

Psalm 23 Gleanings, Part 2

Psalm 23:4-6

Introduction: My intent is bring to back to our minds and hearts, the blessings of this beloved Psalm 23.

I. An Overview of the Content of Psalm 23

A It is **Personal**

1. In the space of 6 verses, 1st person pronouns are used 17 times – “my” > 6 times, “I” > 4 times and “me” > 7 times.
2. Psalm 23 is Personal!

B It is **Relational**

1. It speaks of a personal relationship with the one, true and living God, the LORD God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, the God of the Bible.
2. This relationship is initially conveyed in the figurative language of the common shepherd-sheep relationship. This is clearly seen in verses 1-4.
3. Then gradually, starting in verse 3 and going through verse 6, there is a transition from the figurative language to the reality relationship that exists between the Lord God and every one of His redeemed people.
4. Everything that is said in this Psalm is exclusively addressed to those who are in this spiritual relationship with God, where The LORD IS their shepherd.
5. Psalm 23 is Relational!

C It is **Complete** in its coverage of the believer’s experiential salvation – from regeneration to glorification, from its experiential beginning to its eternal consummation

1. It begins with the believer’s personal conversion. It begins with the believer’s effectual calling, justification, adoption and initial (definitive) sanctification. Eph.2:1-10
2. It encompasses all of earthly life – daily living

D It is **Inspirational**

1. It stirs up the believer’s heart, mind and spirit
2. It is encouraging, uplifting, comforting – needs being met, fears being calmed, God’s companionship being

- b. By Whom is this table is being prepared? -- the LORD, the believer’s Shepherd
 - c. For Whom is this table being prepared? – for me, for each individual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - d. Where is this table is being prepared? – in the presence of my enemies
 - e. What are my enemies doing as they observe the LORD preparing this table for me? – watching, helplessly watching, totally unable to stop, hinder or interfere with what the Sovereign Shepherd is doing for His sheep; envying those for whom this table is prepared
 - f. When is this table preparing by the LORD taking place in Psalm 23?
3. The imagery applied:
- a. To this earthly pilgrimage – I Cor.10:13
 - b. To life after death – Jn.14:1-3
 - c. To the Great Day of Judgment – I Jn.3:4
- C 23:6 “*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*”
1. “*Surely*” – not maybe, not probably, not even hopefully, but most assuredly!
 2. Here is help for the present, the believer’s earthly pilgrimage
 3. Here is the blessed hope for eternity future, when every believer will receive his/her glorified body and dwell in sinless perfection with the LORD their Shepherd

III.Applications

- A To those who do not have The LORD as their personal shepherd, let me urge you to give this matter the top priority in your life! There nothing more important than having and knowing that you are in this personal relationship with the LORD God that is described here in Psalm 23!
- B To those who have the blessing of already being in this personal relationship with the LORD, let me encourage you to memorize and meditate often upon the blessed truths that are ascribed to you in Psalm 23!

ever present (abiding), **victory** over all enemies being assured, **spiritual confidence** in God being unshakably fortified.

3. Psalm 23 is Inspirational!

E It is (easily) **Understandable**

1. It is easily visualized

2. It is easily grasped in concept – “*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*” (not be lacking in any necessary thing) The same thing is restated in Phil.4:19.

3. Psalm 23 is Understandable!

II. A Further Consideration of 23:4-6

A 23:4 “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*”

1. In every believer’s life time, there are peaks and valleys. But none so deep, nor so dark as the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The reasoning is from greater to lesser.

2. What is death like? It is like walking through a unfamiliar, deep, dark valley.

a. Picture in your mind such a valley.

b. Now with this mental picture of a dark valley in your mind, What would you want to have with you before you entered into such a valley?

1) Initial Thoughts: a light, sufficient clothing; a sturdy walking stick, a weapon, a map of the valley

2) Subsequent Thoughts: “The” most important thing needed, above all the rest, would be:

o **A Knowledgeable Guide** to be with you each step of the way

o **A Truly Caring Guide** – one who loves you and values you highly, as his own family

o **A Truly Capable Guide** – one who is able to confront and overcome whatever comes before you in this dark valley.

c. **The Lord Jesus Christ IS the personal Shepherd that you need!!**

3. This is such an appropriate picture because (though all of us will physically die someday – provided the Lord does

not return during our lifetime) no one has personally walked through this Valley of the Shadow of Death and came back to tell us what they experienced. You only walk through this valley of physical death once. There is no coming back. There is no 2nd try.

4. This is where the LORD our shepherd comes to the believer’s aid. No one knows more clearly what “death” IS than the Lord Jesus Christ! He knows all about death. He has told us, in the Bible, what death is, what to expect and what will come after our physical death.

a. Such is His teaching in Luke 16:19-31 about Lazarus and the rich man, where the Lord Jesus teaches us 7 things about death in this passage of Scripture.

b. It is the LORD our shepherd that will be with each one of His elect people as they walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

5. Furthermore it is His rod and His staff that will comfort us (believers)

a. What is this rod and staff of God that comforts believers?!

b. Answer: It is **the knowledge of God** that God has given and made effectually made known to believers.

o In His works of providence -- Rom.1:19, 20 > His power, wisdom, mercy, sovereign control of all thing without exception – This knowledge of God is known by all people without exception, rendering them excuseless before God.

o In His written word (the Scriptures, the Bible) – This knowledge is spiritually discerned and is effectually made known to believers (God’s elect) I Cor.2:11, 12

B 23:5 “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.*”

1. Here is where some commentators differ in their understanding of the time period to which this verse refers – after death or still referring to earthly life

2. The imagery considered:

a. What is being done? – a table is being prepared