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The Lord is My shepherd

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **April 2, 2017**

Psalm 23:1-6

Introduction: Here we have one of the most beautiful of Psalms, described as 'A Psalm to David', and its very content points to David as its author. It likens **YHWH (Yahweh)** to a **shepherd who watches over His sheep**. None knew better the **NEEDS of the sheep** and the **DUTIES of a shepherd** than David.

The story is told of how at a particular gathering the Psalm was **read** by a **famous actor** whose rendering of the Psalm was extolled (praised) for its great beauty. Shortly afterwards it was **read** by a **godly Pastor**. When the meeting was over the actor, moved by the Pastor's rendering, approached him and said, **Sir, I know the Psalm, but you KNOW the Shepherd'**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. As we study this Psalm, the **FIRST** thing we must be aware of is it takes place **UNDER** the Old Covenant. During this time, and **ALL** Covenants made by "the Lord" (Yahweh), the people that **KNEW** him could testify to "His Faithfulness" to **CARE** for them **according to** His Covenant. The reason they were necessary is Adam's sin made Satan the "god of this world" (2 cor. 4:4). So, Yahweh's **WISDOM** and **LOVE** provided help for his people through Covenants (solemn binding agreements, contracts) made with them.

His New Covenant, brought into force by the blood of Jesus (Yahshua), his son, is the **BEST** Covenant he could make for the good of "mankind." It **HAS** better **PROMISES** than **ALL** of the others! Under it, by **GRACE**, through **FAITH**, when a person "entrust their spiritual well-being" to Christ, and his work on the cross, they "PASS from death unto LIFE!"

1 John 3:14, We **KNOW** that we have **PASSED** FROM **death** unto **LIFE**, because we **LOVE** the brethren.

Galatians 3:21, Is the **LAW** then **against** the **promises** of God? God forbid: for IF there **had been** a **LAW** given which **COULD have** **GIVEN LIFE**, verily **righteousness** should have been by the **LAW**.

Thought 2. Under the New Covenant, the Shepherd is **NOT** God, the Father, Yahweh. But his Son, Jesus (Yahshua). His pastors/bishops/overseers are "under-shepherds" over **HIS** sheep.

John 10:11, I am the **good shepherd**: the good shepherd giveth his **LIFE** for the sheep.

1 Peter 5:4, And when the **CHIEF Shepherd** (that's Jesus) shall appear, **YE** shall **receive** a crown of **GLORY** that fadeth **NOT** away.

Acts 20:28, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to **ALL** the **flock**, **over** the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers (bishop [pastor, shepherd])**, to **FEED** the church of God, which **HE hath PURCHASED** with his **OWN blood**.

Thought 3. Now that we see the difference between the shepherd we have NOW, Jesus, and the shepherd written of by David, Yahweh, let's look at his words describing "his shepherd."

Psalm 23:1, [[A Psalm of David.]] The LORD (self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah [Yahweh]) is MY shepherd; I shall NOT want.

NOTE: David thought about God, the God of Israel; as he thought about his relationship with God, he made the analogy of a **Shepherd** and **his sheep**. God was like a shepherd to David, and David was like a sheep to God.

i. In one sense, this was NOT unusual. There are other references to this analogy between the **deity** and his **followers** in ancient Middle Eastern cultures. "In all Eastern thought, and very definitely in Biblical literature, a **king IS a shepherd.**" (Morgan)

ii. It is also a familiar idea throughout the Bible, that the Lord is a Shepherd to His people. The idea begins as early as the Book of Genesis, where Moses called the Lord *the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel* (Genesis 49:24).

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/psalms-23.html>)

Genesis 49:24, But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the **shepherd,** the stone of Israel:)

NOTE: 'I shall not want.' This does not mean that He will provide for the fulfilment of **ALL** our **desires**. It means that He will **'withhold NO good thing** from those who walk uprightly' (Psalms 84:11). We can compare how He was able to say to Israel when they had wandered in the wilderness, **"you have lacked nothing"** (Deuteronomy 2:7).

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. In regard to their desires, he did say IF they delighted themselves IN him, he would GIVE them the DESIRES of their heart. It's because their desires would be FROM his WORD. Similar promises are found in God's New Covenant. Jesus spoke of them prior to his death and resurrection. And later, John spoke along this same thought, which has its foundation in what Jesus said to them.

Psalm 37:4, Delight thyself also in **the LORD** (Yahweh); and he shall **GIVE thee** the DESIRES of thine heart.

John 15:7, If ye abide in me, and **my WORDS** abide IN you, ye shall **ASK** what ye **will (DESIRE),** and it shall be DONE unto you.

1 John 3:22-23, And **WHATSOEVER** we **ASK,** we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and DO those things that are PLEASING in **his sight.** And this is his commandment, That we should **believe** on the **name (authority)** of his Son Jesus Christ, and **LOVE** one another, as (like) he gave us commandment.

Psalm 23:2, He maketh me to lie down in GREEN (a sprout, tender grass) pastures: he leadeth me beside the **STILL** waters.

NOTE: The oriental shepherd **goes ahead of his sheep, seeking out good pasturage** for them. And once he finds it he brings his sheep to REST that they may ENJOY it. They are enabled to lie down in 'pastures of **luscious grass**'. There, feeding safely and well, they can settle down fully content with his provision. This picture of the shepherd causing his sheep to lie down was used by Jeremiah in his **prison cell** as a picture of the future restoration of Israel (Jeremiah 33:12). It is a reminder of the Lord's continual and FULL provision for His own. Compare here also Ezekiel 34:13-16 which describes what the Shepherd God will do for His people.

And when they are **thirsty,** He leads them to the **waters of rest** where they can **drink**

to their full WITHOUT fear. The idea behind 'leading' is of 'gentle guidance'. Compare Isaiah 40:11, 'He will gently lead those who are with young'. The 'waters of rest' will result in sheep which are fully satiated and at peace. They are conscious that **ALL their NEEDS** have **been supplied**. The same idea is contained in the idealistic picture of Paradise, 'they will HUNGER no more, nor THIRST any more, nor will the SUN strike on them or any heat' (Rev. 7:16). It is also found in Isaiah 49:10 from which Rev. 7:16 is taken, and which then adds 'He Who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them'. But Isaiah has in mind more the **blessings** of the **coming** of the **Messiah**.

...As Isaiah says elsewhere, within His purposes 'My people will LIVE continually in a peaceable habitation, and in secure dwellings, and in **quiet resting places**' (Isa. 32:18). (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/psalms-23.html>)

NOTE: ...beside the still waters - Margin, "waters of quietness." Not STAGNANT waters, but waters not tempestuous and stormy; waters so CALM, GENTLE, and still, as to suggest the idea of repose (rest; quiet), and such as prompt to repose (to lie at rest; to sleep). (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. In regard to our physical NEEDS being supplied under the New Covenant, two sets of scriptures come to mind.

Philippians 4:19, But my God shall **supply ALL your NEED** according to his riches IN glory by Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 6:6-10, But godliness with **contentment** is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having **FOOD** and **RAIMENT** let us **be** therewith **content**.

But they that **will** (desire inordinately [excessively]) be **RICH** fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the **LOVE** (**avarice** [excessive DESIRE of gain) of **MONEY** is the **root** of **ALL** (**all manner OF**) evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Psalm 23:3, *He restoreth (turn back, refresh, rejoice) my soul (heart, mind): he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for **his name's** (by implication honor, authority, character: -- report [story circulated]) SAKE.*

NOTE: He restoreth my soul,.... Either when backslidden, and brings it back again when led or driven away, and **heals** its **backslidings**; OR rather, when **fainting, swooning** (sink into a fainting FIT, in which there is an apparent suspension of the vital functions and mental powers), and **ready to die away**, he fetches it **BACK AGAIN**, RELIEVES, REFRESHES, and COMFORTS with the discoveries of **his love**, with the **promises** of his **word**, and with the consolations of **his Spirit**, and such like **reviving** cordials; see Gill on Psalm 19:7... (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. Under the New Covenant, we should keep our EYES on Jesus, our shepherd.

Hebrews 12:2, LOOKING (observe with the eyes while KEEPING them directed) **unto Jesus the author** and finisher of our **faith**; who for the **JOY** that was set before him endured the cross, **DESPISING** the **shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Despising defined 2706, to THINK (have the mind occupied on some subject) **AGAINST** (in opposition), **disesteem** (disregard [to neglect to observe], to slight [to disregard from the consideration that a thing is of LITTLE value and UNWORTHY of notice]).

Hebrews 12:3, For **consider** (VIEW attentively) **him** that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be **wearied** and **FAINT** (sink into dejection [depression]; to lose courage or SPIRIT) in your MINDS.

NOTE: ...for His Name's sake'. Note the idea of sovereignty. He guides them inexorably (inflexibly, uncompromisingly) in these ways because He is concerned for **His Reputation** and **His purposes** and **wants them** to be maintained by His people in order that He might **be glorified**. (Compare Isaiah 63:14). And He does it because of the kind of Being that He is. He does it in order **to reveal** that **He is such** that He can do no other. By it He is REVEALING precisely **Who and What He is, the Righteous One** Who upholds righteousness in ALL who **seek righteousness**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/psalms-23.html>)

NOTE: He leads me: The shepherd was a *guide*. The sheep didn't need to know where the green pastures or still waters were; all he needed to know was **WHERE the shepherd was**. The shepherd would guide the sheep to what he needed.

i. "They are thenceforth led in 'the **path of righteousness**'; in the way of **holy obedience**. Obstructions are removed; they are strengthened, to WALK and RUN in the paths of God's **commandments**." (Horne)

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 2. Remember, this was written under the Old Covenant. So, the Mosaic Law and its morals were taught, and commanded to be obeyed. The New Covenant has the SAME MORALS as the Old Covenant, but with different COMMANDMENTS.

1 John 3:22-23, And whatsoever we ASK, we receive of him (Yahweh), because we keep his commandments, and DO those things that are pleasing in HIS sight. And **this is his COMMANDMENT**, That we should **BELIEVE on the name (authority)** of his son Jesus (Yahshua) Christ and **LOVE one another**, AS he gave us commandment.

John 13:34, A NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye **LOVE** one another; AS (like) **I have LOVED you**, that ye also **LOVE** one another.

Romans 13:8-10, Owe no man any thing, but to **LOVE** one another: for he that **Loveth** another HATH fulfilled (satisfy [MEET requirements], **complete**; performed) **the LAW**. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and IF there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt **LOVE** thy neighbour AS (just like) **THYSELF**. LOVE worketh **NO ill** to his neighbour: therefore **LOVE is the fulfilling (completion** [execution: performance]) of **the LAW**.

Psalm 23:4, 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.

NOTE: ...walk through the valley of the shadow of death - The reference is still to the shepherd. Though I, as ONE of the flock, should walk through the most **dismal valley**, in the dead of the night, exposed to pitfalls, precipices, devouring beasts, etc., I should **FEAR no evil** under the **guidance** and **protection of such a Shepherd**. He knows all the passes, dangerous defiles, hidden pits, and abrupt precipices in the way; and HE WILL guide me around, about, and through them.

For thou art with me - He who has his God for a companion need fear no danger; for he can neither mistake his way, nor be injured.

Thy rod and thy staff - thy scepter, ROD, ensign of a tribe, STAFF of office; for so signifies in Scripture. And thy STAFF, thy prop or support. The former may signify the shepherd's crook; the latter, some sort of rest or support, similar to our camp stool, which the shepherds might carry with them as an occasional seat, when the earth was too wet to be sat on with safety. With **the ROD** or **crook** the shepherd **could defend his sheep**, and

with it lay hold of their horns or legs to pull them out of thickets, boys, pits, or waters. **We are NOT to suppose** that by the **ROD correction** is **meant**: there is no idea of this kind either in the text, or in the original word; nor has it this meaning in any part of Scripture. Besides, **correction** and **chastisement do NOT comfort**; they are NOT, at least for the present, JOYOUS, but GRIEVOUS; nor can any person look forward TO them with comfort. They abuse the text who paraphrase rod correction, etc..
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. Another ERROR some have about shepherds is the belief they “break the legs” of disobedient sheep to train them to NOT wander off. Below, is the error, then, the truth.

NOTE: “The CROOK or STAFF has TWO purposes, ONE to draw the sheep back and the second to **break the leg** of **disobedient sheep**. A sheep who **KEEPS leaving** the flock. The shepherd would **break** the **leg** of the sheep so **it COULDN'T run off**, and carry it on his shoulders while the sheep healed, caring for the sheep and building a bond with the sheep, so the sheep would love the shepherd and NOT leave him.

Thought 2. If this was the TRUTH, then NOBODY would ever “depart from” or leave Jesus. But, according to scripture, in more than one place, **SOME** will depart!

1 Timothy 4:1, Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **SOME** shall **DEPART** from **the FAITH**, giving heed to seducing spirits ...

Hebrews 3:12-14, Take heed, brethren, lest there be IN any of you an **evil heart** of **unbelief**, in **DEPARTING** from the living God.

Thought 3. Now, let's look at what the shepherds of Old actually did do.

A Shepherd **NEVER breaks the leg** of **ANY** of his sheep. He tends to about 1,000 to 1,200 sheep at a time. Devoting most of his time on one with intentionally broken legs is detrimental to the entire herd. A shepherd will **"BRAKE"** the leg of a constantly **wayward lamb** by **placing a WEIGHT on the leg** so that the sheep is **slow to wander off**. Once the shepherd TEACHES this lamb to stay WITH the herd, the BRAKE comes OFF.

Apparently, the first pastor to teach this sermon in 1957 misunderstood this concept and has been spreading this lie ever since. Even good, strong Christians have bought into this load of HOOEY (nonsense, bunk [*Dictionary.com*]). — Preceding unsigned comment added by 70.208.133.209 (talk) 02:43, 7 Feb. 2014 (UTC)” (Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Shepherd>)

Psalm 23:5, Thou preparest **a table** before me in the **presence of mine ENEMIES**: thou **anointest** my head with **OIL**; my **cup** runneth over.

NOTE: i. “Here the *second allegory* begins. A magnificent **banquet** is provided by a most liberal and benevolent host; who has NOT only the *bounty* to FEED me, but **power to protect me**; and, though surrounded by *enemies*, I sit down to this table with confidence, knowing that I shall feast in perfect security.” (Clarke)
...The host's CARE and concern **doesn't eliminate** the presence of **MY enemies**, but **enables** the experience of God's goodness and bounty even in their midst.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/psalms-23.html>)

NOTE: Thou anointest my head with oil] A piece of entertainment common in those times and among that people, Luke 7:36-38, to show the greater respect to their guests. And although this is NOT every good man's case in temporal respects, yet at the word and sacraments God anointeth his guests with the **OIL of gladness**.
My cup runneth over] He had NOT only a fulness of abundance, but of redundancy (EXCESS). Those that have this happiness must carry their cup upright, and see that

it **OVERFLOW** into their **POOR brethren's emptier vessels.** (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jtc/psalms-23.html>)

Thought 1. Now, let's see how vs. 5 is also fulfilled under our New Covenant.

Galatians 6:9-10, And let us NOT be WEARY in **WELL DOING:** for in **DUE season** we shall reap, IF we **faint** (give up labor) **NOT.** As we have therefore opportunity, let us **DO good** unto ALL men, especially unto them who are of the **household** of **FAITH.**

James 2:15-17, If a **brother** or **sister** be **NAKED,** and **destitute** of daily **FOOD,** ...And one of you SAY unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye GIVE them NOT those things which are **NEEDFUL** to the body; what doth it **PROFIT (benefit)?** Even so **faith,** if it hath not WORKS, is **DEAD,** being alone.

Dead defined 3498, a corpse (something that is no longer ACTIVE [working, busy]). Dead, inactive (idle [DOING nothing]).

Thought 2. This definition helps because we KNOW "faith" is NOT of death. It is spiritual, and from God, therefore, it pertains to LIFE, a fruit of our spirit.

James 2:18, Yea, a man may say, Thou hast **faith,** and I have **works:** SHEW me thy **faith** without thy **works,** and I will **SHEW thee my FAITH BY my WORKS.**

NOTE: The appeal of James is clear and logical. We can't "**SEE**" someone's **faith,** but we CAN SEE their WORKS.

You can't **SEE** faith without works, but you can demonstrate the **reality** of **FAITH BY WORKS.** (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/james-2.html>)

James 2:19-23, Thou **believest** that there is one God; thou **DOEST** well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou **KNOW,** O vain man, that **faith** without **works** is **dead** (IDLE [inactive; DOING nothing])? Was not Abraham our father justified (**SHOWN righteous**) by WORKS, when he had **offered** Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how **faith** wrought with his works, and by **works** was **faith** made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God,** and it was **imputed** unto him for **righteousness:** and he was called the Friend of God.

Thought 3. What he said is Christians who are NOT profiting anybody by putting their **FAITH** to work are just like the demons who are NOT helping anybody either! Our Father appreciates the work we do and is NOT unrighteous to forget it.

Hebrews 6:10, For God is **NOT unrighteous** to **forget** YOUR work and **LABOR of love,** which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints...

Psalms 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 (Yahweh) FOR EVER.

Thought 1. David **KNEW** that Yahweh keeps his Covenant. His mind is **FIXED** to **OBEY** his God. So, he spoke of receiving the result of his obedience written in the Covenant.

NOTE: The **certainty** of it: **Surely it shall.** It is as sure as the promise of the God of truth can make it and we know whom we have believed. (6.) Here is a prospect of the perfection of bliss (highest degree of happiness) in the **future state.** So some take the latter clause: "**Goodness and mercy** having **followed me** all the days of my **life on this earth,** when that is ended, I shall remove to a better world, to dwell in the house of the Lord **FOR EVER,** in our Father's house above, where there are many **mansions.** With what I have I am pleased much with what I hope for I am pleased more." All this, and heaven too! Then **we serve a good Master.** (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/psalms-23.html>)