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Weekly Bible Notes
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FREE SAMPLER

Digging deeper into the Bible

For study the week of **January 12 – 18, 2026**

This is a free sample of the Weekly Bible Notes study aid for this week.

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Suggested uses and notes for the *Illustrated Weekly Bible Notes*:

The **complete chapters and/or stories** are provided in canonical order for your weekly Bible study. The format is designed so you can **print and arrange the complete stories / chapters in 3-ring binders in canonical order for future, easy reference**. New chapters/stories are published each week, so that you can **build a cumulative Bible study reference tool**.

The text of each featured chapter / story is presented in the **Common English Version (CEB)**, and just below the block of text are links to the text in nine other translations or paraphrases. An **alternate, modern Bible translation for each verse** is provided with the commentary on each verse, and a list of the Bible version abbreviations with full titles and copyright information can be found at the end of this document.



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Psalm 23:1-6

The Lord is My Shepherd

(CEB)* ¹The LORD is my shepherd. I lack nothing. ²He lets me rest in grassy meadows; he leads me to restful waters; ³he keeps me alive. He guides me in proper paths for the sake of his good name. ⁴Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger because you are with me. Your rod and your staff—they protect me. ⁵You set a table for me right in front of my enemies. You bathe my head in oil; my cup is so full it spills over! ⁶Yes, goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the LORD's house as long as I live.

*(Common English Bible) View text in: [AMP](#) | [GNT](#) | [KJV](#) | [MSG](#) | [NET](#) | [NIV](#) | [NLT](#) | [NRSVUE](#) | [VOICE](#)

COMMENTARY/RESOURCES:

OVERVIEW: “Psalm 23 is the best known and most beloved psalm in the collection. Surprisingly, it casts humanity as sheep—stupid, helpless sheep. But the long-lasting appeal of Psalm 23 is a direct result of that casting because the imagery is both soothing and accessible. When he was a boy, King David was a shepherd watching his father's flocks in the hills around Bethlehem. In those days, too, it was common to refer to kings in the Near East as shepherds; but not all shepherd-kings cared for their sheep. Though David tried to shepherd his people well, he knew the truth: the Eternal is the true Shepherd. In John 10:11 Jesus makes a bold claim. He declares that He is the good shepherd. Immediately His disciples detected the resonance of Psalm 23 in His words. Those of us who follow Jesus today come to know Him as that gentle but strong shepherd who guides us through life if we will follow Him.” (*The Voice Commentary*)

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (KJV)

(MOFF) The Eternal shepherds me, I lack nothing.

(NLT) The LORD is my shepherd; I have everything I need.

(VOICE) The Eternal is my shepherd, He cares for me always.

YOUTUBE: “Psalm 23” by Sons of Korah [Listen](#)

YOUTUBE: Bobby McFerrin's “Psalm 23” [Listen](#)

LYRICS: The Lord is my Shepard, I have all I need,
She makes me lie down in green meadows,
Beside the still waters, She will lead.
She restores my soul, She rights my wrongs,
She leads me in a path of good things,
And fills my heart with songs.
Even though I walk, through a dark & dreary land,
There is nothing that can shake me,
She has said She won't forsake me,
I'm in her hand.

She sets a table before me, in the presence of my foes,
She anoints my head with oil,
And my cup overflows.
Surely, surely goodness & kindness will follow me,
All the days of my life,
And I will live in her house,
Forever, forever & ever.
Glory be to our Mother, & Daughter,
And to the Holy of Holies,
As it was in the beginning, is now & ever shall be,
World, without end. Amen.

COMMENTARY: “The comparison of the care which God extends over his people to that of a shepherd for his flock is one that would naturally occur to those who were accustomed to pastoral life. It would be natural that it should suggest itself to Jacob, and to David, for both of them had been shepherds. David, in advanced years, would naturally remember the occupations of his early life; and the remembrance of the care of God over him

would naturally recall the care which he had, in earlier years, extended over his flocks. The *idea* which the language suggests is that of tender care; protection; particular attention to the young and the feeble; and providing for their wants.” (**Notes on the Old and the New Testaments (BARNES)**, p210)

“In verses 1-4 the psalmist pictures the Lord as a shepherd who provides for his needs and protects him from danger. The psalmist declares, “The Lord is my shepherd,” and then extends and develops that metaphor, speaking as if he were a sheep.” (**New English Translation notes**)

METACOMMENT: “What a sweet assurance of the Father's loving care is given us in the Twenty-third Psalm. As we read, a sense of calm trustfulness comes in to take the place of doubt and anxiety, and it dawns upon us that our Father is not a harsh, frowning task-master, but a patient, gentle Shepherd, who slumbers not; a Shepherd who will safely guard and tenderly guide each one of His flock. He lovingly tells us that He knows His sheep and that there shall be one fold....“The Lord is my shepherd,” and our Lord is divine Love. Just that change of thought brings us closer to our Father. It suggests the tenderness of the tie between God and His children, and we grasp the inspiring thought, that in our despair and weakness and discouragement we may cry to our Shepherd, ever-present Love, and He will hear us and mightily help us. There is no place where His voice is not heard. He says that He is the good Shepherd and a good Shepherd is always ready to take the weak lambs in his arms and does not suffer any to stray. The sheep know the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. If we are the sheep of Love's pasture we shall listen for the voice. The innocent and pure in heart hear the voice of the Shepherd first. Then shall not we try to be innocent, and pure, and meek?” (**Nunn, Henry D., “The Twenty-third Psalm”, Journal Vol. 16 (December 1898), p. 615.**)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1898/12/16-9/the-twenty-third-psalm>

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (KJV)

(NJB) In grassy meadows he lets me lie. By tranquil streams he leads me.

(REMEDY) He provides rest where I can gather strength, he leads me to peace and safety — like still waters;

(TPT) He offers a resting place for me in his luxurious love. His tracks take me to an oasis of peace near the quiet brook of bliss.

YOUTUBE: “Understanding green pastures” by Ray Vander Laan [Video](#)

(from Volume 12, “Walking With God in the Desert” 2011; “That The World May Know” [website](#))

COMMENTARY: Within the framework of the metaphor, the psalmist/sheep is declaring in verse 2 that his shepherd provides the essentials for physical life. At a deeper level the psalmist may be referring to more than just physical provision, though that would certainly be included.” (**New English Translation notes**)

“Contrary to the usual understanding, the imagery in verses 2-3 is not aimed primarily at communicating a sense of peace and tranquility. It does this, to be sure, but its primary intent is to say that God keeps the psalmist alive. For a sheep, to be able to ‘lie down in green pastures’ means to have food; to be led ‘beside still waters’ means to have something to drink; to be led ‘in right paths’ means that danger is avoided and proper shelter is attained....In short, the sheep lack nothing...” (**The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB)**, p767)

Oesterley offers this take: “Here the Good Shepherd tends every single member of the flock. The peace and contentment of body and mind is exquisitely portrayed in the picture of restful repose in green pastures beside the refreshing coolness of still waters. But greater than material comforts is the spiritual happiness of being led into paths of righteousness.” (**Oesterley, W. O. E., The Psalms (London: SPCK, 1939)**)

Boice states: “It is interesting that the psalm begins at this point. We might expect it to begin with motion, with some kind of activity either by the shepherd or the sheep. But strikingly, it begins with rest. It is a reminder that the Christian life also begins with resting in God or Christ. Along the way there will in time be many things for us to do. But we begin by resting in him who has done everything for us. Are you resting in Christ?” (**An Expository Commentary (BOICE)**)

METACOMMENT: “The good Shepherd would not let His sheep lie down except in a secure place where they need not be in fear of the wolves. There in the pleasant pasture, secure from invasion, the gentle flock may browse and drink of the waters and lie down in the shade of the trees. The rippling brook as it flows on its joyous way makes music that soothes the innocent lambs to tranquil slumber. What a scattering there would be if the wolves should come down on the unsuspecting fold! But there is nothing to fear, the Shepherd is watching, no harm can come nigh. Our Shepherd, Love, maketh us to lie down under the shadow of His presence. He maketh us to know that there is nowhere any power that can harm us. Truth in Christian Science leadeth us into a higher, purer condition of thought. We are bathed in the peaceful waters of divine Love and purified. We learn the nothingness of error, and that there is no reality in sickness, no evil power.” (Nunn, Henry D., “*The Twenty-third Psalm*”, *Journal* Vol. 16 (December 1898), p. 615.)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1898/12/16-9/the-twenty-third-psalm>

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (KJV)

(FENTON) He brings me back, my life refreshed, To skip with joy, and praise His Name.

(MOFF) he revives life in me. He guides me by true paths, as he himself is true.

(REMEDY) he heals my inmost self. He leads me through the process of spiritual restoration for the magnification of his character of love.

(TPT) That’s where he restores and revives my life. He opens before me the right path and leads me along in his footsteps of righteousness so that I can bring honor to his name.

COMMENTARY: “He brings my soul – me – back to him. A lamb is frolicsome by nature and tends to wander from the path, but the faithful shepherd makes efforts to bring the lamb back to him...The phrase ‘in the paths of righteousness,’ should be understood in its literal sense – paths along which one does not lose one’s way. **For His name’s sake.** In accordance with the metaphor of the shepherd, this should be understood as follows: The shepherd works so hard on behalf of his flock so that people will praise him as a faithful shepherd. Nowhere else in the Bible do we find a person doing something for his own name’s sake. It may be suggested that the expression ‘for his name’s sake’ is appropriate in reference to God, of whom the shepherd is a metaphor.” (Hakham, Amos, *Psalms, with the Jerusalem Commentary*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2003, p170-1)

METACOMMENT: “We find in our text-book, that the word Soul used in this connection means "spiritual sense." Spiritual sense is the understanding of God, Good, the realization of harmony, health, and holiness. Error has seemed to dull man’s perception, just as smoked glasses held before the eyes make all objects appear indistinct and blurred to mortal sense. To restore the normal perception in the one case, it is only necessary to remove the smoked glasses. Perception was not lost, but veiled. So with the spiritual sense or perception. A false belief in the reality of material things and of sin, sickness, and death, has beclouded the vision. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Webster defines righteousness as "purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to the divine law. . . . Nearly equivalent to holiness, comprehending holy principles and affections of heart, and conformity of life to the divine law. It includes all we call justice, honesty, and virtue, with holy affections; in short, it is true religion." Divine Love has shown us the way out of error and leadeth us through Christian Science into the "realm of unerring, eternal, and omnipotent Mind; the atmosphere of Spirit, where Soul is supreme" (Science and Health, 581).” (Nunn, Henry D., “*The Twenty-third Psalm*”, *Journal* Vol. 16 (December 1898), p. 615.)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1898/12/16-9/the-twenty-third-psalm>

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (KJV)

(AMP) Even though I walk through a valley dark as death I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy staff and thy crook are my comfort.

(REMEDY) Moreover, when I go through the dark times —when I feel like I am going to die —I will not give into fear or choose selfishness, for you are right there with me; your rod of truth and staff of love, they comfort me.

(TPT) Even when your path takes me through the valley of deepest darkness, fear will never conquer me, for you already have! Your authority is my strength and my peace. The comfort of your love takes away my fear. I'll never be lonely, for you are near.

(VOICE) Even in the *unending* shadows of death's darkness, I am not overcome by fear. Because You are with me *in those dark moments*, near with Your protection and guidance, I am comforted.

COMMENTARY: "Protection is the fourth blessing for which David gave God praise. The promises of the Lord's presence assure us of His protection in times of danger when we fear (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5). The shepherd's rod (a cudgel worn at the belt) beat off attacking animals, and his staff (walking stick) kept the sheep away from physical dangers such as precipices. Likewise, God comes to the defense of His people when our spiritual enemies attack us. He also prevents us from getting into spiritually dangerous situations that would result in our destruction (cf. Matthew 6:13)." **(Expository Notes (CONSTABLE))**

"The meaning of the expression 'the valley of death's shadow' poses some difficulty. The Hebrew may properly be understood as a compound noun, with the literal sense 'very deep shadow', or even 'total darkness'. As such, it is not only a part of the metaphor of the shepherd, but again has associations with the exodus and the wandering through the 'deep shadow' of the wilderness. But the expression may have been used deliberately to convey the threat of death, as is done in the poetry of Job. Thus the psalmist's confidence rests in the fact that even in the shadow of death itself, he need fear no evil." **(Word Biblical Commentary (WBC), p207)**

METACOMMENT: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' What does this beautiful metaphor mean? It refers to that period of trial through which all must pass in the progress of the mortal sense to a realization of its own nothingness. In Science we must work out our own salvation. We may be lifted to the mount of spiritual vision and get a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven, but we cannot stay there unsustained by demonstration. We cannot go very far with borrowed light. We must go down again into the valley of shadows and climb step by step. When we shall have proven the shadows to be shadows and not realities, we shall again ascend above the clouds of materialism there to remain. Error will not let us imbibe the Truth without a struggle to prevent it. There will be much wailing and gnashing of teeth, and fear will seem at times to have full possession; but "Love's rod and Love's staff" will comfort us. Our rod and staff are the Bible and Science and Health. Holding on to them we shall grow in strength of understanding so that error may scream at us in vain. Our first glimpse of the Truth is just a little beam, not enough to melt away all error, but sufficient to furnish light to make our way slowly if we do not wilfully close our eyes. All sorts of fears, temptations, and false beliefs,— devouring beasts of mortal mind,—come up to bar the way, but the Psalmist tells us that we shall tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under feet. God, Good, does not ordain suffering. We have let error impose upon us, and it is our work to prove error powerless." **(Nunn, Henry D., "The Twenty-third Psalm", Journal Vol. 16 (December 1898), p. 615.)**

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5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (KJV)

(EXB) You prepare a ·meal [^Ltable] for me in ·front [the presence] of my enemies. You ·pour oil of blessing on my head [anoint my head with oil; ^Coil was a means of refreshment in a hot, dry environment]; you ·fill my cup to overflowing [^Lmake my cup overflow; ^Ca cup of blessing].

(GNT) You prepare a banquet for me, where all my enemies can see me; you welcome me as an honored guest and fill my cup to the brim.

(NLT) You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You welcome me as a guest, anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.

(REMEDY) You provide a feast to nurture me in plain view of my enemies. You cleanse my mind with the oil of your Spirit; my cup of joy overflows.

(TLB) You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest; blessings overflow!

COMMENTARY: "The picture changes [in verses 5 and 6]. The psalmist uses the metaphor of a host to give richer expression to his sense of the warmth and intimacy of his relationship to his God. He is a guest under the protection of the divine host. In the East the man who is hunted by enemies needs but to enter or even only to touch the tent of him with whom he seeks refuge in order to be safe and to enjoy gracious hospitality. His enemies may stand and glare outside the tent door, but can do no more. **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies:** the divine host has exceeded the bare requirements of hospitality. The meal assumes the proportions of a feast at which sweet-smelling unguents are poured on the head of the guest, and there is no lack of good things. **My cup overflows:** Lit., 'my cup is saturation.' The psalmist has had enemies, but their plans against him have been frustrated because the Lord, in effect, has said, 'This man is my friend.'" (*The Interpreter's Bible (IB)*, p128-30)

METACOMMENT: "This table, with the cover of spiritual purity, and light, and power, is laden with the bread of heaven, the spiritual qualities that feed at all times man who is the image and likeness of God." (**Roberts, Justine**, "*The Table in the Wilderness*", *Journal* Vol. 46 (May 1928), p. 84.)

JSH-Online: <https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1928/5/46-2/the-table-in-the-wilderness>

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (KJV)

(MOFF) yes, and all through my life Goodness and Kindness wait on me, the Eternal's guest within his household evermore.

(VOICE) Certainly Your faithful protection and loving provision will pursue me where I go, always, everywhere. I will always be with the Eternal, in Your house forever.

COMMENTARY: Davidson links verses 5 and 6. "The presence of my enemies' is a sign that all those who have threatened the psalmist have now been proved to be wrong. From the present he looks forward confidently to the future. 'Goodness and mercy will follow me.' The verb translated 'follow' most frequently in the Old Testament means 'to pursue with hostile intent,' and this may have been the psalmist's experience at the hands of those he refers to as his enemies. But now he is pursued by 'goodness and steadfast love,' by that firm, unfailing friendship of God which is the guarantee of the good life." (**Davidson**, Robert, *The Vitality of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998))

"The word-pictures of Yahweh as the loving Host (verse 5) and of living with God in his household (verse 6)...brought home to the psalmist the happiness and blessing of communion with God. 'Only goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,' an utterance which testifies to his boundless happiness. Ever more distinctly and with growing enthusiasm he has come to realize how unfathomably rich is the blessing of God which rules over his life. His soul is radiant with light." (*The Old Testament Library (OTL)*)

METACOMMENT: "the concluding verse ends, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." In "the concluding verse ends, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." In "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p. 578) its author, Mary Baker Eddy, interprets "house" as "consciousness" and "Lord" as "Love." This beautiful psalm portrays the shower of benefits bestowed upon man by his creator. Quiet perusal of it results in thought after thought of great spiritual import. As the verses are pondered, each seems to be filled with spiritual food, and each brings an ever larger desire to sing aloud the glories of our God with thanksgiving; and when all have been contemplated, the psalm is found to be most precious in its entirety. its author, Mary Baker Eddy,

interprets "house" as "consciousness" and "Lord" as "Love." This beautiful psalm portrays the shower of benefits bestowed upon man by his creator. Quiet perusal of it results in thought after thought of great spiritual import. As the verses are pondered, each seems to be filled with spiritual food, and each brings an ever larger desire to sing aloud the glories of our God with thanksgiving; and when all have been contemplated, the psalm is found to be most precious in its entirety." (Roberts, Justine, *"The Table in the Wilderness"*, Journal Vol. 46 (May 1928), p. 84.)

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