

# Twenty-Third Psalm

No. 80

## Introduction.

- I. Once David wrote the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm.
- II. This beloved psalm is one of the most comforting passages in the Bible. For nearly 3,000 years it has been a source of comfort and strength to millions of people. It has comforted more sick and soothed more broken hearts at death than any part of the Bible.
- I. **“Jehovah Is My Shepherd”** - David opened this beloved psalm by saying, “Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
  - A. This confident assertion of David reminds me of a **missionary** who on one occasion was teaching a class of small Navajo boys to say the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm. When it came the turn of one little boy, he started out confidently, “The Lord is my shepherd; I’ve got all I want.” How true! What more could anyone want than to be able to say, “Jehovah is my shepherd.”
  - B. Let’s read this psalm again putting emphasis on the pronouns “me,” “my,” “mine,” and “I”.

**23:1** Jehovah is **my** shepherd; **I** shall not want.

**23:2** He maketh **me** to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth **me** beside still waters.

**23:3** He restoreth **my** soul: He guideth **me** in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**23:4** Yea, thou **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**.

**23:5** Thou preparest a table before **me** in the presence of **mine** enemies: Thou hast anointed **my** head with oil; **My** cup runneth over.

**23:6** Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow **me** all the days of **my** life; And **I** shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever. **ASV**

- C. Oh, it is wonderful to say, “Jehovah is my shepherd.” He will bless, direct and protect us. When we come to the realization that Jehovah is our personal Shepherd, life will become richer and fuller. Life will be full of joy and peace.
- II. **“He Maketh Me To Lie Down In Green Pastures”** - David proceeded to say, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside still waters.”
  - A. I am told that sheep will not lie down in green pastures until they are satisfied. I am also told that sheep will not drink from noisy and turbulent waters because they are afraid of drowning. This is a picture of a well-fed and protected flock. David was saying God had provided for his needs just as a shepherd provides for the needs of his flock.
  - B. **God has provided for our needs.** He made provisions for many our needs even before we existed. He knew we would hunger so He provided for the productivity of the soil and the seasons of the years to make possible the growth of food. He knew all living things need water; so He made about 3/4 of the earth water. He knew we would be cold so he caused to be embedded in the earth areas of coal and vast storehouses of gas that we might heat our homes and warm our bodies.
    1. These facts remind me to **the words of Jesus.** (Matt. 6:8).

2. **Jesus** also said. (Matt. 6:25, 26).

3. We sometimes sing the words of happiness and comfort.

Why should I feel discouraged Why should the shadows come. Why should my heart be lonely, And long for heav'n and home.	When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He. His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.
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4. What consolation in knowing the God who even has His eyes on the sparrow is constantly watching over you and me and all who trust in Him.

5. **Paul** comforted us with these words of faith. (Phil. 4:19).

C. Not only has God provided for our physical needs, but He has also provided for **our spiritual needs**.

1. We were lost in sin so God sent His only Son into the world to die that we might be saved. (Jn. 3:16).

2. Those who believe on Christ and continue in His word have an eternal mansion prepared for them. (Jn. 14:2, 3).

III. **“He Restoreth My Soul”** - David went on to say, “He restoreth my soul.”

A. Sheep often stray from the flock and must be restored by the shepherd.

1. When David was young, as a shepherd boy out in the hills, he was very close to God. In later life after he became king of Israel, he sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband killed to cover his sin.

2. David later repented of these sins and was forgiven by God.

B. God is willing to forgive us if we will repent and humbly confess our sins. (1 Jn. 1:9).

1. **A boy was once told by his mother not to play near a certain pond.** One day the temptation was too much, and venturing too close, he fell into the water. Fortunately, he was not hurt, but he was very conscious of his wrongdoing, and most uncomfortable it. So he wrote on his school slate: “Dear mother, I am sorry I have been bad. If you forgive me, please rub it out.” Back came the slate, perfectly clean.

2. This is the way God treats those who confess their sins. He wipes their slate clean and says, “I will remember your iniquities no more.” (Heb. 8:12).

IV. **“He Guideth Me In Paths Of Righteousness For His Name’s Sake”** - “He guideth me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

A. **Sheep have no sense of direction as other animals.** A dog or cat or horse, when lost, will find its way home, but not a sheep. A sheep’s eyesight is very limited. He sees only a few yards ahead of him. He must depend upon the shepherd to guide him.

B. We are very much like sheep. We must depend upon God to guide us.

1. If we try to find our own way in life, we will go astray. (Jere. 10:23).

2. The words of this well-known hymn should always be on our hearts.

Savior, lead me lest I stray,  
Gently lead me all the way;  
I am safe when by thy side,  
I would in thy love abide.

Savior, lead me then at last,  
When the storm of life is past,  
To the land of endless day,  
Where all tears are wiped away.

V. **“Yea, Though I Walk Through The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death”** - David said, “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 comfort me.”

A. **Sheep are defenseless animals.** They must depend on the shepherd to protect them in times of danger. David said even though his life may be in danger he would not fear because Jehovah was with him and would protect him. As children of God we do not need to fear death as long as God is with us. He will protect and comfort us.

B. There is a story told of **a family of four who were avowed enemies of God** and His Son. They were so antagonistic that they declared they never wanted a Christian to enter their home. In the community there was a young girl who yearned and prayed for their salvation. When she heard that the son was sick, she decided to go and visit them in spite of their opposition. She climbed the stairs and paused for breath just outside the apartment door. Then she heard the voice of the father as he said, “Hold on, son hold on. You may die but there is nothing beyond. Soon you will drift off into peaceful sleep and that will be all. Hold on, son.” Also she heard the sobbing mother and daughter admonish him saying, “Hold on, hold on. Don’t falter now.” Then she heard the pitiful cry of the boy, “But there is nothing for me to hold on to.” What a horrible way to die, but that is the plight of those outside the flock of God. Those who have Jehovah as their God have something to cling to and have great comfort in death.

VI. **“Thou Preparest A Table Before Me In The Presence Of Mine Enemies”** - David said, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed by head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

A. Many have thought the picture suddenly changes here from **a pastoral scene to a banquet scene**. This may be true, but this is not necessarily so. The scene may still be pastoral. In Palestine there were thorns and poisonous weeds that grew in the fields. These were enemies of the sheep. The good shepherd would remove the thorns and poisonous weeds and burn them. By doing this he would prepare a table or a pasture that the sheep might graze in safely. The good shepherd would also apply healing oil to the wounds of his sheep when they cut themselves on sharp rocks and thorns. He would also provide plenty of pure water for his sheep to drink.

B. This was David’s way of saying God had cared for and protected him throughout life.

### Conclusion.

I. He closed this psalm by saying, “Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.” David was confident that God’s goodness and mercy would be with him throughout his life and he was determined to live in God’s house forever.

II. Let us also determine to abide in God’s family for all eternity. Let us be faithful to His commandments.

A. Why not make Jehovah your Shepherd this very day. Confess your faith in Christ and be buried in the waters of baptism for the remission of your sins. By doing these things you will become a child of God.

B. Paul said. (Gal. 3:26, 27). Will you come as we sing the hymn of invitation?

