

Psalm 23 (Part 1)

"The LORD is my shepherd"

4-10-2019

Introduction:

** Christian, relish in the fact that YAHWEH is your shepherd!*

I. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – POWERFULLY**

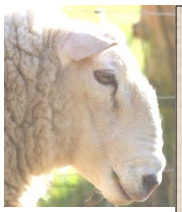
II. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PRESENTLY**

III. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PERSONALLY**

IV. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PROVIDENTIALLY**

V. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PERMANENTLY**

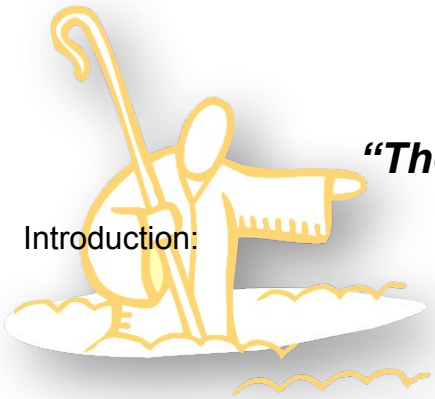




The Lord is not only our Shepherd (Psalm 23); He is our GOOD Shepherd! (See John 10)

What does the Good Shepherd do for His sheep?

- ***The Good Shepherd* Sacrificed His life to save His sheep (v.11-13)**
- ***The Good Shepherd* Personally Knows each of His sheep (v.14-15)**
- ***The Good Shepherd* Gathers & Unites His sheep into one fold (v.16-18)**
- ***The Good Shepherd* Speaks to His Sheep and Leads them through life (v.26-27)**
- ***The Good Shepherd* Eternally Holds His sheep and Keeps them Secure (v.28-30)**



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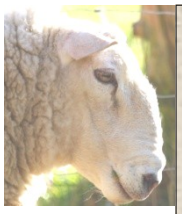
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- ***The Good Shepherd*** _____ **His sheep and Keeps them** _____ **(v.28-30)**

Psalm 23 (Part 1)
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Introduction:

This psalm is probably the most well-known gem of all the Bible. It has dried many tears, and has comforted many hearts.

This psalm never loses its applicability; its practicality will never be exhausted. As long as men (like sheep that wander) are in need of guidance, protection, and provision, they can find it in the LORD who is the Shepherd of His sheep.

"The Lord is my shepherd" = lit. "Yahweh is the one shepherding me" (active participle - shows continuing action).

The reason why God frequently uses the "sheep" motif as an illustration of His relationship to His children is because there are many similarities between sheep and people.

--Sheep, like people, are dumb and will wander (if left to themselves)

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

--Sheep, like people, are dirty and need the cleansing that comes from the shepherd

--Sheep, like people, are dependent (and require the shepherd to led, feed, and stay with them)

Psalm 23:1-3 A Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. [3] He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

--Sheep, like people, are vulnerable and need the shepherd to protect them

Psalm 23:4

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

(Sheep, like people, if abandoned would be lost, ravaged and devoured by wolves, and die)

"Keep in mind the Jewish shepherds did not tend the sheep in order to slaughter them, unless they were used for sacrifice. Shepherds tended them that the sheep might give wool, milk, and lambs." (Wiersbe, p. 330).

** Christian, relish in the fact that YAHWEH is your shepherd!*

“The Lord! But who is the Lord? What is His character? Does He have adequate credentials to be my Shepherd—my manager—my owner? (W. Phillip Keller, A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, Zondervan, 1970, p. 15).

I. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – POWERFULLY**

"The Lord is my shepherd" = lit. "Yahweh is the one shepherding me" (active participle - shows continuing action). Attention is immediately placed on the name of Yahweh or Jehovah.

The Shepherd – Sheep motif “Implies a profound yet practical working relationship between a human being and his Maker.” (Keller, p. 17) A relationship must exist in order for Him to be your Shepherd.

By drawing attention to the Name Yahweh, David is showing Him to be his exclusive (singular) shepherd.

God can and does use “undershepherds” in our lives, but none can function as a vicor for Him.

II. ***YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PRESENTLY**

The Lord is not merely my future shepherd, nor merely my shepherd in the past, but He is my shepherd NOW; When I need Him while I live from day to day.

III. *YAHWEH is <u>my</u> Shepherd* – <u>PERSONALLY</u>

"To think that God in Christ is deeply concerned about me as a particular person…" (Keller, p. 17).

"Obviously, David, in this Psalm is speaking not as the shepherd, though he was one, but as a sheep, one of the flock. He spoke with a strong sense of pride and devotion and admiration. It was as though he literally boasted aloud, "Look at who my shepherd is—my owner—my manager!" The Lord is!" (Keller, p. 18)

"After all, he knew from firsthand experience that the lot in life of any particular sheep depended on the type of man who owned it. Some men were gentle, kid, intelligent, brave, and selfless in their devotion to their stock. Under one man sheep would struggle, starve, and suffer endless hardship. In another's care they would flourish and thrive contentedly." (Keller, p. 18)

"He brought me into being and no one is better able to understand or care for me." (Keller, p. 20).

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6) (Keller, p. 20)

IV. *YAHWEH is my <u>Shepherd</u>* – <u>PROVIDENTIALLY</u>

"Sheep do not just take care of themselves' as some might suppose. They require, more than an other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care." (Keller, p. 22)

"In memory I can still see one of the sheep ranches in our district which was operated by a tenant sheepman. He ought never to have been allowed to keep sheep. His stock were always thin, weak, and riddled with disease or parasites. Again and again they would come and stand at the fence staring blankly through the woven wire at the green lush pastures which my flock enjoyed. Had they been able to speak I am sure they would have said, 'Oh, to be set free from this awful owner!' This is a picture which has never left my memory. It is a picture of pathetic people the world over who have not known what it is to belong to the Good Shepherd. . . who suffer instead under sin and Satan." (p. 23).

V. *YAHWEH is my Shepherd* – PERMANENTLY

See: John 10:11-30

John 10:11 is another one of the great "I AM" statements of Jesus Christ.

To the thirsty, Jesus is the Living Water.

To the hungry, Jesus is the Bread of Life.

To those in darkness, Jesus is the Light of the world.

To those on the wrong path, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

To those who are disconnected from life, Jesus is the true vine.

To those who are misguided, Jesus is the Door.

And now to those who are His sheep, Jesus is the good Shepherd.

v. 11
Note: In the original, there is a repetition of the article. Lit. "I am the Shepherd, the good one."

Jesus is not a good shepherd, as if there were others and He was one among many, but He is the one and only Good Shepherd.

Elsewhere in Scripture Jesus is called the great Shepherd (who arose from the dead to care for His sheep – Heb. 13:20-21) and the chief Shepherd who will come again for His sheep (1 Pet. 5:4). (Ryrie note)

Today, we will see Jesus as "the good Shepherd." For Him to be good, He must be God; for He Himself stated that "there is none good but one, that is God" (Mt. 19:17). He, being God, and not depraved and sinful, is truly good. But how good is He?

By calling Himself the good Shepherd, Jesus is really calling Himself the fulfillment of Ezekiel 34, where God contrasts Himself (34:11-16) with the false shepherds of Israel (34:1-10).

"Goodness is as goodness does." What does Christ do for His sheep that makes Him so good?

**** The Lord is not only our Shepherd (Psalm 23); He is our GOOD Shepherd!***

What does the Good Shepherd do for His sheep?

1. *The Good Shepherd* Sacrificed His life to save His sheep (v.11-13)

v. 11
"Giveth his life" – To "give" speaks of a voluntary willingness to hand over His precious life for the salvation of the sheep (see v. 18). His life was not taken, it was given (as part of the Father's plan and purpose – v. 17).

"For the sheep" – The use of *huper* (in behalf of, instead of) – the usual preposition for substitution (Robertson, p. 178).

Jesus' death was not for the purpose of providing an "example" for the sheep, but to rescue the sheep.

David, who in many ways was a good shepherd, risked his life and rescued one of his father's sheep (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

"For the sheep" – Ultimately, in the final analysis, Christ's sacrifice was made specifically for those who would believe His gospel and become His sheep. Only believers will benefit in His death.

While it is true that He is an infinite God, who gave an infinite sacrifice, to pay an infinite price, whose death is sufficient for all, His death is only efficient to those who believe the Gospel and would become His sheep.

Scripture indicates that Christ's atonement was broad in its provision: He shed His blood even for those who will perish (2 Pet. 2:1). He is the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 Jn. 2:2).

As Hebrews 2:9 clearly states, Christ tasted death for "every man."

In His omniscient mind's eye, it was for His beloved sheep that He ultimately went to Calvary. His atonement will only benefit His sheep. The Bible does not teach universalism (that all men will be saved), but that only Christ's sheep will be saved.

Christ's death was not limited in its provision but it is limited in its application. It is sufficient for all, but only efficient to His elect sheep.

1 Tim. 4:10
For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

v. 12
"The hireling here is not necessarily the thief and robber of vv 1 and 8. He may conceivably be a nominal shepherd (pastor) of the flock who serves only for the money, a sin against which Peter warned the shepherds of the flock – "not for shameful gain" - 1 Peter 5:2 ." (Robertson, p. 179).

A hireling does not have a heart for the sheep. He just puts in his time (three years – Is. 16:14), just eight hours a day for pay.

A hireling (who does not own the sheep but is paid to take care of them) does not have the love and concern for the sheep that the shepherd does. Therefore when he senses danger coming (the wolf – Satan and his forces), he flees to save his own skin.

2. *The Good Shepherd* Personally Knows each of His sheep (v.14-15)

v. 14
To **"know"** means much more than intellectual awareness. It speaks of an intimate relationship between God and His people (Jn. 17:3).

He knows His sheep by name (10:3), by nature (recognizes our traits and needs) and by needs" (Wiersbe, p. 330 - 331).

Jesus' personal knowledge of His sheep is reiterated in verse 27, where He says, "I know them."

To think that Jesus takes interest in us! We are not just a number to Him.

--Jesus knows those who belong to Him
("I...know my sheep)

A shepherd does not tend sheep that don't belong to Him, and Christ is not the shepherd of those people who do not belong to Him (SEE: Jn. 10:26).

--Jesus knows those who know Him
Proof that you know Him:

1) You will hear His voice (v. 27a) (He speaks via the Bible)

2) You will follow Him (v. 27b) (you will do His will)

v. 15
The point of verse 15 is this: Just as Jesus personally knew the Father and the Father knew Him, so in like knowledge, He knows His sheep.

3. *The Good Shepherd* Gathers & Unites His sheep into one fold (v.16-18)

v. 16
"Other sheep" – Gentiles who would believe.

"Which are not of this fold" – Prior to salvation we are not part of Christ's sheepfold. We enter in by faith in the shepherd.

"One fold" – Both Jew and Gentile become one big family of sheep.

Ephes. 2:16
And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

There is diversity, yet unity, in the Body of Christ.

"One fold" – There are not different categories of people in Heaven (EX: Old Testament saints and Church-age saints all form one group of redeemed sheep).

Just as there is only one sheepfold, Paul taught that there is only "one body" of believers.

1 Cor. 12:13
For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Christ's sheepfold includes "God's people in all lands (not just Palestine) and all ages (not just the New Testament era)." (Robertson, p. 181).

Christ's one flock does not speak of a denomination (as the Roman Catholic Church falsely argues) but of a collection of all true believers, not matter which denomination of true Christianity they might attend.

4. *The Good Shepherd* Speaks to His Sheep and Leads them through life (v.26-27)

v. 22
Perhaps three months of time lapse. It is now the middle of December (the time of the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah, when the Jews would remember the deliverance brought about by Judas Maccabeus [B.C. 164], who cleansed the Temple from the defilements of pagan worship by Antiochus Epiphanes [I Macc. 4:59]. (Robertson, p. 184).

John now picks up on the theme of Jesus' good Shepherd sermon (in v. 23ff).

Jesus did not have to "toot His own horn" (as typical "wanna-be" Messiah's would). His life and works and the testimony of others on His behalf would testify of His Messiahship.

Jesus not only told them with His words that He was the Messiah (5:17-47, 7:14, 10:10), but He also told them with His works (His miracles and kind deeds).

v. 27
"My sheep hear My voice" – He speaks to our hearts by means of His written word.

Note: His sheep only hear His voice, not the voice of a cultist or false prophet (v. 4-5, 8).

Implied by the words "**they follow Me"** is the fact that Jesus leads His sheep (as Psalm 23 states). We are not left to ourselves. He is with us always (Mt. 28:20).

Proverbs 3:5-6
Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

5. *The Good Shepherd* Eternally Holds His sheep and Keeps them Secure (v.28-30)

v. 28
"I give" – Jesus is the giver of salvation.

"Give" – Salvation is a free gift, not earned or deserved.

"Eternal life" – Never ending; not temporary life but everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).

"Never perish" – A double negative in the Greek (*ou me*), meaning that is absolutely no way God's sheep will ever perish (or be destroyed by Satan's deception or by God's judgment).

No one can snatch a sheep away from the firm grip of Jesus.

His sheep are not only safe (**"they shall never perish"**), but they are also secure ("**in His hand"**).

"Any man" – lit. Anyone, including Satan, demons, or yourself. Not even you can take yourself out of Christ's hand.

Jesus is saying: "no wolf, no thief, no bandit, nor hireling, no demon, not event he devil can pluck the sheep out of My hand." (Robertson, p. 186).

"It is important to keep in mind that Jesus was talking about sheep – true believers and not counterfeits. The dog and the pig (two "unclean" animals) will go back into sin (2 Peter 2:20-22) (and thereby manifest their true nature)." (Wiersbe, p. 332).

"I and my Father are one" – Both the Father and Son are God (note reaction in v. 31) and as God both have the power to keep you saved.

We are "Kept by the power of God" (2 Peter 1:5).

So verses 29 and 30 are teaching a combined effort to keep the sheep secure.

Conclusion:

Are you one of His sheep?

“Each shepherd has his own distinctive earmark which he cuts into one of the ears of his sheep (on a wood block)” (Keller, p. 25)

Bondslave – “put his ear lobe against the door post and with an awl puncture a hole through the ear.” (Keller, p. 26)

“Either we belong or we do n’t. Do I really belong to Him? Do I really recognize His right to me? Do I respond to His authority and acknowledge His ownership? Do I sense a purpose and deep contentment because I am under His direction? … I’m thrilled to belong to Him.” (Keller, p. 27)

The word “shepherd” in the Bible

Ge 46:34 That ye shall say, Thy servants’ trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, *and* also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Ge 49:24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Nu 27:17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

1Sa 17:40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd‘s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

1Ki 22:17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

2Ch 18:16 Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return *therefore* every man to his house in peace.

Ps 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

Ps 80:1 To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, A Psalm of Asaph. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth.

Ec 12:11 The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd.

Isa 38:12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.
Isa 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.
Isa 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
Isa 63:11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his people, *saying*, Where *is* he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where *is* he that put his holy Spirit within him?
Jer 31:10 Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock.
Jer 43:12 And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace.
Jer 49:19 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who *is* a chosen *man, that* I may appoint over her? for who *is* like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me?
Jer 50:44 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who *is* a chosen *man, that* I may appoint over her? for who *is* like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me?
Jer 51:23 I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.
Eze 34:5 And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.
Eze 34:8 *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;
Eze 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.
Eze 34:23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.
Eze 37:24 And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.
Am 3:12 Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch.
Zec 10:2 For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because *there was* no shepherd.
Zec 11:15 And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.
Zec 11:16 For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.
Zec 11:17 Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.
Zec 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Mt 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Mt 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

Mt 26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

Mr 6:34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Mr 14:27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Joh 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

1Pe 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1Pe 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.