

## Psalm 23 - The Literal Fulfillment

### Introduction:

1. Psalm 23 is a very famous and well-loved psalm. Even many unsaved people can quote part or all of Psalm 23. Its words are touching and tender.
2. It is written as a sheep boasting about his shepherd and what his shepherd has done for him. It is intimate and personal as it begins, "*The Lord is **my** shepherd...*"
3. Sheep are very high maintenance animals to care for. They are very prone to wander, stray, vulnerable to attack, defenseless, not to mention they tend to be stubborn, doing the same stupid things over and over again. Remember the verse, "*All we like sheep...*"
4. Sheep need a shepherd or they don't stand a chance, but they need a good shepherd - a shepherd who has their best interest at heart.
5. In the Bible, the nation of Israel is constantly compared to sheep. Their leaders were given the responsibility to care for the sheep of Israel, but had failed miserably. **Ezekiel 34:1-10** gives a vivid depiction of how evil Israel's leaders (shepherds) were.
6. What will be God's response to this? God will personally care for and shepherd His flock. He will personally save His flock and establish a King from David's loins to be their shepherd. This, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ.  
**Ezekiel 34:11-12, 22-24**
7. This will occur when Christ returns to earth and establishes Israel's kingdom on earth. Most people do not realize that Psalm 23 is actually a prophetic psalm that anticipates this day when Christ will return and deliver His flock, the believing remnant of Israel.
8. Christ came to Israel and declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd (**John 10:11**), but they rejected Him. He rose from the dead as the Great Shepherd (**Hebrews 13:20**) and will one day return as the Chief Shepherd (**1 Peter 5:4**). When He returns, Psalm 23 will be literally fulfilled.

### Israel will have the Lord as their shepherd and never lack again. vs. 1

1. David said, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want* (lack)."
2. The verb tense indicates that David is anticipating a future condition based on the present fact that the Lord was his shepherd. We know that David had been hounded by Saul and Absalom. He had known intense trials, deep poverty, and acute hardship.
3. So David is looking forward in faith to a day described in **Ezekiel 34:11-14, 23-24**.
4. As this psalm continues, it will embellish the thought, "*I shall not want.*" It will demonstrate how Israel will never lack or have need again when they finally turn to Christ and recognize Him as their shepherd.

### Israel will experience total peace. vs. 2

1. Israel's history has been one of turmoil and intense unrest. Notice the peace and rest that the shepherd gives in verse 2 - "*lie down*", "*still waters*"

2. In the Tribulation, Israel will be under the most vicious attack in its history. When it looks as if all hope is gone and Israel is about to be destroyed by the anti-Christ and his armies, the Chief Shepherd will appear.
3. Christ will personally rescue the believing remnant of Israel and will personally lead them from their places of hiding to their own land.  
**Jeremiah 31:8-11, 23:3-4, 6-8**
4. God will cause them to lie down safely. vs. 2; **cf. Ezekiel 34:15, 28**

**Israel will be given complete righteousness. vs. 3**

1. Israel has always been a rebellious lot. They have continually spurned God's principles of righteousness.
2. When Christ, the Chief Shepherd, appears, notice what He does for His flock.  
**Jeremiah 31:31-34**
  - God will completely and totally take away their sin. **cf. Ezekiel 36:25, 37:23**
  - God will place His law in their hearts and minds. **Ezekiel 36:26-27, 37:24**
  - Christ will be their Shepherd/King, and do you know what He is called? - The Lord our Righteousness. **Jeremiah 23:6**
3. Sin will never be an issue again. He will bring full restoration to their souls and lead them in paths of complete righteousness.

**Israel will receive divine comfort. vs. 4**

1. Prior to Christ's return, Israel will go through a time of trouble, darkness, and gloom like they have never experienced before. **Joel 2:1-2; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:21**
2. Israel will be forced to flee from the wrath of the anti-Christ. The believing remnant will flee into the wilderness as they did when they left Egypt. How was this wilderness described in **Jeremiah 2:6?** - the "*shadow of death.*" The phrase, "*shadow of death,*" is associated with darkness and oppression. **Jeremiah 13:16; Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79**
3. God comforted Israel during this time by shepherding them, caring for them, and feeding them. This is exactly what He will do again for Israel just prior to His return. **Hosea 2:14; Revelation 12:13-14**
  - **Deuteronomy 32:9-14** is a beautiful description of the loving care and comfort that Israel will receive from the hand of the Good Shepherd.
4. When you are walking in somebody's shadow, it means you are real close to him or her. Israel will walk in the valley of death's shadow, but they won't fear because their Good Shepherd will personally take care of them. **Jeremiah 31:1-2, 25-26; Ezekiel 34:11-12, 3:31**

**Israel will receive a table of blessing and divine favor. vs. 5-6**

1. When Christ returns, He will gather before Him all nations. The believing remnant of Israel and her friends will receive divine blessing and her enemies will receive everlasting punishment. **Matthew 25:31-46**
2. Israel will literally receive the table of God's blessing in the presence of her enemies. **Ezekiel 34:13-16**
  - The table is their land that God will give them. **Ezekiel 36:24**

- The oil of God's Spirit will be given to them. **Ezekiel 36:27**
  - Israel's cup will run over with God's blessing. **Ezekiel 34:26-27, 36:30, 33-38; Jeremiah 31:12, 14**
3. They will dwell in God's house forever! We apply this to heaven, but God will actually take His house and bring it down to them on earth. **Ezekiel 37:26-28**