



By Dr. Andrew Corbett

Psalm 23 is perhaps the most celebrated Psalm. in all of Scripture. It is most often associated with death and funerals. But even a cursory reading of reveals that it is actually about God’s goodness and protection!

1. Where in Psalm 23 will we find these promises? Note the verse reference and any conditions:

Direction \_\_\_\_\_

Provision \_\_\_\_\_

Refreshment \_\_\_\_\_

Courage \_\_\_\_\_

Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

2. Note the results to not making the Lord your shepherd (what are the opposites to the benefits to making the Lord your shepherd?) -

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3. What similarities are there between Psalm 23 and John 10?

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When we walk with the Lord, we're going somewhere! Note the movement of the Psalm- "He makes me" "He leads me", "He restores", "I walk", "Goodness and mercy shall follow me", this is not a picture of a corralled sheep who is secluded from the world. This sheep is on a mission and gains enemies along the way!

4. According to Hebrews 13:20, who is the Great Shepherd and why?

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5. Note the verse references to these lessons that we can learn from the Shepherd-

\_\_\_ The Shepherd looks ahead.

\_\_\_ The Shepherd stays on the paths of righteousness.

\_\_\_ The Shepherd confronts potential fears.

\_\_\_ The Shepherd uses His own rod and staff.

\_\_\_ The Shepherd doesn't allow the Enemy to dictate the agenda (You prepare a table...).

\_\_\_ The Shepherd strengthens and refreshes others (anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows).

\_\_\_ The Shepherd has a secure home.

Psalm 23 is quite possibly the best known Psalm - and possibly the best known passage - in the Bible. It is frequently read at funerals. And for good reason. It reminds that Christ is our Shepherd not just in this life, but *beyond* this life! He will *shepherd* us from this world into the next and personally introduce us into the presence of the Father where we will find the Ultimate Banqueting Table awaits us for eternity.

6. If we want the Shepherd to shepherd us beyond this life, what relationship should we have with Him in this life?
  - (a) Be sure to keep Him on His toes by seeing how far His grace extends
  - (b) Ensure that He keeps following *us*
  - (c) Be diligent to follow Him by keeping His Word, doing His will, and remaining faithful to Him in the midst of adversity and trials
  - (d) Give Him as much advice as we can with our prayers because He may not be aware of all that is happening or if He is, He may not know how to solve it as well as we could if we were God.



In Australia we don't have shepherds, we have *drovers*. The difference between the type of shepherd depicted in the Bible, and an Australian drover is *how* they lead their sheep. A Biblical Shepherd *leads* his sheep whereas a drover *drives* his sheep.

In churches, God places His *under-shepherds*. These are people that God has entrusted to not just *care* for His sheep, but to *lead* His sheep. The New Testament shepherd is called a *pastor*. Many pastors have found that some people in their charge don't want to be led and actually criticise their pastor for not *following* them. You should pray for your pastor to have the courage to lead as God would have him lead and to have the tenderness of the Great Shepherd as they do.



7. Note how this Psalm crescendos (concludes triumphantly). What should the believer's attitude be to 'house of the Lord' in this life? (Also consider Hebrews 10:24-25)
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This beautiful Psalm reassures us that as we walk with Christ faithfully, even though we experience dark times, Christ's "rod and staff" will both guide and rescue us. David, who tried to serve God with all his heart, was a man given to some well documented failures, yet he was comforted that God would enable him to remain faithful. No matter what you've done or who you've done it with, or how often you've failed the Lord, His *rod and staff* can be a comfort to you as well.



*Amen.*