

“The Lord Is My Shepherd”
Psalm 23, page 548

Introduction:

1. The 23rd Psalm is one of the most read scriptures in the Bible.
2. This scripture has offered comfort and strength to millions of people who were facing life's greatest challenges.
3. The 23rd Psalm is a graphic picture of an ancient life that we have never experienced.
 - A. It speaks of an individual who manages sheep.
 - B. It talks about sheep and the needs of this somewhat stupid and helpless animal.
 - C. It reflects on life and what we can expect in life.
4. Over the next few weeks, we will take a close look at this Old Testament scripture and how it impacts our lives.

I. Psalm 23 gives us an accurate picture of a shepherd.

- A. In general terms, who is an Old Testament shepherd?
 1. Person who owns sheep.
 2. Person who manages sheep.
- B. What is the responsibility of an Old Testament shepherd?
 1. Provide special care to the lambs when they are born.
 2. Guide the sheep to water and feed.
 3. Protect the sheep from danger.
 4. Care for the sheep when injured.
- C. When David wrote this passage of scripture, he was very familiar with the life of an Old Testament shepherd.
- D. David also became a prophet when he declares: *“The Lord is my shepherd....”*
- E. As we look ahead to the New Testament reference to a shepherd, Jesus declares *“I am the good Shepherd.” John 10:9-11: “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*
 1. Jesus is the door to salvation and heaven. Note *John 10:3-5*, page 1045.
 2. Jesus again assures us that He is the good shepherd, *John 10:14-16*, page 1046.
 3. Jesus knows His sheep.
 4. We have the privilege of knowing Him.

II. Psalm 23 describes sheep.

- A. When I was a teenager, we raised sheep for several years.
 - 1. Sheep are born looking for a place to die.
 - 2. Sheep are not very smart.
 - 3. Sheep are usually weak and helpless.
 - 4. Sheep are not especially valuable.
 - 5. Sheep are prone to disease.
 - 6. Sheep will follow the lead sheep right into danger – resulting in death.
 - 7. Sheep definitely need a shepherd.
- B. Being compared to a sheep is not very desirable, but:
 - 1. We will discover, however, that the comparison is accurate.
 - 2. We all too often prove that David's facts are true.
- C. We really do need a shepherd!
- D. Jesus is available to each of us.

III. Psalm 23 describes life.

- A. In addition to a shepherd and sheep, this Psalm talks about:
 - 1. Needs vs. wants.
 - 2. Leadership vs. driving.
 - 3. Peace vs. turmoil.
 - 4. Rest vs. unrest.
 - 5. Restoration vs. destruction.
 - 6. Shadow of death vs. death.
 - 7. Faith vs. fear.
 - 8. Companionship vs. loneliness.
 - 9. Comfort vs. stress.
 - 10. Eternal reward vs. eternal separation.
- B. David understood life.
 - 1. He knew the good shepherd.
 - 2. He had experienced the extremes of life.
 - 3. He had an accurate understanding of the future.

Conclusion:

- 1. Today we have simply introduced you to Psalm 23.
- 2. I encourage you to study this passage several times over the next few weeks.
- 3. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the deep truths contained in this passage.
- 4. The Lord wants to be your shepherd.
- 5. The decision is yours to make.