

The Shepherd King

Description

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to
16 So they went with haste and [by searching] found Mary and Joseph, and the B
17 And when they saw it, they made known what had been told them concerning th
18 And all who heard it were astounded and marveled at what the shepherds told
19 But Mary was keeping within herself all these things (sayings), weighing an
20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things

Luke 2:15-20 AMPC

I've read The Gospels numerous times, and heard the story of the birth of Jesus, or sometimes more commonly known as the Christmas story too many times to remember. However, recently as I was re-reading "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho, there was an exchange between 2 characters that really caught my attention. The main character who was formerly a shepherd was retelling a story of how a king had spoke with him and gave him the urim and thummin which he possessed, but as he told the story to the other character, he spoke with the defensiveness of someone who is trying to convince another of the authenticity of their story. The other character whom he spoke with ignored his defensiveness and said something that shook my world as I read it, he said that, "it was shepherds who 1st recognized a king;" in reference to the shepherds in the verses above. As I thought about those words in the book it immediately took me back to the Bible when the shepherds who were visited by the angels in the field, telling them that the savior was born, and sending them to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-14) to visit the savior. I find it interesting that God chose to reveal the birth of his son, a king, and the savior of the world to shepherds.....until I realized that Jesus is "The Good Shepherd" as he referred to himself in John chapter 10.

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks *and* lays down His [own] life for the sheep. [Ps. 23.]
John 10:11 AMPC

Jesus came to Earth to save his sheep/people, and protect them from the wolf aka Satan. It would only make sense that God would send earthly shepherds, those who understood the responsibility of caring for and protecting those who could not protect themselves, sometimes even putting themselves at danger, to see the heavenly shepherd who would ultimately sacrifice his life to save his sheep. We would do well to remember God's relationship with shepherds in the Bible to understand his use of them in this moment.

Notable shepherds

- Abel – Genesis 4:4
- Abraham – Genesis 13
- Jacob – Genesis 30

- Moses – Exodus 3
- David – 1 Samuel 16

God has a way of using the plain, ordinary, average, and overlooked to bring attention to, or bring about his perfect plan. It was no accident in Luke 2 when he sent the angel to visit the shepherds in the field, because I would imagine they had often spent restless nights under the stars looking towards heaven, asking for a sign or direction from God on where to lead their flock for food and water, or from protection from danger. It was this reliance and intimacy with God that most likely put them in position to recognize or hear from the angel who visited them on this night. This reliance on God and the position of the shepherds in an isolated place I feel was reminiscent to: Abel bringing the best of his flock to God in sacrifice, or Abraham giving his tenth to Melchizedek, Jacob seeing the angels ascending and descending as he slept on a rock before crossing the Jordan, Moses observing the burning bush while with his flock at Mount Sinai, and David writing Psalms to God in the pastures alone. These shepherds heard the voice of God through the angel and responded accordingly, and because of that they were the first to see the “Shepherd King” who would give his life to save the world. These shepherds because they understood the relationship between shepherd and sheep, and the need for sheep to trust in and appropriately respond to the directions of the shepherd in order to ensure safety, security, and sustenance were able to respond to the direction of God; and therefore were able to encounter the shepherd who would ultimately lead them to salvation. Those shepherds like the sheep they tended to in the pasture responded to the voice of God with haste, and by following God’s voice/direction, they arrived at the “bread of life,” the savior of the world, aka the Shepherd King.

27 The sheep that are My own hear *and* are listening to My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me.
John 10:27 AMPC

Reflection Time

Have you found the Shepherd King? What you need to hear or see for you to respond to the God’s direction/voice? What did you do after having a personal encounter with God? Are you a sheep willing to follow “The Good Shepherd,” or do you find yourself often straying away like sheep being led to slaughter?

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1. Faith
2. Uncategorized
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1. Faith
2. Jesus
3. June 2022
4. Luke
5. New Testament
6. obedience

- 7. Sheep
- 8. Shepherd

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