

A Study in Psalm 23

Lesson 1: Our Confidence in God

I. Introduction

David is the writer of this song. He probably wrote it in the latter days of his life, perhaps remembering back to the days of his youth when he tended sheep (1 Samuel 16:11).

"The language could not be more simple, more chaste, more realistic, or more penetrating. It pictures God in love with His people, with rest in his bosom, with grace for all our needs, with comfort and joy in sorrow, with a message of hope so sweet and clear that music breaks forth from the soul." (Kyle Yatex)

II. The Lord is My Shepherd

A. The Lord is my Shepherd

Who is my shepherd, my owner, my master? THE LORD IS. JEHOVAH IS. Almighty God is my personal shepherd – look at 1 Chronicles 29:11.

1. The LORD...The Tetragrammaton YHWH, the LORD, or Yahweh, the personal name of God and his most frequent designation in Scripture, occurs 5,321 times in the Old Testament. Scripture speaks of the Tetragrammaton as "this glorious and fearful name." (Deut. 28:58) or simply "the name" (Lev. 24:11). But it connotes God's nearness, his concern for man and the revelation of his redemptive covenant.

NOTE: "ELOHIM" is the plural name for Deity in the Old Testament. "ADONAY" is the plural of "Majesty" or "Excellence." The 7th century Massoretes took vowels from "Adonay" and put them into YHWH and produced the hybrid English form of "Jehovah."

2. He is my master, by right of my creation:
 - a. He who created all things – Col. 1:16
 - b. By whom all things hold together – Col. 1:17
3. He is my master by right of redemption – Is. 53:6, 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, 2 Peter 2:1

B. He is my shepherd

1. A word about ownership...(He chooses us, buys us, calls us by name, and delights in caring for us). Look at Isa. 53:6.
 - a. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price – 1 Cor. 6:20
 - b. The owner "marks" his sheep with an earmark, similar to the Old Testament marking of a slave who chose to stay with their masters (John 10:14).

- c. Forever after, we belong to Him (John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.")
- 2. Note the personal, intimate relationship.
 - a. We can come in close...Heb. 10:22
 - b. We can call Him "Daddy"...Rom. 8:15
 - c. We know He understands our feelings...Heb. 4:15-16
- C. The Lord is my shepherd...

** The Hebrew word for *shepherd* comes from the root word meaning to "feed." The shepherd met all the needs of the sheep in his care. Note how David chooses an intimate metaphor, switching from the pictures of God as "king," "deliverer," "rock" or "shield." Here he pictures God as the shepherd living with the flock as a guide, physician and protector.

- 1. The Lord established a relationship with us...based upon His character...His provision, and His love. Compare John 10:14 with Matt. 9:36.
- 2. The shepherd is intimately acquainted with his sheep. Look at Ps. 139 and the illustration of the shepherd as the door in John 10:9-11.
- 3. The shepherd must carefully lead the sheep...he can't drive them like cattle.
 - a. Ps. 139:10 – Even lead them...shall Thy hand lead me...
 - b. Ps. 5:8 – Lead me in Thy righteousness
 - c. Ps. 25:5 – Lead me in Thy truth
- 4. The shepherd must care for their every need

Our shepherd was even willing to lay down His life for His sheep – John 10:15-16

III.I Shall Not Want

Because of who my shepherd is, I shall not want...

- A. There is nothing (important) lacking. He is not referring to material things. Consider Rev. 3:17 and Mark 10:21.
- B. I am utterly content under his care.

1 Tim. 6:6 "*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*"

John 10:10 "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*"

"By committing myself to the care of the good shepherd, I am raised above the fear of want." (Spurgeon)

It is God's responsibility to provide...it is my responsibility to keep my perspective clear. Look at 1 Kings 17:7-15.

IV. So what? The Application for 21st Century Living

Ps. 37 – Fill in the blanks for confident living

vs. 1 – Do not _____

vs. 3 _____ in the _____

vs. 4 _____ yourself _____

vs. 5 _____ yourself _____

vs. 7 _____ in the Lord and _____ for Him

vs. 8 Do not _____ it only leads to _____

vs. 25 _____ !