

# Foretold

## COMFORT MY PEOPLE

## PART 2

### *The Shepherd's Rod*

#### **ISAIAH 40:1-11 AND PSALM 23**

### INTRODUCTION

It is common language to refer to Jesus as a Shepherd in the Christian world. We also use the same type of language with Pastors and Elders (in these cases we call them “undershepherds”). In our modern world the word “shepherd” is hard to define as most of us have never been around one, much less studied them or their habits. Even if you do know something of modern shepherding, it looks quite different today than it did when these passages were written. Shepherds were not put in place just to watch sheep eat all day and sleep under the stars at night. They were much more than that.

A shepherd's job was to protect the sheep from wolves, bears and the elements. Many threats come out of the wilderness and the sheep have no way of protecting themselves. Jesus Christ does the same thing for us. He protects us from the enemy and the attacks that he brings. He shows us where to lay down and causes us to rest. There are times that we willingly head into a dangerous area and Jesus will chase us down and lead us back to safety. (Pastors and elders are charged to do the same) Psalm 23:4 is a very interesting verse when we look at it more closely.

Most of us are familiar with the fact that Jesus leads us through valleys of shadow and death. What may be news to us is that His rod and staff are to be a comfort. Again, shepherds carry these long staffs for a few reasons. Yes, they are for fending off the enemy and we should take comfort in that. But, they are meant for more. They carry those staffs to whack the sheep in the direction they want them to go. They also make the sheep rest. How? If there is a sheep that runs off and gets lost regularly, they will take their staff and break the leg of that sheep so that it can't run away anymore. After the leg is broken, they will set the leg and put the sheep around their neck and carry it for the healing process. It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase, “He causes me to lie down in green pastures.” Our Savior, Jesus Christ, will cause us to rest and lie down. Sometimes our Pastors and elders can do the same. It is not something to be resented but something to help us understand how much He cares for us. He is our comfort.

## *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*

1. How does the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep mirror our relationship to Jesus? What about our relationship to the leaders of the church? How can we be better sheep?
2. What are some of the descriptions you use to describe God? Jesus? How do shepherds and Jesus blend? What are some of the characteristics that are not obvious at first glance?
3. When is a time that you have felt like Jesus was protecting you with His staff? How does it make you feel knowing that the God of the universe is protecting you from all enemies?
4. Knowing that there are “undershepherds” within the church, how does that change how you view your pastor or leaders in general? Does it change how we should pray for them? How can we help them with their tasks?
5. Have you ever run away from God to the point of Him needing to “break your leg”? What did you learn from that experience? How does that memory comfort you now? What does it mean to be comforted by God?

## *WRAP UP*

Having a Biblical view of who God is so important to our Christian walk. He has placed Jesus Christ over us as our True Shepherd and church leaders as undershepherds. Sometimes, we want to fight the system and run away but He will not let us go far before He places us around His neck to enjoy His rest and comfort. He feeds us, takes care of us and watches over us. We truly have a God that loves us more than we could ever imagine.