

The Lord Is My Shepherd

By Trey Sullins

Picture a flock of sheep lead by a shepherd. They do not wander away. They have their needs provided and are safe. That image of peace and comfort is exactly what is being talked about in Psalm 23. When we read this psalm of David, we can find three qualities that make the Almighty a great shepherd.

First, David shows that God was his restorer. David clearly says this in verse three when he says, "He restores my soul." The text means that God revived and reinvigorated him. All of these words express the idea that God gave him strength, health, life, and energy again. The way that God does this is by leading him beside the still waters and giving him rest in green pastures (2). Imagine the scene that is being painted here by David. A clean and healthy sheep laying in fresh safe pastures. The Shepherd leads his sheep to quiet and calm water to drink from. The image is that of total safety and comfort!

This comfort and care is expressed similarly in the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1-14. Here in this text Naaman is told by to go down and wash in the Jordan river in order to be healed of his leprosy. After some resistance, he listens, and his leprosy is completely removed. His leprosy was painful and nasty, but the restoring power of God made his skin like the "flesh of a little child." This was only an example of God's physical power to restore, but that power to restore is so much greater and more important on the spiritual side.

Our God has promised this restoration to us as well. He can restore us physically as seen in Matthew 6:30. Here Jesus tells us that if God cares even for the flowers, then of course He cares even more so for us! The spiritual side is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Here a list of sins is given. However, the important part is verse 11 which says, "and such were some of you." In other words, some of these very Christians who he was writing to were once living in terrible sin and were certainly condemned by the will of God. But now these Christians were washed and sanctified by the great Shepherd.

Second, David shows that God was his leader. The most obvious role of a shepherd is to guide the sheep but notice where this Shepherd leads the sheep "in the paths of righteousness" (Psalm 23:3). God leads them to the things that are right. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read that all scripture is given by God and profits us for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Therefore, God determines what is righteous and how we must live if we are to be righteous. That makes Him the candidate for leading the sheep "in righteousness."

In the days of Noah God determined what was right and what was wrong. He tried to lead people to the paths of righteous. When the people refused, he determined that punishment must be made (Genesis 6:7). At the same time God saw Noah and lead him through safety and to righteousness (Genesis 6:8, 14).

God is our leader! Consider the very fact that God gave us a path and way to live by today. The word of God is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16). It also gives us answers to all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). As He is our shepherd and leader, we must obey Him and give Him the proper glory that He deserves.

Third, David shows that God was his comforter. In verse four of Psalm 23 David explains that even though he was walking through the shadow of death he feared no evil. As a follower of God, David had nothing to fear even in facing death. However, because God was with David, he would not have to face death from his enemies. This is especially powerful when you think about all the times that David was in physical danger during his life. In 1 Samuel 18:11, Saul wanted to kill David. In 2 Samuel 8:10, the Syrians wanted to kill David. Again in 2 Samuel 21:16, the Philistines wanted to kill him. Through all of these events David had no fear but was comforted.

This same level of comfort is promised to us as well. God is the “God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3, Romans 15:5) so certainly He would have no trouble in comforting us in whatever ways we might need. Furthermore, His plan brings us comfort. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 explains to us that the Lord Jesus will come back to get His own and take us to the Father. In verse 18 the text says, “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” What could be more comforting than knowing that God Almighty has cleansed us of our sins and will allow us to be with Him for an eternity in heaven?

The life of David is one filled with examples of God’s shepherding. As David showed in Psalm 23 God has all the qualities of a great shepherd and some of those are that He is a restorer, a leader, and a comforter. In order to receive these blessings though we must be one of His sheep! Following and obeying Him ensures that He is our shepherd and will be with us and protect us. Is God your Shepherd?