

## PSALM 23: SHEPHERD



A field sits between the wide arms of the harp (**Psalms**), with a **shepherd** and sheep. The strings of the harp and the color of the sheep indicate "**23**".

- + There is only one man who can save us from eternal destruction – Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Our own sin would condemn us to Hell under the Father's laws, and Satan awaits those who live in rebellion and denial of God to destroy them. Just as the sheep is defenseless and needs a shepherd, so too we are feeble against our spiritual enemies and need the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:1-18).
- + I wonder if we properly appreciate how powerful our enemy, the Devil, is. Though his power is as nothing compared to our God, he is far more powerful and cunning than us. It is folly to ignore this enemy, and thereby open up ourselves to his cunning, allowing him to lure us to our destruction! Contemporary society has not only dismissed God, but also the Devil. It is popular to think the Devil does not exist; many play right into the adversary's hands!
- + One of the ways to tell if a person really believes Jesus has been raised from the dead and intercedes for us is if that person prays to Christ. A disciple of Jesus will seek to connect with him regarding daily needs, especially when navigating moral issues. Many people, even those who say they are agnostics, will pray when in a crisis. The fervent Christian prays not only when in need, but continually, giving thanks and seeking guidance in making God-pleasing decisions. Christ calls us into righteousness, looking to see if we will follow. Those who want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus will be praying to obtain guidance. The opposite is neglect of a relationship with the living Christ and an attitude of self-determination.

+ There will be valleys we must traverse, as we are reminded, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley... (or traditionally the “valley of the shadow of death”). Faith in God, though ultimately comforting, does not guarantee that we will always travel a sunny, carefree path. If we seek to emulate Christ, we note that his journey to the cross was stormy with trials and opposition. We may have assurance in God’s presence, and yet opposition from the world, our sinful self and the Devil. We fear no evil because of the presence of Christ with us.