

### THE PSALM OF ALL PSALMS Psalm 23

Int: “A psalm of David” says the superscription. But the preposition may mean *by, for, to, or about*. I take it to be BY King David himself.

It is about “the LORD.” In all capital letters LORD is the personal name of God Almighty. It is four consonants, no vowels. YHWH. No one knows how to pronounce it. Most scholars just use “Yahweh.”

YHWH is Jesus. Language used of YHWH in the Old is applied to Jesus in the New, e.g. Joel 2:32 with Romans 10:13; Isaiah 45:23 with Philippians 2:11; Isaiah 44:6 with Revelation 1:17-18, 2:8, and 22:13.

In Psalm 23 David celebrated the LORD using three pictures. He is

MY SHEPHERD 23:1-3 Providing

“I lack nothing I need.” Using the shepherd image, David explained.

“Makes me lie down in green pastures.” In the Judean desert patches are few. Sheep would never find them on their own. And when the sun burns fiercely he finds cooler spots so they will not overheat.

“Leads me beside still waters.” Sheep fear running water.

“Restores my soul.” YHWH gives him new strength when he is tired.

“Leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.” “Name’s sake” may point to his character, i.e. YHWH does the right thing because that is the kind of God he is. Or it may mean “to secure his reputation as a good shepherd,” i.e. he helps me to do what honors him the most.

You can trust YHWH, the shepherd, to see to your needs!

MY GUARD 23:4 Protecting

Sometimes YHWH leads through deep valleys where the path dips out of sight and into dark shadows and even danger. Wadi Qelt may be the “valley of the shadow of death.”

David’s song grew more personal. “I do not fear because YOU are with me. Your rod and staff (a shepherd’s tools of trade) comfort me.” Under the protection of YHWH, even death becomes only a shadow.

You can rest knowing YHWH is your guardian!

MY HOST 23:5-6 Communing

It takes time to “prepare a table.” Enemies there may be but in the East a host has a sacred duty to protect guests in his home and offer them hospitality. Enemies can do no more than look on. Eating together is an intimate relationship. “YHWH wants a close relationship with me!”

To “anoint” the head with oil was to mark a man as an honored guest.

To fill a cup till the choice wine ran over the brim implied abundance.

“Goodness and mercy” shall *pursue* me “all the days of my life.”

And when life is over, “I will dwell in God’s house forever.” Once a guest in YHWH’s house, always a guest in his house!