

Glimpses of God - part 4 – Protector and Vanguard

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BIG IDEA – God does shepherd us and rally on our behalf.

scripture focus - Psalm 23:1-6 NKJV “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”

Do you have someone that cares **about** you, deeply cares **for** you? This is one of the most important aspects of a relationship that brings both comfort and joy. Someone who knows us, with all our warts and worries, and still loves us. **This kind of close relationship can make it possible to share the great highs and the lowest depths of life itself.**

From the moment we are born, helpless and needy to the dusk of our days, humans were created in live in relationship. We do better, live longer and thrive in nurturing communities, rather than alone or isolated. Debi Pryde, in her book “Glimpses of God,” writes, “God has created us to interact, to stay connected with people, whether it be people in our immediate families or workplaces, or friends.”

We want to know that somewhere out there, someone is looking out for our best interest, cheering us on, and believing in us.

We want to trust those who have authority over us and knowledge beyond ourselves. When we call in a crisis, a fire, a dangerous or life-threatening situation, we want competent, capable, caring individuals on the phone. We want to know they can take charge. We feel secure and comforted by having that expertise, and experience working for us. **When we don’t see or feel leaders who have those qualities, we get restless, nervous and anxious.**

It is not a coincidence that God **declares himself as our shepherd, because expert, caring qualities are exactly what a shepherd provides for their flock.**

DIG IN DEEPER NOTES

Yhvh rō 'î – Yahweh my Shepherd.

יהוה ניסיון: YHWH-NISSI- Yahweh Our Banner

Scriptures

Psalms 23:1-6 KJV “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Isaiah 40:10-11 NLT “Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. **He will feed his flock like a shepherd.** He will **carry the lambs in his arms**, holding them close to his heart. He will **gently lead the mother sheep with their young.**”

Psalms 100:3 NLT “Acknowledge that the Lord is God! **He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**”

Matthew 9:35-38 NLT “Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.””

John 10:1-18 NLT “**I tell you the truth**, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and **the sheep recognize his voice and come to him.** He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and **they follow him because they know his voice.** They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice.” Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, so he explained it to them: “**I tell you the truth**, I am the gate for the sheep. **All who came before me were thieves and**

robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. **"I am the good shepherd.** The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. "The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

Exodus 17:15 NLT

"Moses built an altar there and named it Yahweh-Nissi (which means "the Lord is my banner")."

Psalms 60:4

But you have raised a banner for those who fear you— a rallying point in the face of attack.

Mark 5:35-43 NLT

"While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now." But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith." Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. He went inside and asked, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep." The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. Holding her hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!" And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat."

Questions

- Q: What was Jesus saying about believers and Himself in John 10:3-5?
- Q: According to [John 10:11](#), why is Jesus the Good Shepherd?
- Q: Where is your Nissi out of [Exodus 17:15](#)?
- Q: How should we recognize and give honor to God for showing up?
- Q: Which New Testament story do you recall where there was a battle, a struggle, a terrifying moment of fear and despair – and Jesus became the banner of God?
- Q: In [Mark 5:35-43](#) can you imagine this happening to you as a father? How would you feel? What would you do?

Diving even deeper into God's Word

God's Yahweh names

- YAHWEH-ROHI [yah-way-roh-hee]: "The Lord Our Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1) – After David pondered his relationship as a shepherd to his sheep, he realized that was exactly the relationship God had with him, and so he declares, "Yahweh-Rohi is my Shepherd. I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).
 - **YAHWEH-NISSI** [yah-way-nee-see]: "The Lord **Our Banner**" ([Exodus 17:15](#)), where [banner](#) is understood to be a rallying place. This name commemorates the desert victory over the Amalekites in [Exodus 17](#).
- Lazarus. Widow's son, Centurion's daughter.**
- **Isaiah 49:22** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the nations, **I will lift up my banner** to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips."
 - **Numbers 21:8** Then the LORD told him, "Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it **to a pole**. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!"
 - **Isaiah 5:26** He lifts up a **banner** for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily!
 - **Isaiah 11:10** In that day the **Root of Jesse will stand as a banner** for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.
 - **Isaiah uses this word, "nes" 10 times in prophetic foretelling of Jesus on the cross on a hill.**
 - **This is not the word "degel: a standard, banner," used elsewhere in O.T., Song of Solomon 2:4. Nor is it the word "shebet: rod, staff, club, scepter, tribe," used in Ps. 23:4.**

Strong's Concordance

ra'ah ראָה: break, to pasture, tend, graze.

New Testament: poimén – properly, a shepherd ("pastor" in Latin); (figuratively) someone who the Lord raises up to care for the total well-being of His flock (the people of the Lord).

nes נֵס: a standard, ensign, signal, sign. Root word: **nasas:** perhaps to be high or conspicuous.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

Psalm 23:1 Shepherd.—This image, as applied to God, appears in Hebrew literature first (Genesis 48:15; Genesis 49:24) of his relation to the individual (comp. Psalm 119:176); as the shepherd of His people the image is much more frequent (Psalm 78:52; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 63:11; Ezekiel 34; Micah 7:14).

Exodus 17:15. Moses built an altar.—Primarily, no doubt, to sacrifice thank-offerings upon it, as an acknowledgment of the Divine mercy in giving Israel the victory. But secondarily as a memorial—a monument to commemorate Israel's triumph.

And called the name of it Jehovah-nissi.—Jacob had named an altar "El-Elohe-Israel" (Genesis 33:20); but otherwise we do not find altars given special names. When an altar was built as a memorial, the purpose would be helped by a name, which would tend to keep the event commemorated in remembrance. Jehovah-nissi—"the Lord is my banner"—would tell to all who heard the word that here there had been a struggle, and that a people which worshipped Jehovah had been victorious. It is not clear that there is any reference to "the rod of God" (Exodus 17:9) as in any sense the "banner" under which Israel had fought. **The banner is Jehovah Himself, under whose protection Israel had fought and conquered.**

The banner, I suppose, to us English people, suggests a false idea. It suggests the notion of a flag, or some bit of flexible drapery which fluttered and flapped in the wind; **but the banner of old-world armies was a rigid pole, with some solid ornament of bright metal on the top, so as to catch the light. The banner-staff spoken of in the text links itself with the preceding incident. I said that Moses stood on the mountain-top with the rod in his hand. Now that rod was exactly a miniature banner, and when he lifted it, victory came to Israel; and when it fell, victory deserted their arms.** So by the altar's name he would say, Do not suppose that it was Moses that won the battle, nor that it was the rod that Moses carried in his hand that brought you strength. **The true Victor was Jehovah, and it was He who was Moses' Banner.** It was by Him that the lifted rod brought victory; as for Moses, he had nothing to do with it; and the people had to look higher than the hill-top where he sat.

MacLaren's Expositions

Psalm 23:1 The king who had been the shepherd-boy and had been taken from the quiet sheepcotes to rule over Israel, sings this little psalm of Him who is the true Shepherd and King of men. We do not know at what period of David's life it was written, but it sounds as if it were the work of his later years. There is a fulness of experience about it, and a tone of subdued, quiet confidence which speaks of a heart mellowed by years, and of a faith made sober by many a trial. A young man would not write so calmly, and a life which was just opening would not afford material for such a record of God's guardianship in all changing circumstances.

The psalm puts the rest and refreshment *first*, as being the most marked characteristic of God's dealings. After all, it is so. The years are years of unbroken continuity of outward blessings.

This rest and refreshment has for its consequence the restoration of the soul, which includes in it both the invigoration of the natural life by the outward sort of these blessings, and the quickening and restoration of the spiritual life by the inward feeding upon God and repose in Him.

The soul thus restored is then led on another stage; 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake,' -that is to say, God guides us into work.

Exodus 17:15. We are all familiar with that picturesque incident of the conflict between Israel and Amalek, which ended in victory and the erection of this memorial trophy. Moses, as you remember, went up on the mount whilst Joshua and the men of war fought in the plain. But I question whether we usually attach the right meaning to the symbolism of this event. **We ordinarily, I suppose, think of Moses as interceding on the mountain with God. But there is no word about prayer in the story, and the attitude of Moses is contrary to the idea that his occupation was intercession. He sat there, with the rod of God in his hand, and the rod of God was the symbol and the vehicle of divine power. When he lifted the rod Amalek fled before Israel; when the rod dropped Israel fled before Amalek. That is to say, the uplifted hand was not the hand of intercession, but the hand which communicated power and victory.** And so, when the conflict is over, Moses builds this memorial of thanksgiving to God, and piles together these great stones-which, perhaps, still stand in some of the unexplored valleys of that weird desert land-to teach Israel the laws of conflict and the conditions of victory. These laws and conditions are implied in the name which he gave to the altar that he built- Jehovah Nissi, 'the Lord is my Banner.'

The Banner was the symbol of the cause for which an army fought, or the cognizance of the king or commander whom it followed.

Let us remember, on the other hand, that whilst it is our simple bounden duty, as Christian men and women, **to reckon ourselves as anointed and called for the purpose of warring against sin and sorrow, wherever we can assail them, there is nothing more dangerous, and few things more common, than the hasty identification of fighting for some whim, or prejudice, or narrow view, or partial conception of our own, with contending for the establishment of the will of God.** **How many wicked things have been done in this world for God's glory! How many obstinate men, who were really only forcing their own opinions down people's throats because they were theirs, have fancied themselves to be pure-minded warriors for God!** How easy it has been, in all generations, to make the sign of the Cross over what had none of the spirit of the Cross in it; and to say, 'The cause is God's, and therefore I war for it'; when the reality was, 'The cause is mine, and therefore I take it for granted that it is God's.'

The banner in ancient warfare, even more than in modern, moved in front of the host, and determined the movements of the army. And so, by the stones that he piled and the name which he gave them, Moses taught Israel and us that they and **we are under the command of God, and that it is the movements of His staff that are to be followed.**

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Psalm 23:1. Under a metaphor borrowed from scenes of pastoral life, with which David was familiar, he describes God's providential care in providing refreshment, guidance, protection, and abundance, and so affording grounds of confidence in His perpetual favor.

1. Christ's relation to His people is often represented by the figure of a shepherd (Joh 10:14; Heb 13:20; 1Pe 2:25; 5:4), and therefore the opinion that He is the Lord here so described, and in Ge 48:15; Ps 80:1; Isa 40:11, is not without some good reason.

Exodus 17:15 All throughout Isaiah and Jeremiah this word “nes נֶסֶ” for banner or standard was also used as a rally cry or point of gathering the army or people together.

Benson Commentary

Jeremiah 51:27-29. Set ye up a standard — blow the trumpet — These were common signals for assembling armies together.

Internet Links

[Hebrew use of the word shepherd](#)

[Names of God](#)

[YHWH Is My Shepherd / YHWH Is My Friend](#)

[What does Jehovah Rohi mean?](#)

[What Does It Mean that God Is Jehovah Rohi?](#)

[The Lord is my shepherd scriptures](#) as well as [here](#).

[THE LORD MY BANNER](#)

[The Synagogue: Background & Overview](#)