

St. Mark Church
Wednesday Night Bible Study
Psalm 23 From A Sheep's Perspective
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I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 23 is the most popular of the psalms.
- B. Psalm 23 along with Psalms 22 and 24 are called the Shepherd Psalms and make up a trilogy.

Psalm 22	Psalm 23	Psalm 24
Good Shepherd	Great Shepherd	Chief Shepherd
Shepherd's cross	Shepherd's crook	Shepherd's crown
Savior	Satisfier	Sovereign
Foundation	Manifestation	Expectation
He dies	He is living	He is coming
His past	His present	His future

- C. David writes Psalm 23 from a sheep's perspective.
 - 1. King David was a former shepherd and was very familiar with sheep.

II. A Shepherd of Provision (vv 1-3)

- A. Sheep are totally dependent upon the shepherd to supply their needs. Without the provisions of a good shepherd they will die.
 - 1. Sheep are nearly blind.
 - 2. Sheep are dumb.
- B. In this psalm David makes both a personal and positive statement.
 - 1. Personal because the pronouns *I, my, mine* are used throughout.
 - 2. Positive because he bold proclaims there is no want in life.
- C. Then David give the reasons for his satisfaction:
 - 1. He lies me down
 - 2. He leads me
 - 3. He loves me
- D. Sheep will not lie down unless they are:
 - 1. Free from finding food
 - 2. Free from friction with other sheep
 - 3. Free from pests
 - 4. Free from fear
- E. One of the most important jobs of the Shepherd is to lead the sheep to clean water.
 - 1. When thirsty enough sheep will drink from polluted water such as potholes, ditches, etc.
 - 2. They will pickup disease and internal parasites.
- F. Because the Shepherd loves me restores my soul.
 - 1. There is a term called "cast down" sheep.
 - 2. Sheep are cast down when they lie on their backs and cannot get up. If left in this position too long the sheep will suffocate and die.

3. It usually happens when the sheep are resting. Sometimes they will stretch their legs and gravity pulls them on their back.
4. The Shepherd keeps a watchful eye for cast down sheep so that He can lift them back to their feet.

III. A Shepherd of Protection (v 4)

- A. Sheep are defenseless animals
 1. Sheep do not have fangs, claws, or poison to protect themselves from predators.
 2. I have never seen a movie “*When Sheep Attack*” or a sign that says “*Beware of Sheep*”.
 3. Sheep are totally dependent upon the Shepherd for protection.
- B. During the summer months the Shepherd will lead the sheep into the high mountain country where the grass is plentiful.
 1. The best way to get to the high country is through the mountain valleys.
 2. But the Shepherd always go before the sheep leading and giving protection.
- C. The Shepherd uses His rod and staff for protection.
 1. The *rod* was a hand carved wooden club that was custom fit and used to defend the sheep against predators.
 2. The rod is an extension of God’s right hand and represents the power and authority of God.
 3. The *staff* is a long pole with a crook at the end. It was used to pull sheep closer to the Shepherd when they are going astray.
 4. The Shepherd uses His staff to protect me from me.
 5. Therefore the rod represents the Word of God and the staff represents the Spirit of God.

IV. A Shepherd of Prosperity (v 5)

- A. The table represents the *tablelands* in the mountains. They were high plains filled with an abundance of grass.
 1. Everywhere sheep looked they would see grass.
 2. The tablelands represent the abundance of God’s blessings. The Shepherd has moved the sheep from adequacy in verse 1 to abundance in verse 5.
- B. Even in moments of being blessed there are pests.
 1. During the summer months in the tablelands the insects (especially) flies are swarming everywhere.
 2. The flies would try and lodge in the noses of the sheep, which would cause great discomfort for the flock.
 3. So the Shepherd would anoint the heads of the sheep. This was done frequently during the summer months.
 4. A one-time anointing is not good enough to deal with the pests of life.

V. A Shepherd of Perseverance (v 6)

- A. David ends with a bold proclamation that goodness and mercy shall always follow him.
 1. It speaks of the Shepherds continual watch over His sheep.