

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 23

A. INTRODUCTION:

1. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. (Eph. 5:17-20)
2. The book of 150 psalms is a book that gives God's revelation to Israel and Israel's response to the Lord in faith.
3. The Psalms are windows into the faith of Israel which allows us to see how people of faith over 3000 years ago related to God.
4. The book of Psalms is a book of prayer and praise; but more than these, it is God's word to His people.
5. The book of Psalms encourages the constant fellowship and dialogue between God and man.
6. The Psalms are both God's word to man and man's word to God.
7. The Psalms reveal the greatness, the wonder, the splendor, the wisdom, the grace, the mercy, the provisions, and the prophecies of God!
8. The book of Psalms is one of many Old Testament books of poetry including also: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. However, many poetic sections are found in the books of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18), in the books of the prophets as well (Isa. 1:2-31), and even in the historical narratives (1 Chron. 16:8-36 - the Ark Psalm)
9. There are multiple types of Psalms:
 1. Individual lament psalms
 2. National lament psalms
 3. Thanksgiving psalms
 4. Devotional praise psalms (hymns)
 5. Wisdom psalms
 6. Pilgrim psalms
 7. Royal psalms
 8. Enthronement psalms (kingdom psalms)
 9. Messianic psalms

B. Psalm 23 is considered by many to be a messianic psalm:

1. The 23rd Psalm is a psalm of trust, confidence, and deliverance.

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2. The shepherd metaphor is clearly used throughout the Scriptures to represent the Lord.
3. The author is given as David, but the occasion of the writing is not certain:
 - a. It is perhaps the time of David's flight from Absalom. (2 Sam. 15:12-14)
 - b. Perhaps it is late in David's life when his strength began to fail. (1 Kings 1:1-2:20)
4. The 23rd Psalm transports us instantly to green pastures and still waters and gives us comfort as those lambs protected by a good shepherd.
5. In 100 words, it sums up all of our needs in life and all the abundance of God's grace both now and forever.
6. It begins with "*The Lord*" and it ends with "*forever.*"
7. These 6 verses and 13 promises are a microcosm of God's grace.
8. The theme of the 23rd Psalm is expressed in the first verse – "*The Lord is my shepherd.*"
9. This psalm is messianic in that it reflects the 2nd person of the Trinity, who has a personal, intimate relationship with his people as referenced in both the Old and New Testament.
10. Although Jesus (Heb. *Yeshua*) is the personal Savior of all who trust in Him; He is the guardian of Israel as a people and a nation.
11. In the Old Testament:
 - a. The patriarch, Jacob, spoke of "*the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.*" (Gen. 48:15)
 - b. In Psalm 80:1, the Lord is referred to as the "*Shepherd of Israel.*"
 - c. In Psalm 95:7, we read, "*We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.*"
 - d. In Isaiah 40:10, 11 we read of the national covenant God made with His people, Israel, "*Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,*"
 - e. In Micah 7:14 we read his prayer, "*Shepherd Thy people with Thy scepter, the flock of Thy inheritance,*"
 - f. In Ezekiel chapter 34:11-22, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel saying, "*Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.*"