drop of river/lake water under the microscope reveals another entirely different world.
4. Sadly countless people reject and deny the creative process of God, therefore rejecting any "Lordship."
5. However, nothing changes the fact despite whatever people may think, God is "Lord."

II. THE "LORD" HAS ALSO "BOUGHT" MAN

1. In the garden of Eden, where the first man and woman were placed, they fell from fellowship with God.
2. God's Son, Jesus came to restore that broken fellowship by what He did on the Cross.
3. Calvary (the cross) was where man was bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ.
4. Therefore man belongs to the Lord by means of having been bought/purchased.

III. THE "LORD" CONTINUALLY CARES FOR MAN

1. The Lord is ever interceding, ever giving, ever working and spares no pains for man's welfare.
2. Consider the Lord's character:
 - He is gentle, tender, true, righteous.
 - Told man of necessary requirements, changes that were necessary under HIS Lordship.
3. He "marks" His own.
 - Sheep have their ears notched.
 - Slaves have a hole in their ear lobes.

- Those belonging to the Lord have an exchanged life - the world's for God's.

4. Sad but tragic, many claim that "the Lord is their shepherd," wanting all the benefits without paying the price of a changed life - believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. A person either belongs to the Lord or not.
2. Jesus warned of a day when He wouldn't recognize the "false" sheep, only those with HIS Mark, that being changed lives and those only would enter His heavenly fold.
3. A sobering thought:
 - Do I really belong to Him?
 - Do I really recognize His right over me?
 - Do I respond to His authority?
 - Do I find freedom, fulfillment in this?
 - Do I sense purpose and contentment?
 - Do I know rest and peace?
4. If so, you can proudly say: **"...The Lord IS MY Shepherd..."**
 - **If not, don't you want to be able to say it?**