

The REWARD of FOLLOWING JESUS

Psalm 23 - A psalm of David.

v1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. v2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, v3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. v4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. v5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. v6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Of all the world's religions, Christianity is the only one in which the reward of following its leader is fully experienced before AND after we die.

All other religions motivate followers by GUILT. They have RULES that need to be followed to receive to receive the ultimate reward. Judaism has the Talmud. Islam has the Korhan. Hinduism has the Bhagavad Gita or the Veda's or a 100 other religious writings or books.

Christianity motivates followers by GRACE. While we have a BOOK, **THE FUNCTION OF THE BOOK IS TO POINT US TO JESUS.**

The Psalmist begins by firstly

I. REMINDING US THAT ULTIMATE PURPOSE / PEACE / SATISFACTION CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN JESUS - v1

v1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

The Hebrew word for "WANT" is *khaw-sare'* and means "to lack; by implication to fail, want, lessen: - be abated, bereave, decrease, (cause to) fail, (have) lack, make lower, want."

BUT it is prefixed with the word "NOT"

(AOV) 'n Psalm van Dawid. Die HERE is my herder; niks sal my **ontbreek (missing)** nie.

(ASV+MKJV) A Psalm of David. Jehovah is my shepherd; **I shall not want.**

(CEV) (A psalm by David.) You, LORD, are my shepherd. **I will never be in need.**

(KJV+NASB+RSVA) A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; **I shall not want.**

(MSG) A David psalm. GOD, my shepherd! **I don't need a thing.**

(NLT) A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; **I have everything I need.**

Psalms 34:9-10 *Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. v10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

Psalms 84:11 *For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.*

Matthew 6:31-33 *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' v32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. v33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Romans 8:31-32 *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? v32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Phil 4:19 *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." v6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

The Psalmist secondly lists some of the

II. **BENEFITS we have when WE FOLLOW JESUS - v2-5**

v2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, v3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. v4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. v5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

1. **HE BRINGS US TO A PLACE OF REST.** *v2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. The Hebrew word for "PASTURE" is *naw-aw'* and means "pasture, abode, abode of the shepherd". When we follow Jesus we are ALREADY HOME.*

Ephesians 2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, *v20* built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. *v21* In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. *v22* And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, *v21* who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Hebrews 4:3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

2. **HE IS OUR SOURCE OF REFRESHING.** *v2 ... , he leads me beside quiet waters. The "QUIET WATERS" refer to an OASIS, not a river.*

John 4:10-14 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." *v11* "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? *v12* Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" *v13* **Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, *v14* but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

3. **HE RECONNECTS US TO OUR FATHER.** *v3 he restores my soul.*

Since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden, people have lived at a distance from God, their creator. Jesus has made it possible for us to be "RESTORED" to our Father. Jesus said: "NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME".

4. **HE IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** *v3 ... , He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

We have no ability to be righteous in our own ability. We DEPEND TOTALLY on what Christ has done for us!!

1 Corinthians 1:30 - *But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,*

Romans 1:17 - *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."*

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Psalms 79:9 *Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.*

Ephesians 1:3-6 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. v4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love v5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- v6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

5. **HE HAS AND IS SANCTIFYING US.** *v4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

The phrase “*v4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*” refer to our CHRISTIAN WALK. To be “WALKING” is a good sign. It means we are on the journey with the Shepherd.

“HIS ROD” protects us from evil external to us.

“HIS STAFF” protects us from evil we may be tempted to “FALL” into.

The Hebrew word for “COMFORT” is *nâcham* and means “to be sorry, console oneself, repent, regret, comfort, be comforted”. When we follow Jesus we are comforted because we are strengthened in our sanctification.

THERE IS NO PEACE FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS DRIFTED FROM THE LORD!!

6. **HE IS PREPARING US TO HEAVEN.** *v5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

The TABLE is the banquet we will be seated at in HEAVEN.

The ANOINTING of OIL is both the Holy Spirit and the symbol of being one of the INVITED GUESTS at the TABLE

The CUP is both the CUP of SALVATION and the CUP of THE BEST WINE.

The Psalmist thirdly points to the

III. **CENTRAL FIGURE OF THE PSALM - v2-5**

1. **HE is the SHEPHERD.** *v1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. v2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, v3 he restores my soul. John 10:7-11 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, **I am the gate for the sheep.** ... v10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. v11 **"I am the good shepherd.** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*
2. **HE is the GUIDE.** *He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. v4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. John 14:1-6 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. v2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. v3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. v4 You know the way to the place where I am going." v5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" v6 Jesus answered, **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***
3. **HE is the HOST.** *v5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, v14 **but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.** Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, **"I am the bread of life.** He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*

The Psalmist finally points to the

IV. **ULTIMATE BENEFIT OF FOLLOWING JESUS - v6**

1. **A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE.** *v6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.*
2. **AN ETERNAL LIFE.** *v6, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Conclusion

**WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO FOLLOW ANYONE ELSE,
OTHER THAN JESUS?**