

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)*

Possibly no other passage of scripture is so often taken for comfort as the 23rd Psalm. None is quoted so often by so many people, and few, if any, are so well known and easily recognized.

But this passage, as many other scriptures in the Bible, is often claimed by those who have no reason to believe that it holds any comfort or encouragement for them. If we are to have any sound reason to believe the blessings of this psalm can be applied to ourselves, we must pass a crucial test set forth in the first verse. Is the Lord truly your shepherd?

If the Lord is your shepherd, then you must certainly be a sheep. Not all men are considered sheep. The scriptures speak of a time when the Lord will sit on the throne of His glory and divide His sheep from the goats. What will He find you to be then?

We ask again, not only are you a sheep, but are you the Lord's sheep? Jesus spoke of some religious people in John 10:26, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." If we are the Lord's sheep, we believe the Bible, we believe God, and our life is a life of trust in Him.

The Lord's sheep hear and recognize the Lord's voice (John 10:4-5). They do not follow men or movements, fads or philosophies. They flee from such. They have ears only for the Good Shepherd. They not only recognize the Lord's voice, but they obey Him. They follow Him. They walk in His footsteps. His teachings order their lives. His favor or displeasure is the governing factor on every decision and action they take.

We ask again, are you the Lord's sheep? Can you meet the above tests? Then the Lord indeed is your shepherd and the promises of Psalm 23 are yours.

The Lord is the Good Shepherd. In contrast to religious thieves and robbers who come only to plunder the sheep, to steal and to kill and to destroy, He comes to give them life abundantly.

The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Not for the goats, not for the thieves and robbers, but for the sheep. He gives them eternal life and they shall never perish. Blessed indeed is the person whose life can be characterized as a sheep and whose shepherd the Lord is.

-C.M.