

THE LORD OUR LIGHT AND SALVATION

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 23:1-6; 27:1-14

LESSON 245 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth 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 thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 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" (Psalm 23:1-6)

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 23:1-6 (KJV)

¹ The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

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

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

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.

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

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.

Psalm 27:1-14 (KJV)

¹ The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

² When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

³ Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.

⁴ One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Shepherd Psalm

- 1 God's loving care for His people is likened unto a shepherd's watchful care over his sheep, Psalm 23:1;

Isaiah 40:11 (KJV)

¹¹ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

John 10:11-16 (KJV)

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Hebrews 13:20 (KJV)

²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

1 Peter 2:25 (KJV)

²⁵ For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

- 2 The Good Shepherd leads His sheep to bountiful provision, peace, and well-being, Psalm 23:2, 3;

Isaiah 49:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

Ezekiel 34:22-31 (KJV)

²² Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

²³ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

²⁴ And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*.

²⁵ And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

²⁶ And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

²⁷ And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and

may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

⁷ Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

⁸ *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

⁹ Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

¹⁰ When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

¹¹ Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

¹² Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

¹³ *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

²⁸ And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make *them* afraid.

²⁹ And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

³⁰ Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord GOD.

³¹ And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, *and* I *am* your God, saith the Lord GOD.

3 The Shepherd's strength and presence defeat the power and terror of death and calamity, Psalm 23:4;

Psalm 72:12-17 (KJV)

¹² For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

¹³ He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

¹⁴ He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

¹⁵ And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; *and* daily shall he be praised.

¹⁶ There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

¹⁷ His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

Psalm 91:1-14 (KJV)

¹ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, *He* is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

³ Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.

⁴ He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

⁵ Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

⁶ *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.

⁷ A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.

⁸ Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

⁹ Because thou hast made the LORD, *which* is my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;

¹⁰ There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

¹² They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

¹³ Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

¹⁴ Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (KJV)

¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- 4 God serves His people with love and divine care despite the enemies that beset them, Psalm 23:5;

Psalm 31:19-24 (KJV)

¹⁹ *Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

²⁰ Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

²¹ Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

²² For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

²³ O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

²⁴ Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Job 36:15-16 (KJV)

¹⁵ He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

¹⁶ Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait *into* a broad place, where *there is* no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table *should be* full of fatness.

- 5 God gives the cup of blessing, in full measure and running over, to those He loves, Psalm 23:5;

Psalm 45:7 (KJV)

⁷ Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Psalm 92:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of* an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

Malachi 3:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

- 6 Eternal life is the possession of the sheep of God's pasture, Psalm 23:6;

Psalm 16:11 (KJV)

¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

2 Corinthians 5:1 (KJV)

¹ For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Revelation 21:3-4 (KJV)

³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

II A Psalm of David

- 1 David's confidence in God's salvation is strong and sure, Psalm 27:1-3;

Exodus 15:1-27 (KJV)

¹ Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

² The LORD *is* my strength and song, and he *is* become my salvation: he *is* my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

³ The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.

⁴ Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

⁵ The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

⁶ Thy right hand, O LORD, *is* become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

⁷ And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, *which* consumed them as stubble.

⁸ And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

⁹ The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

¹⁰ Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

¹¹ Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?

¹² Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

¹³ Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people *which* thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided *them* in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

¹⁴ The people shall hear, *and* be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

¹⁵ Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

¹⁶ Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be *as* still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, *which* thou hast purchased.

¹⁷ Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* thou hast made for thee to dwell in, *in* the Sanctuary, O Lord, *which* thy hands have established.

¹⁸ The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

¹⁹ For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

²⁰ And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

²¹ And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

²² So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

²³ And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

²⁵ And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

²⁶ And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the

LORD that healeth thee.

²⁷ And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

- 2 David desired to dwell in the House of God forever, for therein was eternal life, Psalm 27:4-6;

Psalm 31:19-20 (KJV)

¹⁹ *Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

²⁰ Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

John 14:2-3 (KJV)

² In my Father's house are many mansions: *if it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

Hebrews 12:22 (KJV)

²² But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

- 3 David prayed for God's help to be continued in his life, Psalm 27:7-9, 11,12;

Deuteronomy 4:31 (KJV)

³¹ (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Psalm 50:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

- 4 David testified with confidence of God's mercy and salvation, Psalm 27:10, 13, 14;

Numbers 14:8 (KJV)

⁸ If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

Psalm 3:5-6 (KJV)

⁵ I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

⁶ I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

Isaiah 12:2 (KJV)

² Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also *is* become my salvation.

NOTES:

The Good Shepherd

The Twenty-third Psalm is one of the most widely known and best-loved portions of all the Scripture. Its words of love and beauty have comforted unnumbered hosts of many generations, through every kind of difficulty, trial, and even death. Its simplicity has ever endeared it to the hearts of men.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" is a comprehensive statement that explains the meaning of the entire Twenty-third Psalm. God is the Shepherd of the righteous, and His people are His sheep. Men are in desperate need of a guiding hand all through life; and God is all that, and more, to the soul who will look to Him for guidance, love, and protection.

The safety and protection of his flock is the shepherd's responsibility, because his sheep are not capable of properly seeking pasture and drink for themselves. Neither are the sheep capable of defending themselves from the wild beasts, or the perils that beset them in the hardships of the road. It is the

shepherd's duty safely to guide his sheep around all obstacles that threaten to harm and injure his flock. He is the one who will defend his flock with his life from all attacks of evil beasts, marauders, thieves, or murderers.

A wonderful discourse is given to us in the New Testament wherein Jesus tells the people that He is the Shepherd of the sheep. He said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). That was exactly what Jesus did for His people — the sheep of His pasture. He gave His life for them, that they might escape the terrible hazards of sin and its ultimate penalty — eternal death! Jesus' Blood, shed on Calvary's cross, is the propitiation for our sins, and we have received eternal life by believing in the efficacy of that cleansing Stream

Bountiful Pasture

We are taught here that we shall not suffer want, nor lack any good thing if we look to God for His provision. As the shepherd leads his flocks to still waters, and green pastures where the sheep are fed and watered in abundance, so God leads His people to the source of an everlasting supply of good; namely, the Fountain of Living Waters, Jesus Christ. "The upright shall have good things in possession" (Proverbs 28:10); and "He hath filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:53). Isaiah said of the Shepherd of Israel: "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them" (Isaiah 49:10). Jesus said to the thirsty, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

The promises of God are pertinent not only to this present world for the needs of body and soul during our pilgrimage upon earth, but are for our well-being and enjoyment in the great eternal ages with God. John the Apostle was given a vision of the great City of God that we might know a little of the bliss the saints of God will inherit. He wrote: "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:3, 4). It is little wonder then, in view of such things, that the Psalmist, as he wrote the Twenty-seventh Psalm, summed up his desire thus: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

David desired to dwell in the Temple of God — the New Jerusalem — with God through all eternity. His desire, for the time spent in this present world, was that he might meditate on the beauty and perfection of God through prayer and worship. It is the right and privilege of the child of God to inquire of God in His holy Temple through the medium of worship and praise to God. He who has tasted and seen that God is good loses all earthly desire for the possessions of this world and desires only that he might dwell with God forever. Perhaps the Psalmist had such in mind when he wrote, "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8).

Comforting Presence

In Psalms 23 and 27 the great confidence possessed by the

Psalmist is shown. He fears no evil that might come against him. The climax of his emphasis is reached when he says: "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."

Death has lost its terrors and its sting for the redeemed because of the victorious resurrection of Christ. He conquered death, hell, and the grave in that resurrection. At the time of death, the sky of life may be darkened, and pain may be suffered momentarily, but the fears and terrors of death are gone for the Christian because he is looking to the great Shepherd of the sheep to guide him.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" There is no answer to such questions, for there is none greater than the King of kings, and Lord of lords. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). For "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

Cup of Blessing

David thought of the hazards of his past life, of the many enemies that had striven to kill him; and he praised God for the great deliverances God had wrought in his behalf. God had literally set a table of blessing and protection for him, in the presence of his enemies. It seemed that the worse his predicament became the more God's presence dwelt with him. David compared God's great love and devotion for His sheep to a cup that runneth over because of its fullness. Much of this same theme is presented in the Twenty-seventh Psalm where the Psalmist says, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up." Parental affection is from God; and of all the human bonds, these parental ties and affections are the hardest to sever. But the Psalmist said that even though such calamity should come upon him — that his own parents should forsake him — yet God would console him and keep him.

The Twenty-seventh Psalm continues the theme of God's protection inasmuch that God will hide His own in His Tabernacle and in His presence. This Scriptural passage emphasizes the great personal interest God has in His own, and brings to mind the incident and lesson when Jesus compared the protecting interest of God over His people with a hen gathering her chicks under her wings. Jesus said, at that time, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). In the Psalms we find the same thought, for there it is written, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust" (Psalm 91:4).

Goodness of the Lord

Psalms 23 and 27 end with a confident note of God's goodness and mercy that is the portion of His people. David's confidence that goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life was justified, because he who lives for the glory of God receives God's rewards. These rewards include joy, peace, and everlasting life — all made possible through the goodness and mercy of Almighty God. God's promise is: "Forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee"

(Proverbs 3:1, 2).

David had ample opportunity to prove the saving power and infinite grace of God in his life, because his soul and his life had been in jeopardy many times in the past. Of such times he said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Psalm 27:13). Here is a strong indictment and testimony against all sluggards who continually put off their rightful service to God. The day of trouble will arrive; and having no Savior, those who put off their duty to God shall perish like the flower of the field. But not so with David. His trust had been in the living God, and he advised those less confident of God's salvation to "wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psalm 27:14).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who is the Shepherd of the sheep?
- 2 What is the responsibility of a shepherd?
- 3 Why do the sheep need a shepherd?
- 4 Why did David desire to dwell in the House of the Lord forever?
- 5 How does the Twenty-seventh Psalm emphasize God's personal interest in His people?
- 6 How does parental love compare with God's love?