

# THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23:1-6.

## LESSON 106 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

### David's Boyhood

The name of the man who wrote this Psalm is David. Let us turn back to I Samuel 16 and see what we read of David's life. When just a boy he tended sheep for his father. In the Holy Land, where David lived, as the eldest son grows up he usually helps his father with the ploughing, sowing, reaping, and threshing, or olive picking. A younger brother takes his place with the sheep. David was the youngest in the family, so we find him tending the sheep.

While David was out taking care of his father's sheep, a lion and a bear came down to the flock and took a lamb. But David was a brave boy, because he had God in his heart. God helped him to kill the lion and the bear.

One day when David was with the sheep, his father sent for him. A prophet of God, named Samuel, had come to choose a new king for the people. Seven of David's brothers had passed before the Prophet Samuel. But God told Samuel that none of these boys should be king. Then Samuel asked Jesse, the father, if he had any other children. Jesse answered that the youngest was out keeping the sheep. Samuel said to send for David at once.

### David the King

From among the sheep, out in the field, we see David coming. Perhaps his shepherd's staff is in his hand, or he may be carrying his sling and shepherd's bag. In this bag made from skin, the shepherd boy carries his simple food. David is just a ruddy-faced boy, but he has a heart that loves the Lord. As he stands before Samuel, the Lord says, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." Then Samuel pours the oil on David's head, which means that he will be the king.

God blessed David from that very day. At one time when a wicked giant was troubling the army, David took his sling, and with a smooth stone he killed the giant. God helped him do many wonderful works.

### The Kind Shepherd

We do not know just how old David was when he wrote, "The LORD is my shepherd." But we know that he was saved and loved the Lord with all his heart. No doubt as he wrote this Psalm he was thinking of the days he has spent out tending the sheep. He perhaps realized that God was leading him just as he had led the sheep in his boyhood days. We know that David had in mind a summer scene when he wrote this Psalm, as the flocks do not have to be led to water in the winter.

### Green Pastures

All is dry in the summer except the banks of the brook, where the grass is green. The sky is cloudless; the shepherd calls his flocks and leads them to the dry grass found on the hilltops, which is very good pasture. About noon the sheep stop grazing and huddle together, seeking shade in the shadow of another sheep. The shepherd leads them back to the valley, along the brook. The sheep stop in a patch of green grass and lie down to rest before drinking. This is just as David said, - "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." No doubt David meant that God took care of him just as carefully as a faithful shepherd cares for his flock.

Then the sheep go down to the water for a drink and are again refreshed. David said, "He restoreth my soul." After all the sheep have been watered they rest in the cooling afternoon breeze, and the shepherd again leads them to pasture.

As evening nears, the shepherd starts back for a sheltered spot in which to spend the night with his flock. Perhaps a cave among the rocks is the only place of shelter for the night. A wild beast may linger along the narrow path, waiting for a chance to get a lamb. We are told by shepherds that a wolf will not take an old sheep if he can get a lamb. The shepherd often builds a fire in the entrance to the cave for protection from wild animals. The sheep of the ancient times, and even today in some countries, are taken care of in this way. They feel safe in their kind shepherd's care.

What a true picture of the people of God who put their trust in Jesus – the Good Shepherd. David knew that God was with him and was taking care of him. Every Christian may say with David, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

When a sheep wanders away from its shepherd, it may get lost or a wild animal may attack it. But if it stays close to its shepherd, it is safe. That is just the way with us – when we pray and keep close to Jesus, no harm will come to us. If we follow where Jesus leads us and do what He wants us to do, we shall be safe and happy. When David said, “I shall not want” he meant that he would never be in need of anything – God would supply all his needs. He watches over His children with tender care and gives them food, clothing, shelter, and all that they need and much more. Not only that, but He blesses their soul and makes them happy every day as they love Him and work for Him.

### **Trusting in God**

David said, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” He meant that he would not be afraid when death was near. Jesus has promised to be with us, even in death. When Jesus takes one of our family to Heaven, He is near to comfort our hearts. Jesus has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for us, and some day he will take all who are ready to Heaven. Then we shall always be with Jesus. We may say as David said, “I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the Good Shepherd? John 10:11.
2. Was He David’s Shepherd? Psalm 23:1.
3. Was the Lord good to David? Psalm 23:1-6.
4. Was David afraid of death? Psalm 23:4.
5. Will the Lord supply our needs today? Philippians 4:19.