

Hostility Of The Culture.

Review of Ps. 23 appropriate ~ in times like these.

▶▶ Few yrs. ago. ⇔⇔ Thought it'd be good to have another look at it ~ in light of the times.

Probably ~ no psalm ~ is better known ~ nor more universally loved ~ than this one.

▶▶ It is a mistake though, ~ if we view this psalm ~ as something only to be used ~ at funerals.

▷▷ Because ~ Ps. 23 ~ covers ~ all the days ~ of a believer's life.

The psalm ~ is written by David, ~~ and is a song ~ of trust & confidence ~ in the Lord.

▶▶ And, ~ even though David referring to himself, ~ this Ps., ~ of course, ~ for all believers.

▷▷ It is for all those ~ who ~ have confessed with their mouth ~ that Jesus is Lord, ~ and believe in their heart ~ that God raised him from the dead.

↳↳ Only those ~ who belong to Jesus ~ can truly claim ~ what Ps. 23 asserts.

My goal for us ~ in our review of Ps. 23 ~ is simple.

▶▶ To gain encouragement ~ and ~ to increase our trust & confidence in Jesus, ~~ in order ~ to face the future ~ without fear.

Today, ~ look @ vv 1-3. 1/13

Verse 1a. ~ The Lord Is My Shepherd.

My . . . , ~ ours ~ is not just any shepherd.

▶▶ Briefly consider ~ the following ~ 5 points

1st, ~ consider that Jesus, ~ our shepherd, ~ is ~ the Creator ~ of the universe and all it contains, ~ and ~ is sovereign ~ over all.

▶▶ Is. 40: ~ 25-26 (NIV), ~ To whom ~ will you compare me? ~ Or ~ who is my equal?" ~ says the Holy One. ~ Lift up your eyes ~ and look to the heavens: ~ Who created all these? ~ He who ~ brings out the starry host one by one ~ and calls forth each of them by name. ~ Because of his great power and mighty strength, ~ not one ~ of them is missing.

▶▶ This ~ is good news ~ when we think in terms ~ of such things as ~ care, ~ provision, ~ and protection.

2nd, ~ consider that Jesus, ~ our shepherd, ~ is all-knowing.

▶▶ He knows exactly ~ what we need ~ and ~ what we're going through.

▷▷ 2 Chron. 16: ~ 9a (NIV), ~ For the eyes of the Lord ~ range throughout the earth ~ to strengthen ~ those whose hearts ~ are fully committed to him.

▷▷ And being all-powerful, ~ he can ~ give us what we need ~ and also ~ give us aid and comfort ~ in whatever we're going through.

3rd, ~ consider that Jesus ~ is unchanging.

▶▶ Heb. 13: ~ 8, ~ Jesus Christ is the same ~ yesterday ~ and today ~ and forever. 2/13

▷▷ That's excellent news for us.

↪↪ He will never ~ decide one day ~ to stop being ~ our shepherd.

→→ Never retire. ~~~ Never tire. ~~~ Continue all the days of our lives.

4th, ~ consider that Jesus, ~ our shepherd, ~ tells us that he is "the good shepherd."

▶▶ And because he "is the same yesterday and today and forever," ~ he'll never be ~ a bad shepherd.

▷▷ We can always trust him ~ to give us ~ what is ~ good and not ~ bad.

↪↪ Satan wants us to believe otherwise. ~~~ Implied when tempted Eve. ~~~ But it's a lie.

And 5th, ~ consider how Isaiah describes Jesus, ~ our shepherd.

▶▶ Is. 40: ~ 11 (NIV), ~ He tends his flock ~ like a shepherd: ~~~ He gathers the lambs in his arms ~ and carries them ~ close to his heart; ~~~ he gently ~ leads those that have young.

▷▷ A beautiful picture.

↪↪ Should give us ~ encouragement, ~ comfort, ~ & a great sense of security.

(Vs 1a) The Lord Is My Shepherd.

Shepherds lead the sheep. ⇔⇔ They do not drive them.

▶▶ Ps. 77: ~ 20, ~ You led your people like a flock ~ by the hand of Moses and Aaron. 3/13

▶▶ Jn. 10: ~ 3-4 (NIV), ~~ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, ~~ and the sheep listen to his voice. ~~ He calls his own sheep by name ~~ and leads them out. ~~ 77

▷▷ When he has brought out all his own, ~~ he goes on ahead of them, ~~ and his sheep follow him ~ because they know his voice.

▶▶ Deut. 31: ~ 8 (NIV).

▷▷ The Lord himself ~ goes before you ~ and will be with you; ~~ he will never ~ leave you ~ nor forsake you. ~~ Do not ~ be afraid; ~~ do not ~ be discouraged.

▶▶ Knows what's in front of us.

▷▷ And we can be sure of 2 things.

↳↳ If he allows us to experience it, ~ we know it's for our good.

↳↳ And 2nd, ~ we can be sure ~ he has a plan to get us through it.

▶▶ The Lord goes before us.

▶▶ Therefore, ~ we can follow him ~ with confidence and joy.

(1a) Notice the pronoun ~ my.

▶▶ This shows us that our great Lord ~ is personal

▶▶ And he is ~ personally involved ~ in each of the lives of his people.

▷▷ Not some far off, ~ impersonal God. 4/13

▶▶ Not talking about deism, ~ that teaches *God created everything* ~~ but is not personally involved ~ in his creation.

▷▷ Like the watchmaker ~ who makes the watch, ~ winds it up, ~ sells it, ~ and has nothing more to do with it.

▶▶ No, ~ *God* ~ is personally involved ~ in his creation ~ and ~ in each of the lives of his people.

▶▶ We, ~ i.e., ~ believers, ~ have ~ a personal relationship ~ with Jesus.

▷▷ And he's personally involved ~ in our lives.

▶▶ But we must never forget ~~ it is only due to *God's grace* ~ that we have this relationship with him ~ and ~ that he's personally involved in our lives.

▷▷ For ~ by grace you have been saved ~ through faith. ~~ And this is not your own doing; ~~ it is the gift of *God*, ~~ not ~ a result of works, ~~ so that ~ no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

Vs. 1b, ~~~ I shall not want.

The idea here ~ is that ~ because *Jesus is our shepherd*, ~ believers will always have ~ everything we need.

▶▶ Every need ~ will be met ~ by the ~ guiding, providing hand of *God*, ~~ because ~ he is our shepherd.

▶▶ But a believer might say, ~ "I don't have this," ~ whatever ~ this ~ may be.

▷▷ And *God* would answer, ~ "Then, ~ you don't need it." 5/13

▶▶ Promised to provide ~ for our needs, ~ not ~ our wants.

▷▷ At times, ~ he might give us our wants, ~ but there's no guarantee.

↪↪ There is, ~ however, ~ a guarantee ~ we'll receive ~ what we need.

▶▶ And isn't this ~ what Jesus told us to ask for, ~ i.e., ~ our needs?

▷▷ Give us this day ~ our daily bread.

↪↪ I.e., ~ give us what we need ~ in order ~ to survive.

▶▶ The promise ~ that Jesus ~ will provide everything we need ~ should remove ~ any anxiety ~ we have ~ about our needs.

▶▶ And Jesus ~ reinforces his promise ~ in [Lk. 12: ~ 22-24](#).

▷▷ And he said to his disciples, ~~ "Therefore I tell you, ~ do not be anxious about your life, ~ what you will eat, ~~ nor about your body, ~ what you will put on. ~~ For life ~ is more than food, ~~ and the body ~ more than clothing. ~~~ Consider the ravens: ~~ they neither ~ sow nor reap, ~~ they have ~ neither storehouse nor barn, ~~ and yet ~ God feeds them. ~~ Of how much more value are you than the birds!"

▷▷ Will Jesus nourish ravens ~ and forget his people? ⇨⇨ Of course not!!

↪↪ We are far more valuable to Him ~ than any birds!

→→ So of course ~ he'll take care of us.

▶▶ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, ~~ and live righteously, ~~ and he will give you everything you need. 6/13

▶▶ Now, ~ David does not say ~ how ~ the Lord will provide for us, ~ just that he will.

▷▷ The Lord ~ will choose how.

↪↪ Not in a box.

↪↪ We must simply ask him ~ to provide what we need to survive.

→→ And then let him choose the how.

David Continues ~ In Vs 2.

The Lord makes me lie down ~ in green pastures. ~~~ He leads me ~ beside still waters.

▶▶ Tech point ~~ makes me lie down.

▷▷ Does not have the sense of ~ he forces me ~ to lie down.

▷▷ The idea is that ~ the shepherd finds a place, ~ i.e., ~ *green pastures*, ~ where the sheep ~ can lie down and rest.

▷▷ He lets me lie down ~ in green pastures (CSB).

Now, ~ there is a danger ~ of misreading this verse.

▶▶ Someone might get the impression ~ that it is saying ~ believers will have ~ a perfect & materially prosperous life.

▷▷ Might be tempted to think ~ that the health & wealth gospel ~ is true. 7/13

▶▶ But the verse ~ does not ~ teach that.

▷▷ The Psalm itself ~ goes on to speak of ~ dark valleys, ~ evil, ~ and ~ the presence of enemies.

▶▶ No, ~ the verse is still talking about ~ needs being met.

▷▷ It's an elaboration ~ of vs. 1b.

↳↳ It is showing ~ some of the needs ~ that God has promised ~ to provide for.

▷▷ Vs 2 ~ is far ~ from teaching the health & wealth gospel.

↳↳ It simply emphasizes ~ the promise ~ that the Lord will give us ~ whatever we need.

▶▶ The shepherd sees to it ~ that the sheep are provided ~ ¶¶

▷▷ nourishment ~ ~ green pastures, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ protection, ~ ~ beside still waters, ~ ¶¶

→→ and ~ rest ~ ~ He lets me lie down ~ in green pastures.

▶▶ 1 side note here. ⇔⇔ Protection ~ should be viewed ~ as protection ~ for our souls.

▷▷ That's the point Peter makes ~ in 1 Pet. 1: ~ 5 (CSB).

↳↳ You are being guarded by God's power ~ through faith ~ for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 8/13

↳↳ Being guarded by God's power ~ means ~ that God is protecting our souls, ~ ensuring ~ that we'll ~ receive our resurrection bodies ~ and ~ live forever with Jesus.

▶▶ God's promise of ~ nourishment, ~ protection, ~ and rest ~ should give us ~ joy and encouragement ~ even in the darkest of times.

Now Let's Consider ~ Vs. ~ 3a. ⇔⇔ The Lord ~ Restores My Soul.

When we sin, ~ we break fellowship with God.

▶▶ Is. 59: ~ 2 (CSB), ~ But your iniquities ~ are separating you from your God, ~ and your sins have hidden his face from you ~ so that ~ he does not listen.

▶▶ Ps. 66: ~ 18 (NLT), ~ If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, ~ the Lord ~ would not have listened.

▶▶ Breaks fellowship. ~ But when we repent, ~ he forgives us ~ & He restores us to fellowship.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 1:9, ~ If we confess our sins, ~ he is faithful and just ~ to forgive us our sins ~ and ~ to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

▶▶ Micah ends his prophetic writing ~ with a with a hymn ~ that marvels ~ at the Lord's grace and forgiveness, ~ Micah 7: ~ 18-20.

▷▷ Who is a God like you, ~ pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression ~ for the remnant of his inheritance? ~ He does not retain his anger forever, ~ because he delights in steadfast love. ~ He will again have compassion on us; ~ he will tread our iniquities underfoot. ~ 77

↳↳ You will cast all our sins ~ into the depths of the sea. ~ You will show ~ faithfulness to Jacob ~ and steadfast love to Abraham, ~ as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old. 9/13

In addition to restoring a believer to fellowship, ~ restoring the soul ~ could also mean ~ 77

▶▶renewing ~ our spiritual and emotional strength ~ when we're ~ mentally and spiritually worn down and/or discouraged.

▶▶The Lord has provided ~ 3 primary sources of ~ encouragement, ~ strength, ~ and joy.

▷▷1st, ~ he has given us His Word ~ to guide us, ~ to encourage us ~ and ~ to nourish us spiritually.

↳↳Ps. 19: ~ 7 (NLT), ~~ The instructions of the Lord ~ are perfect, ~ reviving the soul.

↳↳We need to spend time ~~ reading & studying it, ~~ hearing it preached, ~~ and ~ obeying it.

→→Psalm 119: ~ 2a (NLT), ~~ Joyful ~ are those who obey his laws.

▷▷2nd primary source for restoring our soul.

↳↳The Lord has given us ~ the privilege and power of prayer.

→→The prayer of a righteous person ~ is very powerful ~ in its effect.

↳↳We need to take ~ our problems, ~ our discouragement, ~ and our tiredness ~ to God in prayer, ~~ knowing that He ~ loves us and cares for us.

→→1 Pet. 5: ~ 6-7 (NIV), ~~ Cast all your anxiety on him ~ because he cares for you.

↳↳Heb. 4: ~ 16, ~~ Let us then with confidence ~ draw near to the throne of grace, ~~ that we ~ may receive mercy and find grace to help ~ in time of need. 10/13

▷▷ And the 3rd primary source.

↳↳ He has given us ~ other believers.

→→ Eccles. 4: ~ 9-10 (CSB).

↳↳ Two are better than one ~ because ~ they have a good reward for their efforts. ~ For ~ if either falls, ~ his companion ~ can lift him up; ~ but pity the one ~ who falls ~ without another to lift him up.

→→ And in v 12 (CSB), ~ And if someone overpowers one person, ~ two can resist him. ~ A cord of three strands ~ is not easily broken.

↳↳ It is important ~ to regularly ~ worship and fellowship ~ with other believers.

→→ Heb. 10: ~ 24-25 (NIV), ~ And let us consider how ~ we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ~ not giving up meeting together, ~ as some are in the habit of doing, ~ but encouraging one another ~ and all the more ~ as you see the Day approaching.

↳↳ Believers who have gone through similar struggles ~ can be ~ a great source of encouragement and help ~ as we go through dark times.

→→ 2 Cor. 1: ~ 3-4, ~ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ~ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ~ who comforts us ~ in all our affliction, ~ so that ~ we may be able to comfort ~ those who are in any affliction, ~ with the comfort ~ with which we ourselves ~ are comforted by God.

But these 3 resources ~ are not just for renewing us.

▶▶ They are also 3 primary resources ~ for developing and maintaining ~ a healthy spiritual life. 11/13

The Lord restores us to fellowship ~ when we repent of sin.

▶▶ And he gives us ~ the resources through which ~ he renews ~ and we develop and maintain ~ our spiritual and emotional strength.

Finally, ~ For Today, ~ Vs 3b, ~~ He Leads Me ~ In Paths Of Righteousness ~ For His Name's Sake.

Also translated, ~~ He leads me ~ in correct paths ~ for the sake of his name.

▶▶ Idea, ~~ God guides us ~ on the course ~ of righteous living.

▷▷ For the sake of his name == for the sake of his reputation.

What's David saying?

▶▶ That it fits God's character ~ to lead us down ~ the right paths.

▷▷ IOW, ~ he will lead us ~ on the course of righteous living ~ because ~ this is the kind of God he is.

▶▶ In Ps. 18: ~ 30a (LEB), ~ David wrote, ~~ This God ~ his way ~ [or, ~ conduct] ~ is blameless.

▷▷ Always blameless.

↪↪ Therefore, ~ Jesus can be fully trusted ~ to guide us through life.

→→ He ~ will never lead us astray, ~ and ~ will never lie to us. 12/13

▶▶ As opposed to ~ the world, ~ our sin nature, ~ and the devil, ~ Jesus, ~ being Jesus, ~ can be trusted ~ to always lead us ~ on the course ~ of righteous living,

▷▷ Our 3 enemies, ~ just mentioned ~ all lie to us, ~ want to lead us astray ~ and ~ want to destroy us.

Jesus ~ leads us on the course of righteous living ~ because ~ this is the kind of God he is.

▶▶ And he guides us on this course ~ through his word.

▷▷ Ps. 119: ~ 105, ~~ Your word is ~ a lamp to my feet ~ and a light to my path.

▷▷ Ps. 119: ~ 130, ~~ The unfolding of your words ~ gives light; ~~ it imparts understanding to the simple.

▷▷ And Prov. 6: ~ 23, ~~ For ~ the commandment ~ is a lamp ~~ and the teaching ~ a light.

▶▶ Jesus' word ~ is like ~ a lantern or a flashlight ~ that lights ~ the path of life ahead of us.

▷▷ And it enables us ~ to stay on the paths of righteousness ~ and avoid stumbling into sin.

▷▷ My . . . , ~ we live ~ in a ~ spiritually darkened & spiritually dangerous ~ world.

~~ We need the bright light of God's word ~ to keep us ~ on the paths of righteousness. 13/13