

1 Peter 2:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Analysis

Peter concludes the slavery section with gospel imagery. "For ye were as sheep going astray" (ēte gar hōs probata planōmena) echoes Isaiah 53:6—universal human condition of lostness, wandering from God like wayward sheep without shepherd, vulnerable and directionless. "But are now returned" (alla epestraphēte nyn)—conversion is return, coming back to where you belong. "Unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (epi ton poimena kai episkopon tōn psychōn hymōn). "Shepherd" (poimena) emphasizes care, protection, guidance. "Bishop" (episkopon) literally means overseer—one who watches over, supervises. Christ shepherds and oversees believers' souls, providing what they lacked while astray: guidance, protection, care, accountability.

Historical Context

Isaiah 53:6's "all we like sheep have gone astray" described Israel's rebellion. Peter applies this to Gentile converts, once lost in paganism, now returned to true Shepherd. The shepherd metaphor appears throughout Scripture (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, John 10) emphasizing God's caring leadership. For slaves addressed in context, knowing Christ personally cared for their souls (regardless of earthly masters' treatment) provided profound comfort. Early church understood conversion as return—prodigal coming home, lost sheep found, dead raised to life. The "Bishop of souls" language later influenced church office terminology (episkopos/bishop), though here refers primarily to Christ.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding your pre-conversion state as 'going astray' increase gratitude for Christ's shepherding?
2. In what practical ways does Christ currently function as Shepherd and Overseer of your soul?

Interlinear Text

ἦτε	γὰρ	ὥς	πρόβατα	πλανώμενα·	ἀλλ'	ἐπεστράφητε		
ye were	For	as	sheep	going astray	but	are		
G2258	G1063	G5613	G4263	G4105	G235	G1994		
νῦν	ἐπὶ	τὸν	ποιμένα	καὶ	ἐπίσκοπον	τῶν	ψυχῶν	ὑμῶν
now	unto	G3588	the Shepherd	and	Bishop	G3588	souls	of your
G3568	G1909		G4166	G2532	G1985		G5590	G5216

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 53:6 (Parallel theme): All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Ezekiel 34:6 (Parallel theme): My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

Acts 20:28 (Parallel theme): Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Psalms 119:176 (Parallel theme): I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

Matthew 9:36 (Parallel theme): But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 18:12 (Parallel theme): How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

1 Peter 5:4 (Parallel theme): And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Hebrews 13:20 (Parallel theme): Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Jeremiah 23:2 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.