

*Who Cares?
Jesus Cares!*

Psalm 23

“The LORD is my Shepherd too”

*Don Rhoads
Radio Pastor
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Dedicated

*“To Him who loves us,
and loosed us, washed us from our sins,
by His own blood.”*

“Το αγαπωντι ημας
και λυσαντι ημας εκ των αμαρτιων
εν τω αιματι αυτου.”

Who Cares? Jesus Cares!

Psalm 23

for you and me

“The LORD is My Shepherd Too”

Twenty-Four Absolute Power Promises

The Book of Psalms may be the best known, best loved Book in the Bible - especially the 23rd Psalm. Its timeless, priceless absolute-power promises show all people the loving, caring heart of the One and Only LORD God of the Bible. It was penned by the shepherd-king David - meant to minister God's blessings to all who trust His Savior-Son - Messiah Jesus.

So - open your Bible with me to Psalm 23. The Bible is God's Book - the one and only Book with God's own “triple-A” - All Absolute Answers - the loving, living, eternal life giving - power-filled, peace-giving, promise-keeping, problem-solving, people-saving Word of God.

My Two-fold Promise to You

One - we will not at all be able plumb the depths of the bounty and blessings in this brief, beautiful Psalm 23. But we will try. Two - Psalm 23 gives God's personal absolute-power promises to all who love Jesus Christ - the Great, Good, Chief Shepherd.

Psalm 23 is a Messianic Psalm. That means, its focus is on Messiah Jesus. All Old Testament Scriptures foretold God's promised Messiah-Savior-King. All are fulfilled in the New Testament appearance of Christ Jesus.

Fear freezes hearts and minds - on battlefields near and far. And for centuries warriors have recited two powerful Bible passages - “*The Lord's Prayer*” and “*The 23rd Psalm.*” Both bring comfort, raise courage, calm fears, give real soul-rest in place of fear and stress. You and I will see it in Psalm 23 - for it says to all who love Jesus: “*The LORD is my Shepherd too.*”

God's Twenty-four Absolute-Power Promises

Now, in Psalm 23, see twenty-four of God's wonderful, beautiful absolute-power promises to all who believe and belong to the good, great, gracious, living, loving Shepherd Savior-Son of God - Jesus Christ Himself. Read and Rejoice.

1- *“The LORD is*
2- *my*
3- *Shepherd,*
4- *I shall not want,*
5- *He makes me lie down in green pastures,*
6- *He leads me beside the still waters,*
7- *He restores my soul.*
8- *He leads me in paths of righteousness*
9- *for His name's sake.*
10- *Yea, tho' I walk through the valley*
 of the shadow of death,
11- *I will fear no evil,*
12- *for You are with me.*
13- *Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*
14- *You prepare a table before me*
15- *in the presence of my enemies.*
16- *You anoint my head with oil,*
17- *My cup runs over.*
18- *Surely*
19- *goodness*
20- *and mercy shall follow me*
21- *all the days of my life,*
22- *And I will*
23- *dwell in the house of the LORD*
24- *forever.”*

God's Absolute Power Promise

One

“The LORD is . . . Psalm 23:1

*“The **LORD** is my Shepherd . . . God promises all people on the plant - “I AM!” We all need the LORD God Himself, don’t we. Without Him - this Psalm, and all of life, is pointless, holds no promise - at all.*

So - who is the LORD? Why trust Him? Why worship, love, live for Him? What does He do? For us? What is His plan for man, for you, for me? We'll see it in Psalm 23 - the answer to this all-important question: Who is *“the LORD?”*

*“The **LORD** . . . The Bible opens: “In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.” The name - “God” - in Hebrew - is “Elohim” - seen 34 times in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. Then Genesis 2:4 - begins to couple the tetragrammaton (four-letter name) - “YHVH” - with “Elohim” - “The LORD God.” God’s name is - “Jehovah Elohim!”*

So the Genesis record reads - *“The LORD God made the earth and the heavens.”* And - Genesis 2:7 - *“The LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”*

Remember the burning bush on Mount Sinai in Exodus 3? God called Himself - *“I AM”* - *Self-Existent One.* Psalm 100 says:

“Know that - The LORD - He is God!”

Isaiah 45 says: *“I AM the LORD your God.”*

I - even I AM the LORD! Beside Me there is no Savior!

Thus says the LORD who created the Heavens . . .

God Himself . . . who formed the earth . . . created it.

I AM The LORD - there is no other God beside Me . . .

A righteous God and Savior - there is none beside Me.

Look to Me and be saved - all the ends of the earth!

For I AM God, and none else.

“The LORD - is . . . Self-existing - First Cause - Creator of all - in Heaven and Earth - God has no beginning - no ending - He is timeless - eternal. God is all-sufficient. His life-existence depends on nothing and no one - only Himself - in all Heaven and earth and Universe - and all in and beyond His whole creation. He *is* life - *personified*. Jesus is God the Eternal Son - He spoke to God the Father -
*“This is life eternal -
that they may know Thee, the Only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).*

“The LORD - is . . . Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 say this - *“The fool says in his heart: No God!”*
So-called “atheists”, and others who say they are “agnostics” are in a hopeless state. Dr. H. A. Ironside said it - “The same person who in Greek is called an ‘agnostic’, in Latin is called an ‘ignoramus.’” The God who is - calls them bot - *“fools!”*

So-called truth-seeking “scientists” peer thru telescope or microscope at God’s well-ordered, micro-managed Creation - and say they see no evidence that *the Creator LORD God IS*. They’re all either stone-blind, or full-blown, self-deceived liars. When they die - too late - they all see their - Big Mistake.

“The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His finger-work” (Psalm 19).

The One and Only true LORD God of the Bible says - no one can go to His Heaven - without faith in Him - Hebrews 11:6

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God must believe that He is - and that He is the Rewarder of all who diligently seek Him.”

Think about it. Weak, ignorant little man calls his moon walks and Mars rocks - “space probes.” How silly! We aren’t even to the front door of God’s measureless Creation - in and far beyond our stark, dark little universe - with its billions of vast

galaxies, each with billions of sun-stars and planetary solar systems like our own. It's all infinitely beyond man's sin-blinded, poor-soul ability to comprehend. God says so. To Him all in His Creation is as dust in His hand. He could blow on it - "poof" - all gone.

Earth's nearest star is 26 trillion miles away. At 100,000 miles per hour that's a 30,000 year trip. Get real! God's own high, holy, happy "*Heaven of Heavens*" no one on earth can grasp. It's why God never bothers trying to describe it to us. He simply says - to all who know and trust and love Him -

*"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
nor have entered into the heart of man,
the things God has prepared for those who love Him."
(I Corinthians 2:9)*

Man's technical knowledge is increasing exponentially, at a super-phenomenal rate daily. But, know this, my dear friends, with all our super-duper-nano-second information-gathering super-highways - we ain't seen nothin' yet! The - God who is there - has far more to show us - for us to see and know - than we will ever fully comprehend. We'll be discovering it forever.

We are as dim-witted about the LORD God and His plans - as those "too-smart-for-God" rebels in the city of Babel - 4000 years ago (Genesis 11:1-9). God told them to scatter, populate the whole earth. But they all rebelled against God, and said -

"Let us build ourselves a city (Babylon), and a tower to the heavens . . . so that we will not be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

As God judged rebel Adam and Eve, as He judged the rebel world in Noah's day - so God judged all the rebels at Babylon. He confused their one language into many languages - so they scattered by language groups over all the planet. We still see the results of confused linguistics. Folks, God always wins. His plan to populate earth - happened - even tho' the hard way.

Psalm 23 - reveals that the LORD - IS. He spoke into being all time, space, matter, all life-forms, plant, animal, human, angel. He created, named, knows all His stars, yet He sees the tiny sparrow fall. He numbers the hairs on every head. He sees, loves, cares for you and me - "*The LORD is my Shepherd too.*"

"The LORD - is . . . Jesus is - the One and Only Redeemer-King - Messiah-Savior - the One and Only Eternal Son of God - He saves sinners who trust in Him.

*The LORD - of Psalm 23 - is in fact
Jehovah-Jesus Himself!*

Far up India's Godavari River, a 60-foot Gospel-Medical launch stops at jungle villages. The people gather for treatment by Christian doctors and nurses. I saw it. An evangelist preached the Gospel to those dear people - in their language - God's Good News of great joy. Later, I ask him what he said to them.

He said: "I told them - 'You worship false gods - trees, river, birds, animals, sun, moon, stars. Believing in false gods is sin.' I told them - 'The One and Only true LORD God created all these things. And He loves you. He sent His Savior-Son Jesus down to earth to die on the Cross for your sins. And He arose from the dead. He lives forever - and He loves you.' I told them - 'Trust Jesus. He will forgive your sins, take away your guilt, give you His eternal life, make you God's born again child, save you for His Heaven - so you won't go to Hell!'"

Folks, mark it in your memory: All of us - from a poor illiterate mud-hut jungle savage - to a rich, educated, sophisticated penthouse billionaire - and all in between - are lost sinners - dead in sins - dead to God - shut out from the high, holy LORD God Almighty. He accepts into His Heaven - only those who come thru God the Savior-Son - Jehovah Jesus. He said it -

"I Am the Way, the Truth, the Life - no one comes to the Father (in Heaven) but by Me!" (John 14:6).

Peter said it too - God's "so great Salvation" is offered in the
*"Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . crucified . . .
raised from the dead. Neither is there salvation in any other,
for there is no other name under Heaven given among men,
whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:10-12).

God the Father spoke from Heaven - witnessed by God the
Holy Spirit - to God the Savior-Son - Jesus Christ Himself -
"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased"

Again, God spoke to Peter, James, John - of Jesus Christ -
*"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,
You hear Him!"* (Matthew 3:16,17; 17:5).

And - that's the way it is, friends. The LORD and Shepherd of
this Psalm 23 is the Lord and Savior - *Jehovah-Jesus Himself!*
We'll see that fact as we move thru this power-promise of God.

Jesus loves all people on Planet Earth - and He calls to them all
- in every century - country - culture - color - class - creed -
*"Come to Me all who labor . . . heavy laden
(under sin's heavy guilt-load)
- I will rest you."
(Matthew 11:28-30)*

*The LORD - of Psalm 23 - is in fact
Jehovah-Jesus Himself!*

So - do it - Come to Jesus now. Simply say to Him -
"Lord Jesus, I trust in You."

God's Absolute Power Promise

Two

“My Shepherd . . . Psalm 23:1

“The LORD is - my Shepherd . . . Psalm 23 is very personal. Seventeen times - in six short verses - King David uses these very personal pronouns - *“my . . . I . . . me.”* You see it, don't you, Jesus sees you and me and every person on the planet - in person - One to one.

Question: Do you love Jesus? Can you truly say Jesus Christ is your Savior-Shepherd too? Be sure about it. This stubborn, super-confused pagan world is full of counterfeit “christs” - and myriads of false-god religions. Jesus Himself is the One, the Only LORD God and Good Shepherd. He said it -

*“I AM the good Shepherd,
the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.
I AM the good Shepherd, and I know My sheep,
and am know by My own.
My sheep hear My voice, I know them, they follow Me.
And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”*
Gospel of John - Chapter 10

Are you absolutely sure you belong to God? Test yourself -

Jesus said: *“I know My sheep.”*

Ask yourself: Does Jesus know me? Am I His?

Jesus said: *“I am known of Mine.”*

Ask yourself: Do I know Jesus? Personally? Really?

Jesus said: *“My sheep hear My voice.”*

Ask yourself: Do I listen to Him - His Word - the Bible?

Jesus said: *“I know them.”* - the ultimate repeat -

Ask yourself: Does Jesus know me? Why should He?

Jesus said: *“My sheep follow Me”*

Ask yourself: Do I follow the Savior-Shepherd Jesus?

To all who honestly say “Yes” to all of the above - Jesus says -
“I give to them eternal life, they shall never perish!”

Now, I know what you're thinking - being a sheep isn't cool. But, in fact, we are all like sheep - helpless, hapless, mindless - and far too often - simply stupid. We forget the Creator-LORD God - who gives us everything in life that's good. We owe it all to Him, we are utterly dependent on Him. Most people live day to day like they don't need Him. But Psalm 100 says:

“Know - that the LORD - He is God! It is He who has made us - not we ourselves. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture” (v 3).

All you and I ever are, or have, or do that's good, we owe to Jesus Christ. Yes we do. Believe it. It's true. Every heartbeat - life-breath - muscle-movement - good-mind-thought - we ever enjoy - is God's kind, merciful grace-gift - from **Jesus** - to you and me and all - with **love!**

Get this picture clearly. If Jesus doesn't give to us - life, health, good, truth, right, love, joy, peace - we don't get them - at all. We are His sheep. He is our good, great, chief Shepherd who gives us all the good that we ever get. All of it.

God never calls us lions, or tigers, or bears - oh my. He calls us His sheep - He gives life to us all. You and me too. Life, health, wealth - in whatever measure - is all from Jesus - for:

*The LORD is **my** Shepherd too.”*

God's Absolute Power Promise

Three

“My Shepherd . . . Psalm 23:1

“My Shepherd . . . The old hymn few sing anymore says it -
“The King of love my Shepherd is.”

When my grandson, Donny III, was age 9, he was into zoology. He researched for me - God's creatures - amazing life-forms. From the tiny tessellated-johnny-darter-fish, to giant sea-monster blue whales, to the gigantic brachiosaurus - “super-ultra-saurus dinosaurs.” God created, controls - has His own plan for all His creatures. He cares about their existence, and their extinction. So - don't worry about endangered or extinct species. The LORD God who created them all will do it again. Next time - forever. He will do it when He is ready. Really.

Isaiah's words to Israel fit all people on the rebel, pagan planet:

Hear, O heavens, give ear, O earth: the LORD has spoken, “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, the donkey his master's corn crib. But Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people loaded with iniquity (breaking God's Laws), a seed of evildoers, children who are corrupters. They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they have gone away backward (Isaiah 1:1-4).

What God said to rebel Israel, He says to all people and nations on the planet. Man thinks himself intelligent, forward-looking. God calls him “backward.” God's creatures know Him who feeds, cares, controls them, proving they are smarter than so-called “smart” man.

Rebel men and women who all owe Him - do not know Him. God created, cares for all human life too. But we are too ignorant to know it. So, God gave us His Word - the Bible - so we can know that - He created us in His own image - even if -

in our sins we act like lawless animals. We prove it every day - we live like weak and wayward sheep. The Bible says -

“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD laid on Him (on the Cross) the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

Jesus calls us lost sheep - needing Him - the Good Shepherd.

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one, does not leave the ninety-nine . . . and go after the lost one until he finds it. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing . . . comes home . . . calls his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost’” (Luke 15:4-10).

The prophet Isaiah describes God as the loving Shepherd -

“Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and His arm will rule for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. 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” (Isaiah 40:9-11).

“Who has measured the waters (in all creation) in the hollow of His hand, and marked off heaven by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in scales?

“Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor informed Him? With whom did He consult, and who instructed Him, and taught Him the path of justice, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?

“Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, counted as a speck of dust on the scales. Behold, He lifts up the isles as fine dust. Before Him all nations are as nothing, counted by Him as less than nothing, and vanity (empty)” (Isaiah 40).

Jesus said He came *“to seek and save the lost . . . there will be joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents, joy in the presence of God’s angels over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7,10).*

Today - He seeks you too. Come to Shepherd-Savior Jesus.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD,

*Tho’ your sins are a scarlet they shall be as white as snow,
Tho’ they are crimson red, they shall be as wool.*

“Seek the LORD while He may be found,

Call on Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way,

And the unrighteous man his thoughts,

Let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him,

And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

(Isaiah 1:18; 55:6-9)

Our Lord confronted His disciples. They were on an ego trip - debating who was greatest in God’s Kingdom. People do it today too, don’t they. Politicians seek votes, power, money. Show biz “stars” seek the oscars, emmies, grammies, gimmies, and money. So-called “sports heroes” play to be rich and famous. Business people do the same. Some preachers too.

But - Jesus set a little child in their midst, and still says to all -

“Unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will no way enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself, as this little child, is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 18:3,4).

Think about it. No way - into God's Heaven Kingdom - except thru humble, honest, childlike trust in Jesus Christ Himself.

Now the God of peace,

who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,

that great Shepherd of the sheep,

thru His blood of the everlasting covenant,

make you perfect in every good work to do His will,

working in you what is well-pleasing in His sight,

thru Jesus Christ,

to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

(Hebrews 13:20,21)

God's Absolute Power Promise

Four

"I shall not want . . . Psalm 23:1

"I shall not want . . . When British Princess Diana died - her funeral held very little comfort?

But God's precious Bible promises were read. Comforting Bible hymns were sung. One hymn sung was from Psalm 23:

"The King of love my Shepherd is,

His goodness faileth never;

I nothing lack - for I am His - and He is mine - forever."

That, folks, is the Shepherd's Psalm 23 -

"I nothing lack, I shall not want,

for I am His, and He is mine forever."

In life and in death - Jesus is all-sufficient. In life - in death - Jesus Himself offers the only real comfort - here and hereafter. The loving, living, gracious, giving Shepherd-Savior Son of God is here for all who trust, love, follow Him. Yes He is.

"I shall not want . . . for whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live or die - we are the Lord's."

"I shall not want . . . What does this wonderful Shepherd do for His sheep? The greatest need of all people on this sin-guilty globe is eternal life and forgiveness of sins. First Jesus gives life to all living beings and things - angels, humans, animals, plants. But we humans sinned - we spoiled, soiled the life He gave us - and died to God. Now we need His forgiveness of sins, and new life. Eternal life. So, Jesus gave up His own life on the Cross - to save us lost sheep, forgive our sins, make us His own, give us everlasting life.

"I AM the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. I AM the good Shepherd, and I know My sheep, am known by My own. I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:11-15).

“I shall not want . . . Question: How are you today? How is your life? Have you food, clothing, shelter, some money? Are you breathing, your heart beating, muscles moving, mind working? All these and more are Good Shepherd grace-gifts - from **Jesus** to **you** and **me** with **love**.

Think of the good things you receive. Have you been ill, and got well, been injured and were healed. Who does that for you? You say, doctors do it, medicines do it. No, doctors treat you, medicate you, do surgery on you, but they cannot heal you. If your body heals it is because Jesus made it that way.

Psalm 103 says it: *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgives all your iniquities (breaking Gods laws), who heals all your diseases.”* All healing, every cure that ever happens on this sick, soul-pained planet - Jesus Himself does it - or it does not happen.

“I shall not want . . . Whatever our needs, in this life or the next - Jesus alone fulfills them all.

A line in Psalm 100 says: *“Know - that the LORD He is God. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.”*

God's Absolute Power Promise

Five

“He makes me lie down in green pastures . . . Psalm 23:2

“He makes me . . . The LORD God who made all life and growth - made you and me too. For our own good He sometimes makes us do things we would not ordinarily do. Like, slow down, stop, rest awhile, rest in Him.

“He makes me lie down . . . He who made us - *“makes”* us lie down. Sometimes by force. We all know folk whose life-action suddenly stops - forced to take “time out.” Sometimes you and I who must simply stop.

We tend to try to keep going - to achieve, accomplish good, or to satisfy some wish or whim. Too busy for God. We ignore Him, His Word, His will, His way - we go stray. We do our own thing - saying - “Not Thy will - but mine be done.”

So, in His grace and love He may make us stop, look, listen - to Him. He may make us *“lie down”* awhile - to think, meditate, ruminate, take stock, assess our daily plans, purposes. Do we pursue Him, His will? Or are we in trivial self-pursuit?

“He makes me lie down . . . so we must look upUpUP - to Him. Maybe we can’t even walk. But we can walk with Him. We lie silent - can’t talk - don’t know what to say - but we can talk to Him. And when we do - He hears, He has the right answers.

Jesus is teaching us that His high, holy, happy, Heaven-bound purpose for all who are His, who love Him in this fast-passing lifespan - is all about our - knowing Him.

“He makes me lie down . . . so I pause to praise Him, pray to Him, seek His face. When life is frantic, our heart fearful, mind troubled, soul stressed - our loving Good Shepherd may - *“make us lie down . . . rest in Him . . . wait patiently for Him.”*

Our Shepherd-Savior-Lord Jesus calls all people on the planet - to come to Him - to find His real, right soul-rest. He said it -

“Come to Me all who labor, heavy-laden,. I will rest you. Take My yoke on you, and learn from Me, for I AM meek and lowly in heart. And you will find soul-rest. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

We too easily get on some ego-trip - into trivial self-pursuits. We ignore Jesus - feel too strong to “yoke to Him” - too smart to “learn from Him.” Then life gets complex, confused, life’s load gets heavy, full of hard labor. Really. So Jesus says -

“Come to Me all - I will rest you. Yoke to Me. Learn from Me - you will find soul-rest.” And it’s true - yes you will.

So, do it now. Come to Jesus, Yoke to Jesus, let Him pull the load. Learn from Jesus, seek His wise ways. He is meek and humble in heart. Yes He is. Aren’t you and I glad He is. Why else would He stoop to come to this pagan planet earth? Why else would He seek to save us proud, rebel sinners? Why? If we come to Him - yoke to Him - Learn from Him - He helps us let go our ego-trip - to rest in Him - mimic Him.

“In green pastures . . . It’s His bonus blessing. We sheep, grazing in barren, desolate places feed on what seldom satisfies. But the good Shepherd leads us to lush green pastures - so we can feed to the full on the finest.

This sad world is - dry, bleak, barren, pain-filled, with much suffering, sorrow, soul-stress, people depressed. Sin brings real soul-pain, mental anguish, heart-trouble - fear, anxiety, panic, even in bodily diseases and death. And all who remain rebels against Jesus - choose Hell.

Jesus offers to us all His own sweet, loving relief - the good Shepherd - calls all who will - to follow Him. And when we do - He brings us to His own *“green pastures.”*

“In green pastures . . . *“Going Green”* is a popular topic these days. Many people and groups clamor for control of the “Green Earth” - trying hard to make “green peace.” They demand laws limiting free access to God-given bounty and beauty. But - trying to save “mother earth” by human efforts that exclude the Creator Savior LORD God of all Heaven and Earth - is all empty, futile effort.

Only Creator Jesus Himself can restore to its beautiful, pristine, Edenic condition - this sin-spoiled, man-soiled planet earth. And He will. See Isaiah chs 11 and 35 - and Revelation 21:1-7. Many choose to forget this vital fact - *“the Earth is the LORD’S - and all its fulness!”*

Psalm 23 is about spiritual green pastures. Other Psalms say it - *“The LORD is the great God . . . in His hand are deep places of Earth, the hills’ strength is His, the sea is His, He made it, His hands formed the dry land. O come, worship, bow down, kneel before the LORD our Maker, our God, we are people of His pasture, sheep of His hand”* (Psalm 95).

“Make a joyful sound to the LORD, all you lands. Serve the LORD with gladness, come before Him with singing. Know that - the LORD - He is God. He has made us, not we ourselves. We are His people, sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, bless His name, for the LORD is good, His mercy is everlasting, His truth to all generations” (Psalm 100).

When He leads us, we happily escape the thorny briar patch of our own self-effort, to rest with Jesus in His “green pastures.”

“Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, thru the blood of His everlasting covenant (the Cross), is making us complete in every good work to do His will, working in us what is well-pleasing in His sight - thru Jesus Christ - to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!” (Hebrews 13:19-21).

Our Shepherd makes us *“lie down in His own green pastures.”*

God's Absolute Power Promise

Six

"He leads me beside the still waters . . . Psalm 23:2

"He leads me . . . See three vital words here:

- 1) *"He"* the Shepherd!
Question: Is Jesus your Shepherd too?
- 2) *"leads"* the Shepherding!
Question: Is Jesus leading you His way?
Or are you astray? Isaiah 53:6
- 3) *"me"* the sheep! It's personal - you too.
Question: Are you His sheep?

Jesus said it: *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they **follow** Me."* Jesus calls all people - *"Follow Me."*

Question: Is Jesus leading you? Are you following Jesus? I don't mean some days, some ways - I mean - are you fully following Him. Are you? Matthew 4 shows us the way -

*Jesus, by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, casting nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. He said to them, "**Follow Me**, I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and **followed Him**. He saw James and John, called them, and immediately they left their boat, and their father, and **followed Him**.*

*Jesus went about all Galilee teaching, preaching the Gospel, healing sickness, diseases, torments, demonized, paralytics, and great crowds **followed Him**. He saw a tax collector named Levi (Matthew) at the tax office. He said, "**Follow Me**." And (Levi) left all and **followed Him** (Luke 5:27,28). Jesus found Philip, and said to him, "**Follow Me**." (John 1:43-45). Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus.*

Jesus calls all men, women, girls, boys to follow Him. He said:

*"Whoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross (daily), and **follow Me**. Whoever will save his life*

(for himself) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23).

All the troubles among people and nations, all the problems in the lives, marriages, families on planet earth, are simply because we do not "follow Jesus." We choose to ignore, deny, defy His high, holy, happy, Heaven-sent Word, will, way - to do out own thing, be our own king. And we pay a bitter price.

Jesus calls all people on the planet - whatever their century, country, culture, color, class, creed - "***Follow Me!***" So, the question right here, right now is: Will you follow Jesus?

"He leads me beside the still waters . . . Sometimes the Savior-Shepherd

leads us thru dried up stream-beds, where our daily lives seem bleak, barren. Other times He leads us thru swift torrents, raging floods, we face turmoil, troubled waters, impossible trials along impassable trails - where we cannot get thru alone.

Psalm 23 says - thru it all - whatever we face: "Follow Jesus!"

"When you pass thru the waters I will be with you; and thru the rivers, they will not overflow you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

"Still waters . . . As a teen, hunting with my Dad in the mountains, in the heat of the day I often knelt at some small stream, found a place where the water's rapid flow was stilled - to drink in cool, clear, clean, thirst-quenching, sweet waters - to drink deeply, fully at rest.

Still waters satisfy a parched, panting soul. Psalm 42:1,2 -

"As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, yes, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

Again, King David wrote Psalm 63 -

“O God, You are my God, early I will seek You. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry, thirsty land, where no water is. Your lovingkindness is better than life.”

Dr. Haddon Robinson’s book - Psalm Twenty-Three - says this Hebrew line can be read - *“beside the **stilled** waters.”* Jesus controls our life-river. He may slow its fast flow, still the stream, so we weak, timid sheep can pause to rest and drink in His loving grace-goodness to our fill, undisturbed, unafraid.

God led Noah - thru global flood-waters - to a place of purity, peace, new beginning. God led Moses, and all Israel, thru the Red Sea's high water walls - to the victory side. God led Joshua thru rushing, overflowing Jordan River waters - on dry ground - into the Promised Land. Jesus Christ - the Creator-LORD-God Almighty spoke two words, to calm the storming Galilee Sea. Jesus is God the eternal Son. And - He is just as dynamic and energized today - to calm your life-storms too.

Daily - Jesus stops disasters, takes us thru danger-zones - so that we - and those we love - pass thru unharmed. Auto crashes we miss, disasters we escape, diseases we avoid - Jesus gives, guards, governs, guides us in safety thru perils we may not see, or know, or thank Him for.

Don’t fear the dry times - God has plans for you, as He does for His whole creation. He will one day restore, revitalize earth.

“Waters will burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose . . . it shall blossom abundantly” (Isaiah 35).

Isn’t it fascinating how people who are most vocal about water-pollution - seem to care least about sin-pollution on this guilt-glutted globe. But all who thirst most for God - seek the great, good, chief Shepherd-Savior Jesus - to fully follow Him - as He day by day - *“leads us beside the stilled waters.”*

God's Absolute Power Promise

Seven

"He restores my soul . . . Psalm 23:3

"He restores . . . Apostle John wrote of Jesus at Jacob's well by the Samaritan city of Sychar -
"Jesus, being wearied from His journey, sat by the well."

Like our Lord, we get weary, don't we, from toil, travel, trials. Physical fatigue, mental stress, emotional strain drains us. Some call it "chronic fatigue syndrome", medicate it as a disorder. But in fact, sooner or later, we all simply get tired.

Our great, gracious, good Shepherd knows all about extreme weariness, by personal experience. Read His awful agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. No one will ever know the deep despair, dark grief, soul-pain, mental anguish, physical agony that Jesus suffered there. Before He ever got to the Cross He almost died in His unparalleled soul-grief.

Read His Words - they are no exaggeration - they are literal:

"He was in distress of mind, dark depression. He said, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of dying from sorrow.' He fell on the ground on His face and prayed - 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet, not My will but Your will be done.' And He began to be full of sorrow, very heavy, troubled."

Dr. Luke the physician adds this very telling line:

An angel appeared from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground.

No one will ever know or experience His awesome, anguished agony - in Gethsemane Garden - and on the Cross. He knew the ultimate, infinite sorrow and weariness of spirit, soul, body.

So, like David, in Psalm 23, when the Shepherd Savior sees your soul-weariness and mine - He sees, knows, feels, cares about us. And He *“restores our soul too.”* Yes He does.

“My soul . . . Jesus gets up close and personal with you and me. He’s no far-off, out-of-touch, out-of-reach Shepherd-Savior. No way. He is no *“Shepherd of the masses.”* He sees you in person, me too, our soul-stress, tired mind, body achin’, all wracked with pain - He *“Restores my (our) soul.”*

“My soul . . . God created us as tri-part beings - spirit and soul and body. Our soul is our inner-man (inner-woman). It is non-physical. DNA cannot trace it at all. But Jesus can. Our soul holds our personality traits - (1) our intellect (ability to know, reason) - (2) our emotion (feelings) - (3) our volition (acts of will, choice).

Our soul - not our brain - thinks, feels, chooses. Our brain is simply an amazing computer. Our soul holds our conscience. We are created in God’s likeness. We can think, reason, as He does, love Him, others, love as He loves, hate what He hates, care as He cares, choose the right, good, true, godly. Or we can rebel - **unlike** God - think, feel wrong, choose bad things, do evil in His sight.

Today depression, anxiety, fear are called *“mental illness.”* They are really spiritual heart-trouble. Sinning - ours or others’ - brings soul-stress. It happens when we won’t repent and come to Jesus for pardon from sin, and His soul-cleansing, to be set free from sin-guilt - *“our soul - restored by the Lord.”*

People in sin, who ignore and avoid the Lord, suppress and deny a sin-guilty conscience. Guilt becomes a heavy load. We try to cast it off - but we cannot. We try to blame-shift. Yet, our sin-guilt is always there - deep inside - it deadens, darkens our soul - brings shame - soul-stress. And it causes body-stress too - depression, disease, even death.

Jesus Christ came from Heaven to Earth to die for our sins. Jesus took on Himself the righteous, just judgment we all have coming. And - because Jesus is God - He arose from the dead - to free us - lift from us - the load of sin and guilt.

Now Jesus - the Good Shepherd "*restores my soul.*" Millions of people on this sick, sad, sin-plagued, soul-pained planet know nothing of this wonderful Shepherd Jesus - who offers His blessings of sins forgiven, guilt gone forever.

Again the 23rd Psalm, sung at Princess Diana's funeral, says it -
"Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
and Home rejoicing brought me."

Some say, "Jesus loves me just the way I am." Wrong! If so, why would He call us to change? The fact is - Jesus loves us "in spite of the way we are" - self-loving, rebel sinners, self-willed, stubborn, straying sheep. He loves and purposes to change us, conform us to His own likeness. He begins change when we come to Him. He forgives our sins, cleans our heart, clears our guilt - begins us brand new - "*He restores our soul.*"

But the tragic truth is - millions never find soul-rest. Why not? Because only the Shepherd of Psalm 23 - the LORD - Jehovah-Jesus Himself - can revive, renew, restore any lost, heavy-laden, sin-weary soul. Millions of people follow false gods - or no god at all. Big Mistake! They ignore, neglect, deny, defy, reject - the One and Only Shepherd-Savior-Lord Jesus Christ.

But - other millions do come to Savior-Shepherd Jesus, and with David all say - "*He restores my soul.*" You need not pop a pill or see a shrink for real soul-rest Jesus says it to you too -

"Come to Me all who labor - heavy-laden -

I will rest you!"

Matthew 11:28-30

God's Absolute Power Promise

Eight

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness . . . Psalm 23:3

“He leads me . . . Again - Jesus leads. Jesus makes us lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside still waters, restores our soul. It’s our joy to follow Him. And when we get away, astray - our good Shepherd Jesus will track us, bring us back, to His right, righteous paths.

You see, only when we walk in His righteous paths - does He bless, build, benefit us - here and now - and in all eternity ahead. That’s forever, folks.

“In the paths of righteousness . . . Righteous leaders are very scarce, premium people, highly prized. **Un**righteous leaders - men and women - are a dime a dozen. They presume, pretend to lead in righteous paths, but too often are simply slaves to public opinion polls. They follow the crowds. They do not follow paths that are right in God's sight - nor do they lead others after Him.

They are caught in the “I-me-my-mine - I-want-more-for-me” syndrome - motivated by “what's-in-it-for-me?” They ignore God’s righteous Word. It's true in politics, business, education, social issues, and, in many so-called spiritual leaders too.

But our Savior-Shepherd Jesus is the ultimate, absolute righteous Leader. He leads all who will follow Him in the “*paths of His righteousness!*” He’s the Leader we all need.

“The righteous paths . . . John Bunyan's classic Pilgrim's Progress, shows “Christian” toiling up a steep, rocky road, headed to the “Celestial City.” Then, alongside this hard, harsh road, appears an inviting path, with soft green grass - no stones, no thorns, not steep. “Pilgrim” steps onto that path - easy walking, effortless, carefree travel.

But then, subtly, surreptitiously, the path led away from “the righteous path” - the new path was a “path of unrighteousness” - steep, stony, briars, thorns - and - it led away from God. Christian had left the straight and narrow way to God’s life - and was walking the wide, broad way leading to destruction.

“Pilgrim” rightly returned to the *“path of righteousness”* as Jesus commanded us all to do -

“Enter in at the straight gate - for wide is the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction, and many go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and few there are who find it” (Matthew 7:13,14).

Major cities have "Broadway" boulevards. Few have streets called “Straight” or “Narrow.” To some today - “Straight” refers to people who are narrow-minded about right and wrong.

Years ago my wife Alice was soloist in a large church in midtown New York City. Without a thought, Alice took our baby girl Jan on the subway under Manhattan streets, thru Time Square, up the world-famous “Broadway.” Back then it was much safer. Today many people follow Broadway - down, down, down - away from God - into destruction - into Hell.

Left to ourselves, all we like sheep go astray, far away.
Our Good Shepherd loves us, seeks us, leads us back -
into His pure, perfect *“paths of righteousness.”* He does.

Notice - it’s plural - *“paths.”* Every day we begin a new path - our own wrong way - or our Shepherd’s *“right paths.”*

Again, Jesus gives His great love-warning - Matthew 7:13-15 -
“Enter in at the straight gate - because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inside are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Nine

“For His name's sake . . . Psalm 23:3

*“For His name's sake . . . Why walk in His righteous paths?
Why live as His - Jesus-witness?”*

First - Do it - because He said to. It's right in His sight - to live and give ourselves to Him - *“for His name's sake.”*

Second - Do it - because it is good for us. Look at the sick, sad sins of people who shame the name of Jesus.

Third - Do it - because - in His *“paths of righteousness”* - we show other lost sheep how to follow Jesus too. He said it - *“Other sheep I have who are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice, and there will be one flock, and one Shepherd” (John 10:16).*

When Jesus spoke of *“other sheep”* He did not mean that people who are in false-god religions are simply *“other sheep.”* Not at all. Jesus Himself is the One and Only Creator Savior-Lord-God. He knows every person on the planet. He knows who else will come to trust in Him too - as you and I do - when they hear His Good News - as you and I did.

So, Jesus leads His sheep in His *“paths of righteousness - for His name's sake”* - so *“other sheep”* - will hear His name - and will believe in Him too - and be saved.

Now, let's be honest. We sheep all stray from the Shepherd.

*“All we like sheep have gone astray,
we have turned, every one, to his own way.
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”
(Isaiah 53:6)*

You and I know it's true too. God said it. That settles it.

“I was a wondering sheep,
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd’s voice,
I would not be controlled.”

Far too often we leave His “*righteous paths*” - to follow some self-loving, self-indulgent way of our own. In that time we walk a path that is “for our sake” - not - “*for His name’s sake.*”

King David wrote Psalm 23. He knew about straying. He said - when we sin - when we shame His name - our loyal, loving Shepherd, in His mercy and grace, will track, bring back His sheep to “*His paths of righteousness . . . for His name’s sake.*”

When our children were small we rented horses for a mountain vacation. Now, my father was a real cowboy. We still have his spurs, Winchester, Colt six-shooter. But I am not a cowboy. One night our horses got loose, strayed away. I had to track them, each one, seek them for miles, find them, bring them back.

It was a tiny taste of what our Shepherd does for His straying sheep. Patiently He will track us - bring us back. Why?

Well, to be honest, I did not love those stubborn, straying horses - at all. They put me to a lot of trouble. But our great, gracious good Shepherd-Savior seeks us - no matter how far off - because He loves us. Children sing this amazing grace truth -

“Why did Jesus come to earth,
Son of God - by virgin birth?

Jesus came down long ago - just because He loves us so.

Why did Jesus die on the Tree,
Give His life for you and me?

Jesus died once long ago - just because He loves us so.”

Jesus rose up from the dead

Back to life - just as He said;

Jesus calls us - this I know - just because He loves us so.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Ten

“Yea, tho I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death . . .

Psalm 23:4

“Yea . . . It's a word not so popular anymore. But in Psalm 23 - the “Yea” is an emphatic, dogmatic “YES!” Absolutely! David said: Yes! He leads me! Yes! He will track and lead me back! Yes! I will walk thru death's dark valley! Yes! I will fear no evil! All are positive power answers. Why, David, Why? Well, let's read on

“Yea . . . Paul preached God's Gospel to folks in spiritually dead, morally evil, socially corrupt Corinth - a most negative place and people. Paul preached God's Good News - God's power-positive absolute truth. He said:

“God is true! Our word to you was not ‘yea and nay’ (not ‘yes and no’ - vacillating, unsure). For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, preached among you by us, was not ‘yes and no’ (not flip-flopping), but in Him was - ‘YES!’

“For all the promises of God in Him are - ‘Yes’ - and in Him - ‘Amen’ - to the glory of God.

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us - is God - who has also sealed us, and given the guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:18-22).

We get Paul's message, don't we. God is positive - He's for us. God only wants and works for our good. It is we rebel, stiff-necked sinners who are negative. Yes we are. We do stupid, negative, sinful stuff - that brings grief, shame, pain to us - and to others. We are self-absorbed - self-loving - simply selfish.

Ah, but there stands our great, good Shepherd Savior Jesus - ready, willing, able to help us out of our sin-guilt and shame, into His happy, holy blessings. Jesus turns us negative, nobody nerds into His positive power people. Yes He does. Psalm 23 - makes all who are in Jesus say - “Yea!” “And Amen!”

“*Yea, tho’ I walk . . .* God calls our daily living a “walk” - one step, one day at a time. Only God Himself knows where our earthly walk is leading - or when and how it will end. He gives us each a full lifespan - brief or broad - to come in wise, true trust - to His Shepherd-Savior-Son.

“*Tho’ I walk . . .* The Bible says: “*Walk worthy of the calling to which you are called.*”

If we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word - He leads us thru any test or trial. He calls all who are His is to “*walk in the light, as He is in the light*” (I John 1:5) - in His truth, His right, His good. Walking in His fellowship is walking in close, clean, constant companionship with Him.

“Relationship” with God our Father in Heaven - for every true, born again child of God - is never broken. Never. Once born into God’s family - we are “related to God” - forever.

“Fellowship” with God - walking in close companionship with our Heavenly Father - is broken every time we sin. When we step into sin - we no longer walk with Him.

“*If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*” (I John 1:6).

A major cause of Christians in anxiety, fear, depression - is unconfessed sins - weighing on a sin-guilty conscience.

The way back to His fellowship - walking in His close, clean, constant companionship - is to confess our sins to Him.

“*If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

But - our old sin-nature - too often - insists, persists in resisting Him. We ignore, deny, excuse, alibi our sins. Big Mistake.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (I John 1:8,10).

In Psalm 23 King David says - *“Yes! Tho’ I walk . . .”* Inner soul-rest, His perfect peace comes in walking daily with God.

“Thru the valley . . . Watch this important word - *“Through.”*
He leads us *“thru the valley.”* Vital fact.
Jesus will never ever leave His sheep in the dark valley. Never.
He leads us thru - out the other side. Always. Count on it.

“Thru the valley of the shadow of death . . . When we walk
in close, clear,
constant companionship - when we abide - remain, continue,
stay in fellowship with our great good Shepherd - no terror can
trap us in the death valley. No one can hurt, hinder, halt our
walk with Jesus. He takes us **thru** - beyond - out the other side.

My boyhood was poor. Dad hunted deer for our winter
meat supply. I was too young to carry a gun, so my job
was to “play dog”, go thru the brush, drive out a deer so
dad got a shot. He only needed one. The best place to
trap a deer was a box canyon. Dead end. No way out.

Now, hear me. Walking in sins, many ignore Jesus Christ,
think they hide from Him. Big Mistake - again. They may run
from Jesus, but they cannot hide. Adam learned that - the hard
way - see Genesis 3 - Adam sinned, feared, tried to hide.

*“I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid
because I was naked, and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:10).*

All who refuse Savior Jesus - die in their sins and walk
the *“valley of the shadow of death”* alone - and on the
other side - face Judge Jesus. To them “death valley” is
a dead-end box-canyon called Hell. No way out forever.

But, all who follow the wonderful Shepherd-Savior Jesus - He
leads safely thru “the valley of the shadow of death.” That
valley becomes simply a shaded pathway - **thru** a brief dark
day - into the brilliant sunshine glory-light of God's Heaven.

David faced Goliath in a “*death valley*.” Later David’s own son tried to kill him. He fled thru the Kidron (death) Valley. 20,000 died that day, son Absalom too. A thousand years later, in Gethsemane, at that Kidron (death) Valley, our blessed Savior-Lord Jesus agonized - on His way to the Cross. Calvary Hill - was the ultimate “*death valley*” where Jesus died to take God’s just judgment for the sins of the whole world.

Think about it. You and I walk into unknown “*death valleys*.” But for God's grace, we would meet dark dangers, disasters, death. Satan and his demons hate God’s people. If God allowed, they'd kill us, attack us, any day of the week. Read Job 1 and 2. God let Satan take Job’s wealth, health, family. Satan would have killed Job too, but God said - “No!”

Paul wrote of our devil / demon warfare - Ephesians 6:10-12 -
“Be strengthened in the Lord, in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be dynamic to stand against the methods of the devil. For we agonize not against blood and flesh, but against princes, powers, world-rulers of darkness, wicked spirits in the heavens.”

Peter too, wrote of our war against the devil - I Peter 5:8,9 -
“Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom to devour. Whom resist - steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are happening in your brothers in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered awhile, will Himself make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him dominion and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Walking with Savior-Shepherd Jesus makes the darkest death valley a victory march out into the sunshine of His triumph.

*“Now thanks be to God
who always leads us in triumph in Christ.”*

II Corinthians 2:14

God's Absolute Power Promise

Eleven

"I will fear no evil . . . Psalm 23:4

"I will fear no evil . . . It's literal, friends. Jesus loves us, guards us from hate-filled enemies - if we follow Him. Jesus said it to rebel unbelievers in Jerusalem who refused His love -

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets (God's preachers), and stones those (messengers) sent to you - how often I would have gathered your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. And you were not willing! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. Amen! I say to you, you will not see Me, until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Luke 13:34,35).

Just four decades later Jerusalem paid a bitter price. Titus the Roman conquered and leveled the city, destroyed the temple, killed a million Jews, took 100,000 more into slavery, scattered them all over the Roman Empire.

American children and teens are troubled. Adults too. Why? Because God-blessed America is defying His Savior-Son Jesus. And by bad example parents lead children to ignore Him too. Then we wonder why troubles increase. Well, Du-u-uh.

People "mooch" God's grace-gifts - each heartbeat, life-breath, muscle-movement, good mental ability - all are His gifts - yet they ignore God's Savior-Shepherd Son.

People accept the daily bread He enables them to earn, and take the beauty, bounty, blessings He gives thruout the lifespan He gives them. Yet they profane, use it in vain His holy name, Millions blaspheme Him, then blame Him for crisis times. Ridiculous! They ignore Him, then wonder why fear. Hello-o!

Fears stalk our walk, our streets, schoolyards, work places. Terror tracks us daily. Our children and teens need drugs to

calm their anxious hearts and minds, they go to school in fear. They see a shrink to quell bad behavior. People ride planes, trains, buses, cars, in fear of road-rage nuts. Why? Because America ignores the God of peace - Jesus - *"Prince of Peace."*

Evil invades our land, our lives, on every hand. Television, radio, the internet, books, magazines, spew a constant stream of vile, violent sin-pollution in body, soul, spirit - 24 - 7 - 366.

But God - every day, all along the way - offers to all people on the planet His loving solution. And, my friend, when you follow Jesus - the Shepherd-Savior - then even walking in *"death valley"* you too *"will fear no evil."*

Remember the Christmas Story. When Jesus Christ came from Heaven to earth by virgin birth - the angel said it - four times - to Zachariah, to Mary, to Joseph, to shepherds with the sheep - *"Fear not! Fear not! Fear not! Fear not!"*

Remember the Christmas glory-angel's message - it's still true - *"Fear not! Behold, I bring you Good News of Great Joy - open, offered - to All People - the Savior - Christ the Lord!"*

Headed to the Cross to die for the sins of the world - Jesus said: *"Let not your heart be troubled. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid"* (John 14:1,27).

After His resurrection from the dead - Jesus again spoke His loving message: *"Fear not . . . peace to you!"*

It's still true today too. All who trust in Jesus say it - along with King David here in this blessed, beautiful Psalm 23 -

"Yes! Though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death - I will fear no evil!"

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twelve

“For Thou art with me . . .

“For You are with me . . . Psalm 23:4

This little line is the most important, most powerful and peace-giving - of all that is spoken in this so important Psalm 23.

*“Yea, tho I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil - for **YOU** are with me.”*

See the change? It is vital. Up until this line - David is speaking - **about** the LORD His Shepherd - “**He** makes me, **He** leads me, **He** restores my soul.” But now - in verse 4 - David changes his wording - he speaks - not about - but **to** the LORD:

*“I will fear no evil - for **You** are with me . . . **Your** rod, **Your** staff comfort me . . . **You** prepare a table before me.”*

Don't miss this. It's absolutely, infinitely important! Recall the angel speaking to Joseph about Jesus. That angel quoted Isaiah: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and call his name **Emmanuel - God with us**” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

*“**You** are with me . . .* David goes from praising the LORD - to praying - from speaking about the LORD - to speaking **to** the LORD - in Person. In troubled, testing, terror times - we can be free from fear - by talking - not only about our Lord - but - talking **to** our Lord. Just as David did it here - “*I will fear no evil - for **YOU** are with me.”*

Practical Example. Deacon Stephen was the Church's first martyr - died for His Jesus-witness. He walked “*thru the valley of the shadow of death.*” Hate-filled men stoned Stephen to death - just for belonging to Jesus - “*for His name's sake.*”

As Stephen was dying he shouted out - “*Behold! I see Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand!*”

Then, as he walked into “*the valley of the shadow of death*” Stephen spoke - **to** - the Savior - “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*” (Acts 7:59,60). Stephen had spoken **of** Jesus. Then, under vicious, violent, hateful attack - about to die, He “*feared no evil.*” Why? Because in his dying he spoke - **to** Jesus - up close and personal. We can too.

Personal Example. In the Korean War - under enemy attack I saw men I worked with die, others badly wounded. I recall vividly - running to my battle station - enemy fire exploding near me - killing, maiming many. But - hear me carefully now - I felt no fear. Only His sweet peace - knowing Jesus was with me - knowing where I’m going in death - caused me to say with David -

“I fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

Paul said it too - a little differently - but just as powerfully -

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword? As it is written, for Your sake we are killed all day long, accounted as sheep for slaughter. But, in all these things we are hyper-conquerors thru Him who loved us.

“For I am persuaded that - not death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created person, place, or thing - will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:).

When we are sure our Savior-Shepherd Jesus Himself is with us - He who says: “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” - you and I too can say - to Him: “*I fear no evil, for You are with me.*”

Both David and Stephen knew that peace - both walked thru - “*the valley of the shadow of valley*” - knowing they were with the Shepherd. There is no greater, stronger, comfort.

All thru the centuries multiplied millions of God's people have died - many killed for the Word of God and the Jesus-witness. Many still die - daily - all over this Jesus hating planet - and they too - with David - "*fear no evil.*" Why no fear? Because as they "*walk thru the valley of the shadow of death*" - they say to the Shepherd-Savior Jesus - "*Thou art with me.*"

Aboard ship I had a friend, one to could count on in any battle. He seemed to show little interest in the Lord. But one day, as we headed into battle, he began quoting to me - Psalm 91. I asked him how he knew it. He said, "My mother taught me."

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge, my fortress, my God, in Him I will trust. Under His wings you will take refuge; His truth will be your shield and buckler. You will not be afraid of terror (or terrorist) by night, nor the arrow (aero-plane) that flies by day.

"A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you, because you have made the LORD, the Most High, your dwelling place."

Friend, it's God's power-promise - coverage you can count on.

"He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear! What can man do to me!'" (Hebrews 13:5,6).

It's the promise of the LORD God Almighty to you and me too:

"Thou art with me!"

And again - know this - when the Shepherd-Savior-Lord Jesus is with you - even walking "*thru death valley*" - you'll not fear.

The late, great Bible preacher and pioneer in nationwide radio Bible teaching, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, said it this way -

*"Let others count sheep jumping over a wall -
I will speak to the Shepherd."*

God's Absolute Power Promise

Thirteen

“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me . . . Psalm 23:4

Security is in demand today. We all want to be sure, secure. We *“treasure up treasures on earth”* - trying to be safe, secure. But - exactly how secure are we? Without warning - disease can strike, cancer, heart failure, a killer car-crash, freak accident. Trouble strikes - and our security is not secure at all.

Others inherit “treasure” we may leave behind. But it does not secure them either. Even millionaires, billionaires amass wealth - but it cannot secure them from disease, danger, death.

So, where is security? King David lived a rich, famous, powerful man. But he died. Psalm 23 shows that he knew where his security lay. In his Shepherd-Savior-LORD God.

Our beloved America cut loose from England with a strong “Declaration of Independence.” But - our founding fathers made it clear that our God-blessed America was “Dependent” on the God of the Bible - Him from whom all blessings flow. They did not intend for us ever to deny, defy our “dependence” on the Lord God Almighty. Yet, our nation, more than ever, needs to assert a “Declaration of Dependence” on Jesus Christ.

Political leaders boast of giving full religious liberty to all who come to our “Land of the Free.” Yet many religions exercise freedom of speech here, and openly express their beliefs, even when they strongly oppose the Christians’ freedom of speech and worship. It is unjust.

Often our leaders claim to be Christians - but won’t, don’t express openly their love and loyalty for the Lord Jesus Christ, in fear of “offending others.” Shame on them. We need to vote in fearless leaders who boldly speak out their personal “Declaration of Dependence” on Jesus Christ Himself.

Our leaders need to take the political position that - of course - in America all citizens may believe, worship, speak freely. And that includes all Christians. If our President, and any of our leaders know Jesus - they are free to be unashamed in saying - *“The LORD is my Savior-Shepherd too.”* For it is Jesus Christ - the One and Only living Lord God Almighty - who gives this nation, or any nation, all its rich blessings.”

“Your rod . . . The Shepherd's rod was a stout stick - used to fight a predator - lion, bear, wolf, man. It was a rod of power, a strong, sturdy stick of strength.

Teddy Roosevelt said - *“Walk softly and carry a big stick.”* God does that. Think about it. Puny, powerless nations defy God Almighty of the Bible. How foolish. And He laughs at their empty hate and rage - ridicules them as pitiful rebels.

“Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together - against the LORD - against His Anointed (Messiah), saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces, and cast away Their cords from us’” (Psalm 2:1-3).

Rebel men and nations deny, defy the LORD God - and His Messiah-Savior-Son Jesus. Psalm 2:4-12 tells God’s response. Doe He bite His nails, wring His hands, pace the halls of Heavens - over little man's empty ego-rage? Read on . . .

“He who sits in the Heavens shall laugh, the LORD will hold them in derision (ridicule). Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and torment (distress) them in His deep displeasure, saying, ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion!’”

Psalm 2 - is God’s reality revelation - His grim grace-warning to all rebels who choose to stand against Messiah Jesus - God’s - *“King of kings and Lord of lords.”* Like it or not - believe it or not - God says it - His voice rings out from Heaven - thru the corridors of time - loud and clear for all on planet earth to hear - *“I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion!”* JESUS!

Handel's great Oratorio: "The Messiah" was performed before the king of England. The story is told, that as the great musical pageant came close to its climax, as the grand, glorious "Hallelujah Chorus" began - the king himself stood to his feet - paying homage to Messiah Jesus - "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" - acknowledging - "*He shall reign - forever and ever!*"

Millions today - all over this planet - bow daily - to honor, praise, love, worship Jesus Christ. One day - maybe soon - all people in Heaven and Earth - even in Hell - will bow the knee and confess that - "*Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!*" (*Philippians 2:11*).

Psalms 2 says it - Messiah Jesus - God the Savior-Shepherd-Son - still allows pusillanimous rebel man do his thing, have his fling, be his own king - for a little lifespan. Jesus still lets dust-speck nations who think they are bigger, stronger, smarter than God - have their way, their say, their day - for now. But - mark it - Jesus Christ will return! And when He does - He will call a halt to all sin - and all the sorrow our sins cause. Believe it.

Psalms 2 records God the Father speak to God the Messiah Son
*"I will give You the nations,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You will break them with a rod of iron,
You will dash them to pieces - like a potter's vessel.*

Psalms 2 records God the Holy Spirit speaking to all people - especially to all the world, national, local leaders. Hear Him -
*"Be wise now, O you kings!
Be instructed, you judges of earth!
Worship the LORD with fear, rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
Lest He be angry, and you perish (go to Hell)
when His wrath is kindled a little while.
Blessed are all who put their trust in Him!"*

Do you see it? The great good Shepherd-King carries a **“rod.”** One day He will *“break rebel nations with His rod of iron - smash them to pieces like a potters clay pot.”* Why? To stop all sin, and all the pain and suffering and shame and blame our evil sins bring on planet earth - and to set up His own high, holy, happy Kingdom on earth - as it is in Heaven.

But - right now - Messiah Jesus carries with Him His **“Shepherd’s rod.”** And all who know Him, all who truly trust and love Him - speak to Him these sweet words - *“Your rod . . . comforts me.”*

“Your staff . . . The shepherd's staff was a stout stick too - perhaps longer, with a crook on the end. The shepherd used his staff to help the sheep - pull them to safety, hold them out of trouble, to open up brush, free trapped sheep, reach them in hard places, and to keep the sheep in line.

The shepherd’s staff could strike or sooth. It gave discipline, direction, protection, rescue, comfort. Jesus does all that for His own sheep too. If you belong to Jesus - fear not! Jesus carries His rod and staff - for your good and mine. Believe it.

“They comfort me . . . We often use the term *“comfort”* in a placid way, meaning - “I hope things work out.” Such comfort is powerless. But *“Jesus-comfort”* means power-action. Our Good Shepherd gives us His caring, reassuring comfort. He is for us - always. He fights for us - stands off all foes - He suffers pain, hardship, even death - in order to save you and me and all people who come to Him.

Do you recall Saul of Tarsus - breathing out threats, murders, prison - to stamp out Christians? On the road to Damascus the Lord Jesus waylaid Saul - knocked him down - blinded him - made him say, *“Who are You - Lord?”* And the Lord said to him - *“I AM Jesus whom you are persecuting!”* Whenever, wherever Jesus-people suffer - Jesus suffers too. Believe it.

Daily He “walks thru the valley of the shadow of death” with one of His own - out to the other side - into brilliant beauty of Heaven’s glory. He comforts all His people. Paul learned this lesson - and wrote it - God’s “comfort” - for you and me too -

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trouble, so we can comfort those who are in trouble with the comfort with which we are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our comfort also abounds in Christ.” (II Corinthians 1:3-5).

Again, Dr. Haddon Robinson says, “God offers more than a pocket handkerchief to dry our tears, calm our fears.” It’s true. Yes He does. And all who know Jesus say it with King David -

“Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Fourteen

“You prepare a table before me . . . Psalm 23:4

“You prepare . . . Every good thing you and I get - is God’s love-in-action gift. He gives food to all creatures - great and small. To you and me too. God created this lush green, well-watered earth, with healthy, tasty foods. And He called it all *“very good.”*

But man's sin spoiled this lovely Edenic planet. We fight weeds, pests, poisons, disease, death. Yet, God gives us seasons to plant, grow, harvest, gives us sun, rain, soil, seed. Even to folk who ignore Him: *“He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, sends His rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

*“Oh, the Lord is good to me,
and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need,
the sun and soil and rain and the apple seed -
Oh, the Lord is good to me.”*

Do you feel that way? Does your heart sing that song too? Do you thank the great Creator-Lord Jesus Christ for His daily mercies, His loving grace-gifts to you, and to those you love?

Here’s a sad fact. Human suffering is most severe among places and peoples on earth where Jesus is most rejected. His best blessings they miss. Nations with false gods work hardest to survive - can’t say *“I shall not want?”*

Why is that? Well, it's really a “no-brainer”, isn’t it. God gives to pagan nations His blessings - the same rain, sun, soil, same living seeds - that He gives to America. Yet, when their crops are good, their foods and income plentiful, do they thank and worship the One and Only loving, living, giving LORD God of the Bible? No! They worship and serve their false-gods - that never help them for they don’t exist. They expose rebel hearts.

So, God withholds from them His best blessings - so the people can see and compare His blessings - with their poverty - under their false gods. His loving purpose is clear to all who will see -

“That the goodness of God leads to repentance.”

God calls to all people on the planet - by His loving mercy and grace - to change their minds - repent - and turn in personal trust to Jesus - and turn away from their false-god religion.

Paul gladly commended the believers in Jesus in Thessalonica -

“You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come” (I Thessalonians 1:9,10).

Sadly, many God-blessed Americans today ignore, deny, defy, forget Jesus too, as pagan peoples do. A bumper-sticker says: “When you sit down to eat - thank a farmer.” Well, of course we thank a farmer. But you and I - and the farmer too - need to thank God above for all His wonderful daily blessings to us all.

False gods and false god religions save no one from sin, or death, or Hell. They do not exist. Only Jesus saves - the One and Only Savior-Son of God - died for the sins of the world, arose from the dead - forgives - saves - all who choose Him.

All who don't - He won't.

God sees every heart. To all who truly desire to know God - He sends His Good News - in Jesus Christ. Dr. Luke recorded the Christmas glory-angel's message - Luke 2:10,11 -

“Fear not! Behold! I bring you Good News of great joy to all people . . . the Savior . . . Christ the Lord!”

Jesus is the One and Only Savior-Shepherd.

So - how about it? Do you love Jesus - for all good He gives you and yours? David said it: *“You prepare a table before me.”*

“*A table before me . . .* David is talkin' a king's banquet table here, folks. He knew all about fine-bread, big-spread banquet tables. He was a rich king. He provided from the king's table for all who looked to him. He said it to his Shepherd Lord - “*You prepared table before me.*”

Think about the wonderful spiritual food that Shepherd Jesus gives us all. He who with His miracle Word fed 5000 men - plus women and children - now offers Himself to all people: “*I AM the Bread of Life: he who comes to Me will never hunger, he who believes in Me will never thirst*” (John 6).

King David also wrote - Psalm 34 - hear his own testimony:

“*I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

“*O taste and see - that the LORD is good. Blessed is the one who trusts in Him. O fear the LORD, you His saints, for there is no lack to those who fear Him.*”

One who fears the Lord Jesus - never needs to fear anyone else.

“*Before me . . .* It's very personal, isn't it. All good things you ever get are God's gifts set before you. God loves you personally, cares, takes care of you, and yours.

Ah, I hear a rebel say, “Hey! I earn it all, I owe God nothing!” Question: Can you create your life - make your heart beat, lungs breath, muscles move, brain-waves work? One tiny virus - a single cancer cell, one tragedy can stop you in your tracks. Every obituary says it - we have no power to keep life going.

Only Jesus Christ gives and sustains life and health - with or without doctors, medicines, machines. And when He stops giving - “*preparing a table before me - you*” - we stop living. Thank Him. Worship Him. Serve the great, good, gracious Savior-Shepherd Jesus.

God's Absolute Power Promise

Fifteen

“In the presence of my enemies . . . Psalm 23:4

“In the presence of my enemies . . . David's enemies all hated, haunted, hunted him - all tried to kill him. From Goliath, to Saul, to Philistines, to his own sons - many enemies tried to kill him. All failed. Why? Because God took care of him. God cares for all His own.

God calls Satan - *“enemy - our adversary the devil.”* God calls our arch foe *“the great, fiery red dragon, the serpent of old, the devil, the destroyer, murderer and the father of lies - and Satan - the accuser.”* Satan is all that and more too. He hates all people (not just God's people). He seeks to see all people - *“Go to Hell.”* Satan leads all he can into God's just judgment that Jesus called - *“Outer darkness, the eternal lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels - called Hell” (Matthew 25:30,41,46; Revelation 20:15).*

Satan misleads millions - thru false-god religions or rebel ignorance of the Bible - to believe that Judge Jesus won't judge - won't let anyone *“Go to Hell.”* But Jesus said -

“Unless you repent you will all perish (Go to Hell)! Fear not those killing the body, who cannot kill the soul. But rather - fear Him who is dynamic to destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Luke 13:3,5; Matthew 10:28).

Satan plots, plans, plies his lies - draws rebel dupes into thinking Hell isn't real - and that God won't judge those who blaspheme, profane, use in vain - the high, holy name of Jesus Christ. Satan is our ultra-evil arch-enemy. Peter warned all who know Jesus -

“Be sober, be vigilant, because our adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks around seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith” (belief in the Word of God).

Peter wrote a warning - and call - to all who choose to refuse Jesus Christ - who are lost - who choose to “Go to Hell” -

“The Lord is not slack about His promise (to return - and judge rebels), but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that anyone perish (Go to Hell), but that all come to repentance.

“But the (Judgment) Day of the Lord will come - as a thief in the night (swift, sudden, maybe soon) - the skies will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with super-heat, the earth also and its works will be burned up.

Think about this. Why are the words “damn - hell - go to Hell” so overused in modern speech? Especially in a God-blessed, Bible-believing country? Why? Well, it’s Satan’s “not-so-subtle-snow-job” on silly rebel dupes. The solemn warnings of “Hell’s damnation” are so over-spoken they seem unreal. So, many convince themselves there is no real righteous judgment. They choose rather to celebrate John Lennon’s sad, sorry lie -

“Imagine there’s no Heaven, it’s easy of you try,

No Hell below us, above us only sky.”

John Lennon is dead - and today - he knows his Big Mistake.

Mark it out clearly - remember it always - Satan is a loser!

Jesus beat the devil when tempted. Yes He did! On the Cross Jesus beat the devil - died for our sins - *“crushed the serpent’s head!” (Genesis 3:15)*. Jesus beat the devil when He rose from the dead. Jesus beats the devil daily - saving lost sinners. The devil will be forever beaten when Judge Jesus orders the serpent-dragon to - “Go to Hell!”

All who ignore, deny, defy Jesus Christ - side with Satan - make themselves enemies of Jesus - and of all who love Jesus. Death is their eternal destiny. They all choose to - “Go to Hell!”

But mark it - Jesus Christ still loves, still calls all lost sinners -

“Come to Me all who labor, heavy laden, I will rest you. Take My yoke on you, learn from Me, you will find soul-rest.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Sixteen

“You anoint my head with oil . . . Psalm 23:5

The shepherd used oil to protect the sheep, from pests, gnats, flies that annoy, infest, infect their eyes, ears, nose, mouth. The shepherd anoints the sheep, even dips the sheep in it. The oil cleanses, heals, soothes, protects. Some shepherds also use oil to ward off deadly field-vipers. Anointing with oil is vital.

Oil, of course, pictures the Holy Spirit’s holy, helping ministry to all who are the sheep of God’s pasture.

Oil fueled the lamps in God’s Temple - lighting the glory of the golden lampstand - that portrayed Messiah Jesus. He still says:

“I AM the Light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life.”

Oil was used in sweet perfumed incense, burnt at the golden altar of prayer, picturing the beauty and fragrance of the Savior’s walk on earth - in Holy Spirit power. The Bible calls His life-sacrifice to God to pay for our sins a - *“sweet-smelling fragrance - well-pleasing to God.”*

Oil was used to anoint priests and kings - set apart by God, to God, for God’s sacred service. Jesus Himself was anointed:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me - He has anointed Me to preach Good News to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, set free sin-slaves, restore sight to the blind, set free the sin-crushed, preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Oil in Scripture pictures the Holy Spirit Himself, who sanctifies - separates - sets apart to God - as holy vessels - people Jesus calls to His sacred service. All who love Jesus, He anoints with the Holy Spirit - *“the Comforter.”* The instant we trust Jesus - God the Holy Spirit gives us His eternal life - powers us to serve in His Kingdom - “anoints” to be His Jesus-witnesses.

God's Absolute Power Promise

Seventeen

"My cup runs over . . . Psalm 23:5

David tells us here, that the LORD fills his life-cup to overflowing. Keep in mind, we're talking about the Shepherd and his sheep. Jesus and His flock. All who belong to Him.

Sheep thirst. In dry times "*green pastures and still waters*" were scarce. The shepherd gave his sheep water from a well. He dropped a leather bucket on a rope into the well - drew up the cool, refreshing, thirst-quenching, life-giving water - filled a water vessel - full and overflowing. Each sheep drank his fill.

Sheep of Shepherd Jesus drink our fill too - refreshing blessing-benefits of His wonderful water of life. When we do we too say with shepherd-king David - "*my cup runs over.*"

David is saying, "I've been there, folks. I've needed God's life-supply." David knew God's refreshing grace. It's there for me too - never runs out, always run over. Why? Easy. Because - the LORD is my Shepherd too. He pours out His blessings to me too. He fills up my cup with His refreshing, restoring - "*My cup runs over.*"

Remember what Jesus told a sinner-woman at Jacob's well -

"Whoever drinks this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks the water I give - shall never thirst. But the water that I give will be in him a - well of water - springing up into everlasting life."

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, Out of his inner being shall flow rivers of living water - the Holy Spirit."

May I ask you, today, are you weary of this sick, silly, singuilty globe's empty, dry, barren pursuits? Are you? Jesus offers to you too - an overflow cup of life only He can give.

God's Absolute Power Promise

Eighteen

“Surely . . . Psalm 23:5

“Surely . . . All of these twenty-four truths in Psalm 23 - are God's absolute-power-promises. The world we live in gives us no *“surely security”*, no guarantees, none at all. The world offers only darkness, danger, dread, disease, death.

Question: So - where do you look for sure security - right here, right now - and then in eternity ahead - out beyond death's door? Where?

Jesus said - all people on the planet who reject His Heaven - who choose to ignore, deny, defy His so great and gracious love and salvation - by their own rebel choice - when they die - will *“Go to Hell.”* Do you see it - no assurance there - none at all.

Jesus also said - all who confess the truth that they are lost sinners - and who repent (change their minds) - turn in true trust and love to Him - they have His clear, certain, changeless power-peace promises - sure, secure - right now - and forever.

Jesus began many power-statements with the word: *“Amen.”*
“Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

“Amen” is a Greek word that comes from the Hebrew word - *“Amen.”* Both mean the same: the statement introduced - or ended - by this word - is of absolute truth and importance. Believe it.

So, when Creator Savior Jesus uses that absolute-power term it is of supreme, even eternal, importance. He is the good, great, chief Shepherd - only - to people who truly believe in Him:

“Amen, Amen, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life” (John 6:47).

God's Absolute Power Promise

Nineteen

“Goodness” Psalm 23:5

“Surely goodness . . . will follow me . . . When good comes many people say, “I’m lucky. Fate is with me”, when they should be saying - “God blessed me.” Daily living is never “lucky” - good or bad. Events in this brief lifespan of years God gives us - are no dice roll or turn of cards. Proverbs 16:9,33 says it loud and clear -
*“A man’s heart plans his way,
but the LORD directs his steps
The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.”*

All good that comes to you and me - is from the LORD God.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Surely true!

Proud rebel hearts hate to owe God for the good He gives. They prefer to credit “luck” - or “thank their lucky stars” - but give no thanks to the loving LORD God above, from whom all blessings to all people flow. Our natural sinner-bent is toward self-glory, self-praise. To “self” - period.

Charles Darwin wrote a book he titled - The Descent of Man - his silly, senseless, defenseless theory that men and monkeys have common family ancestry and descent. Big mistake. Darwin was dead-wrong! But - his title was right-on - we can all see a real - “Descent of Man.”

You see it, don’t you. God says, man’s sin in Eden began the true and tragic “descent of man” down, down away from God. It’s a descent into spiritual death, moral decay, killer diseases, natural disasters, eternal death and Hell. Romans chapter 1 - records the six-step - “Real Descent of Man.” Read on

“When they knew God -- (1) they glorified Him not as God, (2) nor were thankful, but (3) became vain in their reasoning, (4) their ignorant heart was darkened. (5) Professing to be wise, they became fools (Greek: ‘morons’), and (6) exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, like man, birds, beasts, creeping things” (vs 21-23).

So - where does it lead - this - “Real Descent of Man down, down away from God?” It leads to bad news!

The “Real Descent of Man - down away from God” inexorably leads deep into the - “Raw Depravity of Man - without God.”

Romans chapter 1 - verses - 18-32 - is man’s sin-list - sick, sordid, soul-pained. God exposes a straight-talking dirty-laundry list of the “real descent of man down away from God” - into the “raw depravity of man without God.” Read on - continue in Romans chapter 1 - verses 24 thru 32

“Therefore, God gave them up - to uncleanness, lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies. God gave them up - to vile passions - women changing their natural use for what is against nature. Also, men, leaving women, burn in lust, men with men, doing what is shameful, receiving the penalty due for their evil error. Since they dislike retaining God in their knowledge - God gave them up - to a debased mind - filled with all unrighteousness, porno-sex-sins ” - etc. - ad nauseam.

The world has long pursued its multi-false-god religions. It all began in Babel - ancient Babylon. And God says it will all end there too (see Revelation chapters 17–19). Some religions try to make sinner-men into little gods.

God originates, initiates - creates good out of nothing. By stark contrast - we are not gods. We can’t create. We only imitate. God created the eye, man mimics with a camera. God created life, man clones (adjusting life-cells God created). Man is created in God’s image - but man is - not the Creator God.

Of proud, but oh so puny man, Dr. J. Vernon McGee quotes
Sherman Nagel:

“You cannot put one little star in motion;
 You cannot shape one single forest leaf,
Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,
 Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief!
You cannot bring one dawn of regal splendor,
 Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,
Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender,
 And - dare you doubt the One who does it all?”

Said the monkey who swung by his tail,
 to his little monks, female and male,
“In a few million years, from our offspring, my dears,
May come professors in Harvard or Princeton or Yale.”
Said the bird on the branch way up high,
 “Why do humans all worry and cry?”
Another bird said, sadly shaking its head,
“They’ve no Heavenly Father as do you and I.”

Psalm 23 says it - God alone originates - creates - all that is the
 “*Goodness . . .*” we all receive.

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twenty

“And mercy will follow me . . . Psalm 23:5

“Surely mercy will follow me . . .

“Depth of Mercy...

Can there be Mercy still reserved for Me?

Can my God His wrath forbear,

Me, a chief of sinners, spare?

“Long have I withstood His grace,

Long provoked Him to His face,

Would not hear His loving calls,

Grieved Him by ten thousand falls.

But there for me my Savior stands,

Holding forth His wounded hands;

God is love, I know, I feel,

Jesus weeps - and loves me still.”

“Seek the LORD while He may be found,

Call on Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous his thoughts,

And let him return to the LORD,

For He will have mercy on him,

And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

“Surely mercy will follow me . . . Judge Jesus is still Savior

Jesus - the God of all

mercy. He hates to judge sinners. The Prophet Micah said it -

“Who is a God like You -

pardoning iniquity . . . delighting in mercy.”

How Great is God's Mercies

“The LORD is good, His mercy is everlasting, His truth endures to all generations. The LORD is merciful, gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in mercy. As high as the Heavens are above the Earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him” (Psalms 100; 103; 136).

Paul wrote to pagan idol-worshippers who had come to Jesus

“You were dead in trespasses and sins . . . in lusts of the flesh and mind, by nature children of wrath, even as others.

But God, rich in mercy, for His great love, wherein He loved us even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive in Christ - for by His grace you are saved” (Ephesians 2:1-9).

The songster wrote of God’s so great and loving mercy -

“The mercies of God, what a theme for my song,
Oh I never could number them o’re;
They are more than the star in the heavenly dome,
Or the sands on the wave-beaten shore.
His goodness and mercy shall follow me on,
Even on to the end of my days,
I have His sure promise and that cannot fail
That His mercy endureth for aye.
For mercies so great, what return can I make,
For mercies so constant and sure;
I’ll love Him, I’ll serve Him with all that I have,
As long as my life shall endure.”

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me . . .”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twenty-One

“All the days of my life . . . Psalm 23:6

“All the days . . . How many days have you lived? Do you see God’s loving goodness and mercy?

*“So teach us to number our days,
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.”
(Psalms 90:12)*

How many days will you live? Jesus knows. However long our lifespan, all who trust Shepherd-Savior Jesus know this: always - all days - Jesus sees us. In any triumph, trial, tragedy, in power, pleasure, pain - He loves, cares, is there - for all who love Him. Jesus says it: *“Come to Me . . . follow Me.”* His *“goodness and mercy will follow you too - all the days.”*

Moses lived long, and He learned to pray this way - Psalm 90 -
“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were, or You formed earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

“A thousand years in Your sight are as yesterday. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by strength, fourscore years, yet their strength is in labor and sorrow, soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Moses called it, didn’t he. He lived 120 years. Many people today live 70, 80, 90 years. As I write, my own mother is in her 99th year. *“All the days of our lives”* are God’s grace-gifts.

Again, King David said it - Psalm 145 -

“I will extol You, my God, O King! I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day - I will bless You, I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, greatly to be praised, His greatness is unsearchable. The LORD is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, of great mercy.

“The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down.

You get the picture, don't you. Shepherd-Savior Jesus is always in absolute-power control - every way and day - working all things for good to all who love Him - so His *“goodness and mercy will follow me (us) all days.”*

Shepherd Jesus also sees, knows by name, every rebel on the planet who rejects Him. He has a plan for them too.

Job said it: *“Don't you know - that since man was put on earth, the triumph of the wicked is brief - the hypocrite's joy is but a moment? For what do the wicked live, become old, mighty in power? They spend their days in wealth - and - in a moment - go down to the grave. They say to God, 'Depart from us, we choose not to know Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we serve Him? What profit will we have if we pray to Him?'”*

Every day we live dark dangers dog our tracks, more than we ever know. But God's loving *“goodness and mercy follow us, all the days of our life.”* Why? Because Shepherd-Savior Jesus walks with us, gives, guards, governs, guides us. He does.

Before Jesus left this planet, headed back to Heaven, He said to all who trust and love Him - *“Behold, I AM with you - all the days - even to the end of the Age.”*

“All the days of my life.” Remember - Jesus gives to all people on planet earth a lifespan - long or short - time to come to Him. Our length or strength of days is all in the loving hand of our great, gracious Shepherd and Savior-Lord Jesus Christ.

Question: Is the Lord Jesus your Shepherd too? Trust Him.

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twenty-Two

“And I will dwell . . . Psalm 23:6

“And . . . It’s a connective conjunction. Here, “and” tells all who love Jesus: “This lifespan on earth - ain’t it!”

“And” - says *“all the days of my life”* are not the end, friend. In God’s plan - there is far more in the future ahead - than we can ever imagine or explore - eternally, infinitely more!

Even if *“all the days of my life”* are 70 or 90 or 120 years - they are a fast-passing, rapid-fire, quick-vanishing scene. James and Peter both wrote it for us all - to read and heed.

“What is your life? It is a vapor that appears for a little time, then - poof - vanishes away. All flesh is as grass, all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, it's flower falls. But - the Word of the Lord endures forever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel (Good News in Jesus) is preached to you” (see James 1:9-11; 4:14-17; 1 Peter 1:24).

The infinity of eternity stretches out forever ahead of us all. You too. In Heaven or in Hell. You too. In our lifespan of years here and now - - long or short - we've only just begun to live.

God gives us all a number of fast-passing years - in which to trust in His Shepherd-Savior-Son Jesus. All who do - go to God's high, holy, happy Heaven - forever. Absolutely!

Jesus said - all who won't, don't trust in Him - receive His loving salvation - will forever Go to Hell! Jesus said it. That settles it. Believe it. Believe Him! In Hell - forever and ever - they will remember with bitter remorse, regret, never forget - that Jesus called them too - but they never came to Him.

They will never

“Dwell in the house of the LORD.

Not forever and ever and ever.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twenty-Three

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord . . . Psalm 23:6

I will dwell . . . Salvation - from sin and death and Hell - is the absolute power promise of the Shepherd-Savior Jesus - to all who truly trust in Him. King David has no doubt at all - that what God promises - He always performs. So David declares this full, final, forever fact -

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

You see, anyone who tries to work to win eternal salvation will - “Go to Hell.” God says no one on topside of this poor sinner planet - is ever “self-worthy” to go to God’s high, holy Heaven by his or her “good works.”

God says: *“There is none righteous, no, not one, none who seeks after God, none who does good. No, not one”* (see Romans 3:9-23; cp Psalms 14 and 53).

Salvation is never **self-gained** - always only **Savior-given**. Only Jesus died for our sins. Only Jesus arose from the dead. Only Jesus can save us - out of Hell - save us for His Heaven.

Without Jesus Christ we all are lost sinners, dead in sins, dead to God, shut out from God, with no right, no entre’ into His high, holy, happy Heaven. Not now, not forever.

But - when we come in simple faith - trust - belief - to Jesus Christ Himself - He forgives our sins - takes away our sin-guilt - we are born again - into His forever family - gives eternal life - welcomes us yonder into His own Heaven-Home - forever. It all happens only by His amazing grace, His loving goodness and mercy. Only in the name of the Savior-Shepherd Jesus Christ - can anyone ever say - alongside King David -

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

“I will dwell . . . Just before Jesus died, arose, left the planet headed back to Heaven - He said this -

“In My Father's house are many dwelling places. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

Again, this lifespan on earth ain't the end, friend. Not at all. Heaven is waiting - for all who trust in Jesus. He said it -

“I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life; no one comes to the Father (in Heaven) except thru Me” (John 14:6).

*“In the **House** of the LORD”* In Heaven the Savior-Lord Jesus is preparing a dwelling place in the Father's House for all who love Him. He said it:

“You believe in God. Believe in Me too (Why? Jesus is God - One with the Father). In My Father's House are many mansions (literally: dwelling places, living spaces). I go to prepare a place for you. And since I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I Am, there you may be too” (John 14:1-3).

As a Pastor, I have ministered often at funerals to grieving families. Some of their loved ones died lost - for they had never come in faith to Jesus in the lifespan of years He gave them. Tragically, the family had no hope of ever seeing them again - forever.

But, by contrast, happily, many whose funeral I preached had in fact and act of faith come in trust to Jesus - in their God-given lifespan of years. To them it was my joy to quote this great and precious, absolute-power promise of the Lord Jesus:

“I go to prepare a place for you. And since I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself - so that where I AM (in My Father's House), there you may be too.”

And those people too - say it with King David -
“I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

So Where is God's House?

Is the “*Father's House*” fiction or fact? Absolute fact! As real as our tiny earth is a “dwelling place.” As real as our solar system, our galaxy, this dark, stark universe around us. So the House of the LORD in Heaven is just as real.

Will Jesus literally return to take His people there? Well, of course He will, don't be ridiculous! Jesus said it. Believe it!

To find the “*Father's House*” - first let's see the Old Testament record of Heaven. King Solomon built a great, glorious temple to the LORD - Jehovah God. Read Solomon's great dedication statement (II Chronicles 2:6; 6:18; cp I Kings 8:27). He said -

“Behold, I build a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate to Him. And the temple I build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. But who is able to build Him a temple? Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens (above all Heavens), cannot contain Him! Will God indeed dwell with men on earth? Behold, Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain You.”

Then, in his dedication prayer Solomon called on the LORD -
- and eight times he said -

*“When we pray, Hear from Heaven, Your **dwelling** place.”*

Both David the King and Isaiah the prophet call Heaven God's
“*Dwelling Place.*”

“The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in Heaven. His eyes behold the children of men” (Psalm 11:4).

“The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands. Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne, earth is My footstool. What house will you build Me? Has not My hand made all these things!’” (Isaiah 66:1,2).

The Bible reveals three Heavens. The LORD God of the Bible created all three.

Heaven One - the blue-sky, atmosphere-envelope God created to protect our lovely little Planet Earth - the heaven where the eagles soar, and planes fly.

Heaven Two - the dark, stark universe God created with its billions of stars in billions of galaxies, in vast space defying man's plans to measure or map it.

Heaven Three - the boundless, bountiful, brilliant, beautiful Heaven of Heavens - God's Home - God's throne-room - far beyond all we can see or know or imagine till He takes us there.

Think about it. The crucified, risen, ascended Savior Lord Jesus - is there. Daily He takes up there many of His people - *"thru the valley of the shadow of death . . . absent from the body . . . at Home with the Lord . . . to be with Christ . . . which is far better."* The Father's House.

*"The House of **the LORD**"* is God's *"Heaven of Heavens."* Jesus came to earth from His own Heaven-Home. Now He is there. King David - who wrote this Psalm 23 - is there too - 3000 years and counting. Multi-millions more are there. All people, in all human history, who died believing in Messiah Jesus the Son of God - are there too.

Jesus has taken many to His Heaven-Home - thru death's door. People who trust and love Him are there - from every century, continent, country, culture, color, class - young and old - men, women, teens, sweet children - Jesus has taken millions of them Home to His *"Father's House."* He does it daily.

Mark it. Thru the centuries - Jesus takes children thru death's door up to His Home in Heaven. Why? Well, only He knows why He takes each one. But - here's a fascinating fact - millions of children live in pagan lands, or are raised by rebels who reject Jesus. And for many - the only way they'll get to Heaven is if He takes them - thru death's door. Jesus said it:

“Let the little children come to Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:13,14).

“Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in Heaven. For the Son of Man came to save those who were lost” (Matthew 18:2-11).

The final Book of the entire written Word of God - the Bible - is the *“Revelation of Jesus Christ.”* In it God gives small preview glimpses of His Heaven. John wrote it - for us too -

“I looked, and behold, a door standing open in Heaven - and the Voice, saying, ‘Come up here!’ And behold, a throne, and One sat on the throne” (Revelation 4:1,2).

That preview scene is in the Heaven of Heavens - a real place - where real redeemed people who love Jesus go to live forever. Not some fictitious so-called “outer space aliens” - these people are all rejoicing - *“at Home in Heaven - forever with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)*

Think about all the people on this little planet - so eager to spend billions on moon walks, Mars rocks, tiny space probes that don’t get out the front door in exploring space - but who neglect, reject, won’t inspect all that the Bible tells about God’s Heaven of Heavens.

So, they are grossly ignorant of His measureless creation. From earth they have no way out - past our vast, starry universe. All creation centers on His high, holy Heaven throne. And David says it loud and clear for all on earth to hear - all Jesus-people on this tiny dust-speck planet - one day - soon - *“Will dwell in the house of the LORD.”*

Remember two thieves on crosses beside the crucified Jesus. One thief - insisted, persisted in resisting Savior Jesus. The other thief turned to Jesus - in personal trust - called on Jesus - *“Lord, remember me, when You come to Your kingdom.”*

Then and there, our dying Savior gave him His power-promise:

*“Amen! I say to you,
today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*

Jesus died that day. The thief died too. Their bodies were buried. But their spirits went into Paradise - went together. And all who believe in Messiah Jesus - from Adam to Abraham to David to that thief - were in Paradise - the place of soul-rest - waiting - just three more days - till Jesus arose from the dead.

Then - on that great Resurrection Glory-Day - Jesus Christ arose from the dead - came out of that tomb. Spirit, soul, body - He arose in triumph - proving -1- that He is God in flesh - with power over life and death, and proving -2- that His death paid for all the sins of the world - mine and yours too - and proving -3- that He is ready, willing, able to save all people who simply, surely trust in Him - to save us from sin, death, Hell - and save us for His own high, holy, happy Home in Heaven.

Forty days after He arose from the dead - Jesus ascended - lifted off planet earth up, up away - back Home to His Heaven.

Jesus promised to return from Heaven - *“I will come again.”* And when He ascended to Heaven - He took with Him all the living spirits of all the dead who - from Adam to the thief - had said in their lifespan: *“Lord, remember me.”*

It was not David's or Adam's or the thief's self-worth that got them into Heaven - they were all lost sinners. Self-worth never gets anyone into Heaven. Only Savior-worth - and His goodness and mercy takes to Heaven all who trust in Him. David saw past death: *“I will dwell in the house of the LORD.”*

Question: What makes Heaven - Heaven? Well, first, it is infinitely beyond anything man's pitiful, in vain, so-called “space-exploring” can ever imagine or know. The Bible says it:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of men, the things God has prepared for those who love Him” (I Corinthians 2:9).

The “Paradise of God” - called His Home in Heaven - is a place of infinite awe, amazing, indescribable wonder - glorious, boundless, brilliant beauty, endless blessings - all belonging to all who belong to the Creator Savior Lord Jesus Himself. Ours to own, explore, enjoy forever - God’s measureless Creation.

In God’s Heaven-Home are - no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain - no evil, no error, no terror, no night - all life - light - love. And all these wonders in Heaven’s Home are simply - “side-benefits.”

What makes Heaven - Heavenly? Mark it clearly, remember it always - Heaven is Heaven because the Triune Lord God Almighty - God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, God the Savior-Son Jesus - King of kings - Lord of lords - is there!

Think about it - the Lord Himself - with us in person - always. John heard it, wrote it - a loud voice from Heaven saying -

“Behold, the tabernacle (dwelling) of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God, and they shall see His face” (Revelation 21:3; 22:4).

This beautiful Psalm 23 of David - opens and closes with “*The LORD.*” In Him is Life - Light - Love - brought out of His eternity past - into humanity present - and out into eternity future. All of Heaven’s joys are in Jesus. Believe it. Our Heaven Home’s highest delight is seeing and being with God Himself - in Jesus.

In Psalm 27 - David writes says it - for all who love Jesus -

“One thing I have desired of the LORD, that I will 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 - to enquire in His temple. I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.”

Jesus in Heaven - makes Heaven - Heaven our forever Home.

But - think about this sober fact - the old spiritual song said it -

*“Heaven, Heaven, everybody talkin’ ‘bout it
ain’ta goin’ there - to Heaven.”*

Question: If you die today, do you know you’ll go to Heaven?

Question: When your time comes to face God - if He asks you:

“Why should I let you into My Heaven?”

What will you answer Him?

There is only one real right answer that God accepts.

We must say to Him:

*“In the lifespan of years You gave me on earth,
I trusted in Your Savior-Son - the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

*“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved,
and your household.”*

“And I will dwell in the house of the LORD.”

God's Absolute Power Promise

Twenty-Four

"Forever!" Psalm 23:6

"Forever!" This final word in Psalm 23 is about - eternity.
Do you at all think about your future - past this lifespan on earth? Do you look ahead - to the future of those you love - what will happen to them in the vast eternity ahead?

"Forever" - calls you and me - to look ahead to all that God calls *"eternal life - everlasting life."* So, what about you? What about your loved ones - and their very real - *"forever?"*

Forever Shut Out

John Lennon, the late, rich, famous Beatles musician, wrote a song some still sing. A strange, sad, silly song - very famous - very sentimental to many people - but all it says is all wrong!

"Imagine there's no Heaven, it's easy if you try,
No Hell below us, above us only sky."

John Lennon misled millions. I do not know where he went when he died. I do not know if he ever trusted in Jesus before a madman's bullet broke off his brief lifespan. But I do know - if John Lennon could write again - speak out again - he'd say - loud and clear - for all on earth to hear - his song was wrong.

One of the classic doctrinal statements in all the Bible is in Philippians 2. I lift out this great absolute-power promise:

"God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow - in Heaven, on earth, under the earth (Hades) - and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

Right now, as we speak, wherever John Lennon is in Heaven above or in Hell below - you can know this - his

knees are bowing to the name above all names - "Jesus" - and he is confessing that - Jesus Christ is Lord. He will do it forever. But forever too late to save him. And - if he could - John Lennon would tell all the world, like his own son, to bow to Jesus too. Yes he would. Count on it.

Imagining "No Heaven" can't negate Heaven, saying "No God" can't negate God. King David wrote God's own Words -
"The fool has said in his heart - 'No God!'"

God says Heaven and Hell are real - and we all " *dwell forever*" - in one or the other - in the "House of the LORD" - or in the outer darkness lake of fire the Savior-Lord Jesus called "Hell." Choose Jesus. Bow to Jesus. Call on Jesus. Do it now.

"Forever!" Life goes on forever - either in Heaven or Hell!
The Greek term defines the eternal like this:
"*into the ages of the ages*" . . . time measured as infinite . . . never-ending. God loves you. God wants you to live with Him - in the Heaven-House of the LORD - forever and ever.

God cannot, God will not, allow into His Home in Heaven rebel sinners, who here and now reject His Savior-Son Jesus. If God did that - He would mock and nullify the Cross of Jesus - who died for the sins of the world - to provide the one and only way into His Heaven.

If God let us enter Heaven - unchanged - into His pure, perfect, peaceful, joyous, beautiful Heaven-Home - if He let us in just as we are - rebel sinners - too proud to call on the One and Only Savior-Lord Jesus Christ - if God let us into His Heaven unrepentant - we would wreck and ruin and sin-pollute the place - just as we do to this lovely little planet He gave us.

Think about it. Why should God open His Heaven, with its forever blessings, to people who ignore, deny, defy, neglect, despise, reject His own beloved only begotten

Savior-Son, who in His so great love, died the brutal, bloody, ultimate death on the Cross to pay the infinite penalty - for their sins? Why should He? He doesn't!

God allows into His Heaven - all those - only those - repentant sinners who humble themselves "as a little child" - and come in faith to call on Jesus.

*Question: Have you come to Jesus?
Will you come to Jesus?*

Pontius Pilate asked a "forever" question: "What shall I do with Jesus?" According to history, Pilate answered that all-important question - wrong - ended a suicide.

A lost sinner jailer asked too: "What must I do to be saved?" It's a choice we all must make - "What will I do with Jesus?"

Jesus said it - *"I AM the Door,
thru Me, if anyone enter in, He will be saved."
"Amen, Amen, I say to you,
whoever believes in Me has everlasting life."*

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved,
and your household" (Acts 16:31).*

Say to Him - "Lord Jesus - I trust You to save me."
Then you too can say with King David:
"The LORD is my Shepherd too."

In point of Bible fact - all people on the sin-guilty globe called Planet Earth - who choose to come in sure, simple faith to the One and Only Creator Savior-Shepherd Lord - Jehovah-Jesus - can say - with King David - and you:
"The LORD is my Shepherd too."