

The LORD is My Shepherd Psalm 23 Verses 4-6

A Psalm of David.

Ps 23:1 ¶ 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. 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. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 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."

There are a couple of points I would like to make on the natural shepherd, which were not mentioned when I preached on verses 1-3 in 2023 found at this link <https://elderclarkelee.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-29-clarke-lee-the-lord-is-my-shepherd-psalms-23.mp3> which reflect the image of the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ. The first is, what the bible declares in **Joh 10:1 ¶ "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."** I once saw a video of this actually happening. There were five people who were looking at a herd of sheep in a pasture from a good distance off. Each person in turn used the same words that the owner used to call the sheep. When the strangers called the sheep, the sheep did not even look up but continued feeding. However, when their shepherd called them, they immediately looked up, and when he called them again, they all began to hasten to him. A person, who has been gifted the new birth, can hear and understand the voice of Jesus calling to them. They look up to him, and as Jesus calls them, they will hasten to come to him.

The second is historical in reference to sheep that continually stray away from the flock and do not respond to the voice of the shepherd. Usually these are lambs, which are just feeding haphazardly and are soon gone from the sight of the flock. They are not responding to the voice of the good shepherd. When the shepherd sees the continual disregard of his voice in a lamb, he will go get lamb and he will break one leg of the lamb. The shepherd will fix the leg so it will heal properly and not be a problem for the lamb as it grows up. However, with the broken leg, the lamb is now completely dependent upon the shepherd and must remain in close contact with the shepherd. Once the leg is healed, the lamb will no longer stray away from the flock, because now it has become attached to the voice, and the daily care, of the shepherd.

This gives us the picture of our great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and how he tends to the sheep, the children of God. If we are continually straying away from God, he will bring great affliction upon us, which will cause us to draw near to him, and make us desire to remain close to our Shepherd and to love and heed the voice of our Saviour. Thus, we see the picture of **Joh 10:4 "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."**

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."

King David recognized that he was living in the land of the grave, which is what "**the shadow of death**" means. David also understood that there would be a resurrection of the dead. We understand that here in time, we are living in the land of the grave. Except Christ return before our natural death, we all expect to go to the grave. If have eternal life in Christ Jesus you go to heaven, in the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

"I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;" Evil means **bad adversity, affliction, calamity, or distress**. King David knew there was evil on this earth, for he lived a life that was filled with adversity and affliction and witnessed much evil. We remind you; King David is now an old man, looking to go the grave shortly, with experiential knowledge from his long life, and he understands completely, I have no reason to fear evil for God is on my side.

True Christians do not fear evil, though they may dread to have to endure the consequences of evil, because they know that Christ is in them. They know that they have something that the world and Satan do not have, which is the power of Christ in us. We know that the power of Christ is greater than the power of Satan and all

the evil that is in this world, as seen in: ***Ro 8:31 "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."*** If you have "***Christ in you,***" as you go through life you will grow in faith, as you experience God's continual deliverance from evil. Like King David, as you grow in experiential knowledge, your faith and trust in God will grow stronger.

"thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Rod has the meaning ***to branch off; a scion, (scion means lineage, a clan or tribe) a stick for punishing, writing, fighting, ruling, walking, etc., sceptre, staff.*** My first thought of a rod is Aaron's rod that budded and bore fruit, which identified Aaron as the Lord's chosen high priest. The high priest office always followed the lineage of Aaron, and the priesthood the tribe of Levi. We are identified by God, in the new birth, as priests to God, and our claim to lineage of priesthood is through Jesus Christ the true High Priest. It is not only a prophesy of the New Testament Church, but of every child of God for whom Christ died. The rod, representative of the New Testament Church, which like Aaron's rod, which was a dry branch until the sacrificial law was completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ, is still bearing fruit, and will continue to do so, until the last child of Grace is born again.

The rod, as a stick for punishing, is the picture of God's judicial judgment upon us when we turn away from Him. Remember the scripture in ***Heb 12:8 "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."*** If there is no chastening from God in our lives, it is evidence that we are not a child of God.

What about a staff? The word used here means ***support, sustenance, or a walking stick.*** Since the object of this chapter is "The Shepherd," we also recognize that most shepherds have a staff. In application to the life of a child of God, The Shepherd is our support, sustenance, and our walking stick. It is the power of Christ in us, the Holy Spirit, which gives us support. Without the support of Jesus in our lives, we could not live the life of a child of God. Jesus is our bread of life, and therefore, He is our sustenance. Jesus, and His Word of Truth, are what we lean upon, and use to assist us in our pilgrimage here on earth.

Do you remember that one of the definitions of rod was a staff? Therefore, we can see a shepherd using his staff as a walking stick, as a tool of defense for the flock of sheep, and also as a tool of admonition to unruly sheep. Historically, a shepherd's staff had a crook on the end that he could use to pull a sheep back from danger. This also demonstrates a tool of admonition. It is easy for a child of God to get caught up in the things of this world and lose sight of their shepherd, but The Shepherd will draw them back unto himself, with lovingkindness. With these thoughts in mind, it is easy to see how King David could say "***The Lord is my Shepherd,***" "***thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.***" King David had experienced both and was of a glad heart that God loved him enough to use both upon him. Every child of God can say the same.

5 "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Table means ***a table that is spread with a meal.*** King David knew that every meal he ate was by the blessing of God. King David also knew that he always had enemies in this life. Even in this time of peace that he was experiencing, he knew there were enemies lurking about and working to try to take him from the throne that God had set him upon. The same is true in the life of a child of God. When we read the written word of God and see our Saviour in the words, there is a table spread with food for us. When we hear the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is a table spread with food for us. When we fellowship with God's people, there is a table spread with food for us.

There is also another table, to which we sit down and partake of the bread and wine, which are representative of the body and blood of our blessed Saviour, known to us as the Lord's Supper.

Prophetically, we see that our Saviour, who gave his life for our eternal salvation, did so in the presence of his, and our, enemies. Our Saviour overcame all these enemies and brought peace into the hearts of God's people, even though we too are surrounded by enemies, the most dangerous being our own sin nature.

"thou anointest my head with oil;" King David was anointed to be king over Israel from a horn of oil. God sent the prophet Samuel to do this anointing, which must have often given King David hope when he was experiencing great tribulations. How, you ask? There was a long time between, when David was anointed, until he became king on the throne over all of Israel. When he was experiencing great trials and tribulations, David

had the promise of God that he would be king over Israel, therefore, David could understand that God would protect him to fulfill his promise to David.

Every child of grace has been anointed with oil, the Holy Spirit presence of Jesus in them. We have the promise of Jesus that he will return and take us to the place he has prepared for us, thus we are anointed with joy and peace in our hearts, for God cannot lie. We are told in Revelation that we are made kings and priests to God, therefore, figuratively, we have had our heads anointed with oil, as King David.

"my cup runneth over." What cup is King David talking about? He is speaking to us of the cup of the blessings of God, which were so abundant in his life, that his life was overflowing with these blessings. The same is true in the lives of the children of God. Though in the struggles of life it may not seem so, but the knowledge that you have been saved eternally, and your sins are eternally forgiven, is to each child of God a cup overflowing with the blessings of God.

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."

6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:" King David knew that God would be with him all the days of his life, from the time he was anointed until his death. We know this is true because we are told in **1Sa 16:13 "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward."** This gives us a picture of what happens in the new birth. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon us from that day forward, until death. With the Spirit of the Lord, we have goodness and mercy all the days of our lives.

"and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Even though King David did not have the New Testament scriptures, he knew that there would be a resurrection of the dead, and then he would **"dwell in the house of the LORD forever."** The same is true for every child of God. We are told of this in **1Th 4:13-18; 13 ¶ "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words."**

We can comfort ourselves, and one another, with this Psalm of David. **"The LORD is my shepherd;" "and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."** Hallelujah! Amen!