

Ole Miss FCA Weekly Devotional: 4/26/10

The Power and Passion of the Master Coach, Elliot Johnson



Thought of the Week:

God's Glory is Declared in His Name, Yahweh-Rohi, "The Lord, My Shepherd"

Verse of the Week:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. Psalm 23:1

Seldom has one man demonstrated the loving concern for another that Gale Sayers showed to teammate Brian Piccolo. Sayers, a black man from Kansas University, and Piccolo, an Italian from Wake Forest University, were roommates and best friends on the Chicago Bears' 1969 squad. That year, Piccolo was tragically stricken with cancer, and Sayers spent hours by his side. Gale would return early from games to get to the hospital to encourage his friend. When he was presented the George S. Halas Award as the most courageous player in pro football for the 1969 season, Sayers had this to say:

"You flatter me by giving me this award, but I tell you here and now that I accept it for Brian Piccolo. It is mine tonight; it is Brian Piccolo's tomorrow. . . . I love Brian Piccolo, and I'd like all of you to love him too."

Think of having a friend who loves you more than Gale Sayers loved Brian Piccolo. That is what every Christian has in the God of the universe! The name Yahweh-Rohi designates Him as the loving Shepherd who feeds His flock of tired, hungry sheep. In Psalm 23, called the "Shepherd's Psalm," David reviewed a life of stormy trials, a life filled with passion and warfare. He took great comfort in the thought that the great Shepherd always "restored his soul" after the storm. The word Rohi is further translated companion or friend, expressing the idea of "an intimate helper who shares life together." No other name of Yahweh has the tender connotation of Yahweh-Rohi. While His other names reveal His awesome holiness and majesty, the designation Shepherd reveals God's condescension to walk with and guide mortal, sinful creatures on this earth. Isaiah says of the Lord, "He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young" (Isaiah 40:11). Ezekiel reveals the tender, loving care given by the true Shepherd of His people (Ezekiel 34:11-16) in contrast to the false shepherds who cared only for themselves (Ezekiel 34:1-10). Good shepherds in the land of Israel live with their sheep and call each by name. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd. A shepherd protects his sheep from thieves and from preying animals. He leads them to rich pastures and to fresh, pure water.

The Lord Jesus Christ is beautifully personified by the name Yahweh-Rohi. "I am the Good Shepherd," He said (John 10:11). He knows His sheep and they know Him (John 10:14). He laid down His life for His sheep (John 10: 11, 15). No one forcefully took His life, for He laid it down willingly (John 10:17-18). His sheep will follow Him, for they realize He is Lord. They will never perish, for He holds them in His hand (John 10:27-28).

The Good Shepherd knows our peculiarities, our frailties, and our weaknesses. Yet He loves and leads us. Surely goodness and love will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23:6). Thank you, Yahweh-Rohi! Thank you, Jesus!

Time Out:

- (1) From Psalm 23, list all the verbs that tell what Yahweh-Rohi does for His sheep (verses 2, 3, 4, and 5).
- (2) Read John 10:1-30
 - Does the Good Shepherd drive His sheep or lead His sheep (verses 3-4)?
 - Why do the sheep not follow a stranger (verse 5)?
 - What has Jesus the Good Shepherd, done for His sheep (verses 11 and 15)?
 - Did Jesus tell the Jewish people plainly that He was Messiah (verses 24-25)?
 - Why didn't the Jews believe Jesus (verse 27)?
 - What do Jesus' real sheep do (verse 27)?
 - What promise did Jesus make to His sheep (verses 28-29)?
- (3) Imagine living in a violent, stressful world if there were no Shepherd to help you. How can you influence those who have rejected the Good Shepherd to come to Him?