

The Good Shepherds

When writing about some of the messengers of God, Bahá'u'lláh mentions David. (Kitab-I-Iqan, page 51) Who was David?

David was a simple shepherd boy who was chosen by God to become the King of Israel. As a young boy he spent his days looking after his father's sheep. He was known to be kind, thoughtful and good and he felt very close to God.

He was also a good musician. He sang as he played his harp. The songs that he wrote himself are all in praise of God and they are called Psalms. (We say this word as "Sarms," to rhyme with "arms") One of the most famous is Psalm 23, in which David compares God to a Shepherd. David knew how his sheep needed him to look after them. He realised that we need God's protection and love in the same way if we are to be healthy, happy and kept safe from danger. Here is David's song. Get someone to read it with you to help explain some of the difficult words and the meaning of lines you might not understand. Write down these meanings on the right-hand side of the page next to the lines of the Psalm, so that you can see them easily.

Psalm 23

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.

Many, many years later in the City of David, called Bethlehem a baby was born. He was Jesus and was from the family of David.

When He grew up he travelled around the country teaching people about God. he did this by telling them stories, called Parables. In these stories He spoke about things in a way that the people would understand.

Like David before Him, He also compared God to a good Shepherd. Many people were cross with Jesus because he would be friendly to someone they thought was bad or sinful. Jesus explained to them why He wanted to help these people in this Parable:

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." I say to you that likewise there shall be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.