

## "Psalm 23-A Fresh Look at the Shepherd and the Sheep" Psalm 23

This Psalm is called the "Pearl of the Psalms" for one reason...it's value! The descriptions of the "Christ as our Shepherd" and "we as His sheep" are vivid and precise. Our study enhances our love and loyalty to Him!

Recommended book: *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* by Phillip Keller

### **1 THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

He created me as the object of His affection!

"Do I really recognize his right to me?"

"Do I find freedom and complete fulfillment in this arrangement?" (Pg. 29)

### **I SHALL NOT WANT**

"He is the owner who delights in His flock. Well-fed, safe, and flourishing in His care." (Pg. 31)

### **2 HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES**

Four things that must be true is sheep are to lie down:

1. Free of all fear
2. Free of social friction from within the herd
3. Free from flies and parasites
4. Free from hunger

2 Tim. 1:17

The grass is not just green accidentally, this is Shepherd's work.

Read page 47 "How he clears...."

He delights to see me contented, quiet, and at rest.

### **HE LEADS ME BESIDE STILL WATERS**

Juxtaposed Jer. 2:13....muddy water/broken cisterns

Guard against casual sin Rom. 8 and Gal. 5 (pg. 57)

The sheep drink pure, pristine, alpine cold water!!

### **3 HE RESTORES MY SOUL**

"Cast Sheep" (Lying on its back...it cannot get up.) Pg. 63

"All this time I worked on the cast sheep..."

If shepherd notices the fleece is too heavy filled with filth, bugs, etc., he shears...what relief to be rid of it all! ...

\*\* I find it interesting that the Hebrew word for restore is primarily "RETURN"!

## **HE GUIDES ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAMES SAKE**

Ruts versus Routes?

Ruts...“sheeped to death...same paths.....same results (Keller)  
(Prov. 14:12/16:25..“There is a way to seems right to man but the end is the way of death.”)

Routes....Letting the Lord decided where I go, how I follow, or what I will do with my life. Mark 8:34 “Take up your cross and follow”. “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly..” Jn 10:10

### **WHY? FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE!**

To me, the most important words in this psalm! This is the purpose of life...His glory.

TABLE TALK.....HOW does He make me lie down, lead me beside still water, restore me, and guide me for HIS NAME’S SAKE?

## **4 THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DEATH,**

Remember the context.....the sheep are being led UP a mountain to higher ground.

Why is it called “the valley of death”?

It is called the “valley of death” for so many reasons...the dangers of predators, ravaging sudden floods, and the danger of falling off on the way up....they need the shepherd’s leadership...HE KNOWS THE WAY. He has walked it many times. They have not.

The ultimate goal for the shepherd for the sheep....

At the top of the mountain, there is

1. Better Food 2. Better Water 3. They Have Learned Quiet Acceptance

Jn. 16:33 “In this world, there will be many tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

They walk through the valley of the shadow of death but they do not die....“I walk through!”

### **I FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME.”**

\*\*\*Why? Because they believe the above mentioned....they also believe in the goodness of the rod and staff!

### **YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF THEY COMFORT ME”**

(Completely connected to why the sheep has no fear!)

Rod..symbol of authority...modern day rod is the SCRIPTURES.  
Protection from predators...the WORD.

Staff...symbol of "kindness and long-suffering" (Keller..pg. 101)..the shepherd laying the staff alongside the sheep ..I love this! What a picture of love and companionship.

## **5 YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES"**

We know why David is on the run. He is being hunted down by Saul. If we can get into David's head....

(Keller.. "tableland"...the shepherd goes ahead and prepares the place for the sheep....cleans the water supply repairs the dams, fertilizes the grass, brings salt, and maintains the food supply.)

David has ultimate faith God will intercede for him because he is God's precious creation.

### **YOU HAVE ANOINTED MY HEAD WITH OIL"**

Two fold interpretation:

1. Sheep: From the sheep's perspective, the most annoying thing is flies and insects. Apparently, the only antidote to flies, bugs, etc. was an olive oil , linseed oil, and sulphur medicine.
2. David's Kingship..our favor! Samuel anointed him as a future king in the same way, He anoints us as "His beloved." Eph. 1, the book of Rev (the bride of Christ), I Pet.

### **MY CUP OVERFLOWS"**

Interpretively, what does this mean? Is this the cup of suffering, blessing, contentment or victory?

TABLE TALK...What does this mean "My cup overflows?" What is the cup?"

My cup overflows because Jesus Christ dies for all my sin...in every life sin-suffering. (Adamic and hidden fault/presump. sin)

Jesus calls His agony in the Garden of Geth. "a cup".

But because He died for me, my cup overflows with the assurance of eternal life!! My cup (or life) overflows with the knowledge and love of HIM!

## **6 SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALLTHE DAYS OF MY LIFE"**

What is the connection to the previous verse? If I am enduring a cup of suffering, how can I understand this last verse?

If I am enduring a cup of blessing, I think I can understand this . But only experientially!

PG. 133

### **BECAUSE I WILL DWELL IN HIS HOUSE FOREVER**

For fun, flip the verse.....Because I will dwell in His house forever, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me....when the author uses the word "life"...it is eternal and earthly!

Earthly, I can believe because He has promised to be a GOOD SHEPHERD and I choose to trust and follow or not.

Mission Statement?

---

### **Extra! Extra!**

Having completed the questions posed in your Bible Study packet, here are some for today's lesson encompassing the "whole" of the study text. Consider this your "scratch pad" for extra information!

"The Lord is my Shepherd" What does that imply?

- 1.
- 2.

I Shall Not Want

He Makes Me Lie Down in Green Pastures

Four things that must be true of sheep are to lie down..

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

"He Leads Me Beside Still Waters"

Compare with Jeremiah 2:13 and counter this with all of Romans 8 and Galatians 5!

"He Restores My Soul"

"He Guides Me in the Paths of Righteousness for His Name's Sake"

For you, is it "Ruts versus Routes"?

Ruts....

Routes...

TABLE TALK...Pick One

1. HOW does he make me lie down, lead me, restore, and guide me for His Name's sake?
2. HOW can I carve new routes of growth and not the same old ruts that lead now me nowhere?

"Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I Will Fear No Evil"  
What are the ultimate goals for the Shepherd?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Compare with Jn. 16:33 "I have overcome the world!"

"Your Rod and Staff They Comfort Me"

(This question is in your study packet but you may write more here if you like!)

Rod-  
Staff-

"You Prepare a Table Before Me in the Presence of My Enemies"

"You Have Anointed My Head With Oil"

1. Sheep Perspective!
2. David's Kingship/Our Favor

"My Cup Overflows"

TABLE TALK....What is the cup? What does this mean?

"Surely Goodness and Mercy Shall Follow Me All the Days of My Life"

Do you have a Mission Statement for Psalm 23?