



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Psalms 23:1-6 **English Standard Version** **April 2, 2017**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, April 2, 2017**, is from **Psalms 21:1-6**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Psalms 23:1) A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In this beloved Psalm, the Lord is **our** Shepherd because we are following the God of the Bible. We listen for and recognize His voice and earnestly desire to be close to Him as we pray, study the Scriptures, serve, and seek to obey Him. We want nothing more than His will to be done and the knowledge of His will so we can obey Him in everything wherever He leads. No matter what we are experiencing in this world, we have learned that godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6).

(Psalms 23:2) He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

Those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ know that He will lead us where we need to go, where we to stay, and where we need to go for greener pastures and still waters. He can pour His love and peace so fully into our hearts that we experience His calm assurance no matter what our outward trials and sufferings as His followers. After bearing much good fruit in His Name as empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Lord often pours out both material and spiritual blessings upon us without number or limits to His generosity.

(Psalms 23:3) He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Neither David, Jesus, nor the Apostle Paul had easy lives. Our Father did not spare His

only Son from suffering and death. But when the followers of Jesus as their Shepherd turn to the Lord in humble obedience and love, Jesus refreshes our souls and restores our well-being. We are led in the way we should go for the sake of the Name of the Lord, to bring Him glory and honor; not because we deserve His blessings, but so we can be like Jesus and bless others in His Name with His divine love and power.

(Psalms 23:4) 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.

Jesus is our perfect example of what it means to walk through the darkest experiences. United to the Lord Jesus Christ, death is a harmless shadow and we will enjoy victory over death with Him. Because of His resurrection from the dead, we too will rise from the dead and receive the inheritance He has prepared for us. No evil defeated Jesus; and by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ no evil will ultimately defeat us. Even now, we are seated with Him in the heavenly realms. God will prune us to bear more fruit and we will bear more fruit, just as sheep provide wool to bless others year after year. Jesus will empower and encourage us as we walk the narrow path that leads to salvation. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and His shepherd's rod will defend and guide us; His staff will rescue and preserve us.

(Psalms 23:5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Every man and woman of God who is an obedient follower of the Lord Jesus Christ will have enemies: sometimes even in the church. But our Father still prepares a spiritual (and sometimes material) banquet for us despite them and sometimes they see the Lord blessing us in His presence. Surrounded by enemies and soon to die on a cross for us, Jesus prepared His disciples spiritually and ate the Passover meal with them (establishing a new covenant in His blood). Jesus will act in similar ways for us despite our enemies and what they might do to us. We will experience the oil of gladness and overflowing joy and love as His spirit anoints and fills us with His presence.

(Psalms 23:6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Based upon all the Bible teaches and the experiences Jesus Christ alone can give us, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we have assurance of God's goodness, love, mercy, and saving grace toward us. The Lord will walk with us or carry us through all of life's struggles into eternal bliss with Him. We long to dwell with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit along with all who love our Most Holy and Almighty God. Following Jesus

Christ our Shepherd will lead us to live forever in His house – the house He has prepared for us. The twenty-third Psalm gives us the assurance of God’s faithfulness no matter what we are experiencing or seeing about us in the world in which we live.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. If you say the Lord Jesus Christ is your Shepherd, how should you behave?
2. Why does the Shepherd guide you in right paths?
3. Explain why you need not fear evil when you are following Jesus.
4. Why do the Shepherd’s rod and staff comfort you?
5. If you follow Jesus, what will follow you all the days of your life?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

Visit the [International Bible Lessons Forum](#) for Teachers and Students.

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