

The Great Shepherd

Key Verse: “*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*”
—*Psalm 23:6*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 23:1-6

IN THIS MEDITATION, DAVID uses symbolic language about the God of Israel as he contemplates the relationship which exists between himself and the sovereign Creator. He employs the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep. Although this illustration applied originally to the Jewish people especially during Old Testament times, eventually it will pertain to all who

acknowledge the supremacy of the Heavenly Father.

David, a shepherd himself, speaks of how the Lord provides sustenance for those who manifest obedience by arranging for their care, comfort, and refreshment. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”—Ps. 23:1-5

Our Key Verse reflects the abundant provision of mercy that will be the portion of all who will come into harmony with the divine arrangement and standards on every plane of existence.

Much of the Bible is prophetic in nature, especially with reference to blessings that are promised, despite the turmoil that has surrounded the human family since sin entered the world following Adam's disobedience and expulsion from Eden. This helps us to understand one of the main objectives of the great Messianic purpose of God as expressed by the angels on the night Jesus was born: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14) This chorus of the heavenly choir was in keeping with the promise of Jesus' birth, which stated that he would be "The Prince of Peace," and that of the "increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7

In another of the psalms, David again foretold the blessings of peace which would come to the nations under the administration of Messiah's kingdom. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness"—that is, by obeying the righteous rule of Christ's kingdom, which all will be obliged to do.—Ps. 72:3

On a still grander level, however, during this present Gospel Age, a spiritual class is being developed which will help to facilitate the promised peace and blessings for mankind during the Messianic kingdom. The Lord's consecrated people enjoy an inner sense of calm that only comes from having faith in the saving blood of Christ and confidence in the promises of God. The Apostle Peter describes one who has this Christian trait as possessing a meek and quiet spirit, or demeanor. He states, "Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."—1 Pet. 3:4

How grateful we should be for the assurances that everlasting peace for all intelligent beings will be an outgrowth of God's magnificent plan of salvation throughout eternity! ■