

Study Guide

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BY STILL WATERS

Pondering the Psalms

Psalm 23. Jehovah Jireh

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO

My real love and interest in the Psalms began on August 31, 2000, when I began reading Warren Wiersbe's daily devotional titled "Prayer, Praise & Promises – A daily walk through the Psalms." That interest has only grown over the past two decades.

I am beginning a new series titled "Pondering the Psalms." I will reflect on the psalms that have meant a lot to me. My reflections will be a blend of insights I have read or heard that have stayed with me and my thoughts.

I begin this series with the well-known and well-loved Psalm 23. Let's hear the whole psalm.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

Yea, 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.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord

Forever.

I find it quite interesting that King David begins the Psalm by saying "Jehovah-ROHI" or "the Lord" is my shepherd. David did not use "Elohim" or the great and mighty Creator God, one who is separate and distant from the world. Neither did he use the word "Adonai" or the Master is my shepherd. That would have made it a slave and master or a servant and Master relationship.

David instead chose to address God as "Yahweh or Jehovah" - The Lord. Hebrew scholars say Jehovah is the most personal name that God gives himself, implying one can get close to God.

It is in some ways, similar to how Jesus addressed God the Father when he taught his disciples to pray the Lord's prayer. He begins by saying "Abwoon" in Aramaic which is translated as "Abba" an intimate word like Daddy or Papa, or even more intimate like Dada.

The reason David uses Yahweh or Jehovah seems to be deliberate as Warren Wiersbe points out that “the compound names of Jehovah in the Old Testament reflect the contents of this psalm.” Compound names add a descriptive suffix to the name Jehovah, for example, “Jehovah-Shalom” which means the “Lord our peace.” Let’s see how this Psalm includes most of God’s descriptive names found in the Old Testament that help us in the different aspects of our life – including eternal life.

1. Our shepherd in the pastures of our life

As we walk through the pastures of our life following our Shepherd our life is filled with sufficiency and contentment. We have God’s name Jehovah-Jireh meaning the LORD will provide reflected in the phrase “I shall not want.” (v 1).

God’s provision of our day-to-day needs give us the contentment that we can lie down in green pastures (v 2a) and have the peace of mind that only Jehovah-Shalom - the LORD our peace can offer reflected in the phrase “He leads me beside still waters.” (v2)

In addition, in the pastures of our life like sheep, we can get hurt and need healing. It is here that Jehovah-Rapha - the Lord who heals steps in and David reflects this in the phrase “He restores my soul.” (v 3a)

In the pasture of our life we can stray away but here Jehovah-Tsidkenu the Lord our Righteousness is reflected as “He leads me in the paths of righteousness.” (v 3b)

2. In the valley

Secondly, we are not always pastures, and there are times we walk through the valleys of life. Here God our shepherd provides us a sense of security and serenity.

His name Jehovah-Shammah means the Lord is there or is present and is in the phrase “*For You are with me.*” God’s very presence is our security and strength which Jesus reaffirmed when He said “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:20)

Add to that promise the calm reassurance of the name Jehovah-Nissi meaning the Lord our banner where the Lord battles for us against our foes reflected in the phrases “Your rod and Your staff” (v 4) and “before me in the presence of my enemies.” (v 5)

3. Eternity in the father’s house

Since we belong to the Good Shepherd Jesus who laid down His life for us we are assured of spending eternity in our father’s house despite our flaws and faults. How is that possible? It is due to God’s goodness and mercy that follows us everywhere. (v6)

We have mentioned Jehovah-Tsidkenu earlier - the Lord our Righteousness. Jesus not only clothes us with His righteousness but the name Jehovah-M’Kaddesh meaning the Lord who sanctifies us by “anointing my head with oil.” (v 5)

Yes, in Psalm 23 I hope we can see God’s all-sufficiency for our life on earth and eternity. He provides for our physical well-being, protects us from all danger and illness, gives us peace of mind, lays out a banquet of pleasure and promises His presence here and in eternity. No wonder most of us watching this video know the Psalm by heart.

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