

**PSALM 23**  
**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**  
**INTRODUCTION-THE PSALM AND THE SHEEP**  
**PSALM 23:1**

**Introduction**

*A famous actor was once the guest of honor at a social gathering where he received many requests to recite favorite excerpts from various literary works. An old preacher who happened to be there asked the actor to recite the twenty-third Psalm. The actor agreed on the condition that the preacher would also recite it. The actor's recitation was beautifully intoned with great dramatic emphasis for which he received lengthy applause. The preacher's voice was rough and broken from many years of preaching, and his diction was anything but polished. But when he finished there was not a dry eye in the room. When someone asked the actor what made the difference, he replied, "I know the psalm, but he knows the Shepherd."*

We and most folks we come into contact with have all heard the **23rd PSALM** at some point in our life. But how many of them know the **SHEPHERD** of the **PSALM**? As we work our way through this **PSALM** in the coming weeks, **LORD** willing, I pray that we will come to know not only the **PSALM** and its content like never before, but more importantly that we might come to know the **SHEPHERD** of the **PSALM** in a deeper, more meaningful way!

Let us set our hearts on the "**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**" this evening as we look at **THE PSALM and THE SHEEP**.

**I. WE SEE THE PSALM!**

The **23rd PSALM** is the most familiar and quoted of all the **PSALMS**. Unfortunately, because of its familiarity, it is often neglected in a time of study. So I want us to get reacquainted with this **PSALM**!

The location of this **PSALM** is interesting at best. But it is the **LORD** who has placed it where **HE** wants it. At first glance we might miss the significance of the **23rd PSALM** being placed in between the **22nd and 24th PSALMS**.

**PSALM 22** speaks of the **CROSS OF CHRIST**, while **PSALM 24** speaks of the **KINGDOM OF GOD**. **PSALM 23** speaks to life that is in between the **CROSS** and the **KINGDOM** to come.

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*"Between Mt. Calvary and Mt. Zion are the green pastures and still waters of Psalm 23." (Roger Campbell)* God desires to lead and guide our lives like a **SHEPHERD** would his sheep.

We know the one who penned this **PSALM** was **DAVID**, who was himself a **SHEPHERD**! The **LORD**, in **HIS PROVIDENCE**, saw to it that **DAVID** was in a place where **HE** could teach **HIM** these truths that we see here!

What better place could there have been to learn about the **LORD's SHEPHERDING** and care for **HIS SHEEP** than by the experience of being a **SHEPHERD** to **SHEEP**? (Cf. **1 Samuel 16:11; 17:28, 34-37**)

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This is not the first instance of the **LORD** doing this. Let's remember how the **LORD**, in **HIS PROVIDENCE**, led **MOSES** to the backside of a desert for 40 years where he tended **SHEEP** before the **LORD** used him to lead **ISRAEL** out of **EGYPTIAN** bondage and into the **PROMISED LAND**! (**Exodus 3:1**) Do you think **MOSES' SHEPHERDING** experience taught him anything that helped him later?

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But back to **DAVID**. Imagine with me, if you will, the sweet **PSALMIST**, **DAVID**, the man after **GOD'S OWN HEART**, out on the hillsides of **JUDAH** tending to his father's **SHEEP**.

As **DAVID SHEPHERDED** his **SHEEP** and communed with the **LORD**, the **LORD** pointed him to the correlation between what he is doing (i.e. tending to or **SHEPHERDING SHEEP**) and how the **LORD SHEPHERDS HIS** own people!

As **DAVID** meditated upon this matter of the **LORD** being his **SHEPHERD**, he began to understand the **LORD** in ways that maybe he never had before!

As a **SHEPHERD**, **DAVID** knew that his **SHEEP** totally depended on him! **DAVID**, began to realize how the **LORD** his **GOD** was his **SHEPHERD** in much the same way that he was the **SHEPHERD** of his father's **SHEEP**!

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The **HOLY GHOST** had **DAVID** pen this **PSALM** for our benefit and the benefit of all of the **LORD's SHEEP**!

*2 Peter 1:21–“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

This **PSALM**, as we will see, speaks of the **GREAT SHEPHERD** and **HIS SHEEP**!

It speaks to our **PROVISION** and **PROTECTION** by our **GREAT SHEPHERD**!

It speaks of our **SHEPHERD, THE LORD GOD** our **HEAVENLY FATHER** and **HIS SON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** and **THEIR LOVE** and **CARE** for us as **THE LORD'S SHEEP**!

It speaks to the today and tomorrow of our lives as the **LORD's SHEEP**.  
The **SHEPHERD'S** care was a daily need and a daily **PROVISION**!

It speaks to how our **GREAT SHEPHERD** ministers to **OUR DEEPEST NEEDS** in the same way that **DAVID**, as a **SHEPHERD** knew each of **HIS SHEEP** including their **TENDENCIES** and **NEEDS**!

In this **PSALM** we find all this and so much more, because the **LORD truly is our SHEPHERD**!

*WE SEE THE PSALM*

**II. WE SEE THE SHEEP!**

**DAVID**, though he was a **SHEPHERD** himself, did not see himself in that light in this **PSALM** but rather saw himself as being a **SHEEP**.  
*“The LORD is my shepherd.”*

If we were starting our own sports team and needed to represent our team, we might consider choosing the lions, tigers, or bears as they give a picture or a sense of power and aggressiveness that is needed.

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But, I seriously doubt that anyone would consider a **SHEEP** or a **LAMB** to be representative of their team! **SHEEP** are not known for their agility, strength, or for being very smart!

Yet the **LORD** has chosen the **SHEEP** here to illustrate our nature. Not lions, or tigers, or bears, but **SHEEP**. Why? Because as people we bear a remarkable resemblance to **SHEEP**. (That ought to be very humbling to us!)

Isaiah says it best.

*Isaiah 53:6a–“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;*

*There was a cartoon from years ago that showed two **SHEEP** looking at a crowd of people and one of the **SHEEP** was saying, “All we like people have gone astray.”*

Unlike the lion, or tiger, or bear of strength we, like **SHEEP**, are inclined to be **WEAK, WANDERING, and GOING ASTRAY** and thus we become **EASY PREY** for our enemy, the **DEVIL**.

Our wanting to go our own way only hurts and endangers us! Like a flock of **SHEEP** we need a **SHEPHERD**! To live our life without the **SHEPHERD** brings about our own demise!

The **BIBLE** presents to us how life is for a **SHEEP** without a **SHEPHERD**. *Ezekiel 34:1-12; 23-24*

**JESUS** had this to say about **HIS** people in *Matthew 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.*”

Like **SHEEP** we are prone to wander way from the **SECURITY** of the **SHEPHERD** into a life of **INSECURITY** and **HURTFULNESS**!

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We all have a tendency toward **GOING OUR OWN WAY** and **DOING OUR OWN THING!**

Oh how we need to see ourselves as **SHEEP** in need of the **GOOD SHEPHERD!** The **GREAT SHEPHERD WHO** will **PROVIDE for us and PROTECT us!**

Once we admit that we need our **GOOD and GREAT SHEPHERD**, then the built in blessings of this **SHEPHERD led life** begins to bring **COMFORT** and **CARE** to our **HEARTS** and **LIVES!** Just as we sang a while ago, *“Savior like a Shepherd lead us!”*

*WE SEE THE PSALM...THE SHEEP...*

Next week, **LORD** willing, we’ll come back and take a look at **THE SHEPHERD! (THE LORD!)**