

TREAD DISEASE & VICTORIOUS YET

One morning, the goatherder, who had charge of thousands of goats, awoke to find many of his animals infested with some strange kind of skin disease. A few of the animals had lost large patches of hair, and others were scratching until they bled. The infected animals would not even eat because of the discomfort they suffered.

The herdsman isolated the infected animals and treated them with strong iodine. The next day, they were worse, and many more animals had contracted the disease. He isolated the newly infected animals and treated all the sick ones with an antibiotic ointment.

The following day, over half of the huge herd showed symptoms. There was no way he could isolate all the sick animals. He did not have enough medication on hand to begin to treat them all, and most of them were beginning to look really bad from not eating. The herdsman called a veterinarian.

By the time the veterinarian arrived the following day, the entire herd of goats was in awful shape with the mangy disease. The goats were bloody from scratching. They were bald. Many of them had huge, open, pus-draining sores over most of their bodies. They were a miserable, pitiful sight.

For days the veterinarian and the herdsman worked together trying one formula after another. They used every treatment they could think of. They took skin cultures. They posted dead goats. They were out of ideas, and death stalked the herd.

Finally the veterinarian admitted defeat. "There's no way I can understand this terrible condition," he told the herdsman, "unless I become a goat and live with them for a while. If I do that, perhaps I can learn what the problem is and how to treat it."

"You can't do that," protested the herdsman. "It's too dangerous. What if you can't change back?"

"I have to take that chance," said the veterinarian. "I love these animals, and I can't stand to see them suffer." So the veterinarian became a goat and lived with the herd. Many of the sick animals resented his intrusion and beat him unmercifully. Others were willing to trust him, to believe he was what he said he was. Those were the ones who were cleared of their mangy condition and became sleek, shiny and productive once again.

When a large number of goats was healed and the rest were still fighting the veterinarian, he decided the time had come to leave the herd, reacquire his original form, and work with the herd from afar. Even after the veterinarian left the herd, goats that believed in him, lived in fellowship with him, and trusted him remained well and whole while those around them continued to be plagued with the mange and be haunted by death.

This story is not so far-fetched. It is the story of how our Creator came to live with us as a man named Jesus. It is the story of how he left our existence through death to wash us clean of our plague so that we might live. It is the story of how many disbelieve, reject Him and continue to be haunted by death. It is the story of how many believe and accept Him into their lives to live with and for Him and because of that know a freedom from fear and a quality of life never before imagined.

This happy ending can be yours if you will ask Jesus to be Lord of your life and Savior of your soul. When you do this, you can live the same kind of whole, productive, clean, forgiven life the cooperative goats lived.