

With Me

A Journey through Psalm 23

Psalm 78:72 NIV

[72] And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.

Psalm 23:1-6 NIV

[1] The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, [3] he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. [4] Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. [5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. [6] Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

A thousand-year journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament

KENNETH E. BAILEY

[1] The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

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Sheep have a special problem. They have no defenses. Cats have teeth, claws and speed. Dogs have their teeth and their speed. Horses can kick, bite and run. Bears can claw, bite and crush. Deer can run. But the sheep have no bite or claws and cannot outrun any serious predator. They can butt other sheep, but that ability will not protect them from a wolf or a bear. The sheep's only security is the shepherd.

Kenneth Bailey

[1] The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

“The Lord is my shepherd.” In other words, I wandered in the midst of beasts, dogs and bulls (that) surrounded me; lions opened their mouths and wished to ravish me. I was terrified, and because of fear I made a treaty with the Savior. Therefore, do not be afraid, O my soul, for He is my shepherd, and “I shall not want.”

Archbishop Nerses of Armenia, 12th Century

[1] The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

BLESSED ARE THE VULNERABLE, THEY WILL FIND CONTENTMENT
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters

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Sheep will only lie down when they have had plenty to eat, have quenched their thirst and are not threatened by any wild animal or disturbed by biting insects.

Kenneth Bailey

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters

The good shepherd "leads me"; he does not "drive me." There is a marked difference. In Egypt where there is no open pasture land I have often seen shepherds driving their sheep from behind with sticks. But in the open wilderness of the Holy Land the shepherd walks slowly ahead of his sheep and either plays his own ten-second tune on a pipe or (more often) sings his own unique "call." The sheep appear to be attracted primarily by the voice of the shepherd, which they know and are eager to follow.

Kenneth Bailey

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters

Within sound and sight of water they (the sheep) would all begin to run toward it, showing that they were very thirsty. Yet, at their arrival, as I watched them, only a few would be drinking, while others all along the edge of the water, like the pedestrians on a fashionable street in a great metropolis, keep passing each other up and down the stream. . . . I learned the valuable lesson that they do not drink from rippling waters. They continue until every last one of them had found a quiet little pool between stones showing up above the ripples. . . . No turbid streams or ruffled rivulets will tempt them. . . . They want waters that move quietly.

M.P. Krikorian

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT ABIDE, THEY WILL BE LED TO ABUNDANCE
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

[3] he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

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...once a sheep knows that it is lost, it tries to hide under a bush or rock and begins quivering and bleating. The shepherd must locate it quickly lest it be heard and killed by a wild animal. On being found it is usually too traumatized to walk and must be carried back to the flock or to the village.

Kenneth Bailey

[3] he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

BLESSED ARE THE LOST AND HURTING, THEY WILL BE FOUND AND MADE WHOLE
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

[4] Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

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Valleys of the shadow of death are paths which wind in between mountains where there are dark shadows and deep gorges. Travelers march slowly and silently in order to avoid being seen or heard by bandits. The fear of death is constantly in their minds. They tremble, they expect trouble or death at any time while they are passing through.

George Lamsa

[4] Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

The Hebrew word here translated “rod” (shbt) has a long history. Its meanings include rod, scepter and weapon. It does not refer to a “walking stick.” Rather it is the shepherd’s primary offensive weapon for protecting the flock from enemies, be they wild animals or human thieves. The instrument itself is about two and a half feet long with a mace-like end into which heavy pieces of iron are often embedded. It becomes a formidable weapon.

Kenneth Bailey

[4] Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

BLESSED ARE THE FEARFUL, THEY WILL BE COMFORTED
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

[5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

BLESSED ARE THE SURROUNDED, THEY WILL BE DEFENDED
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

[6] Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

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On the way home at the end of each day, the shepherd knows that there is the danger of a wolf or some other predator following the returning herd in the hope that a young or injured sheep might lag behind and become easy prey. If the shepherd has an assistant, one of them will naturally follow closely behind the herd for the specific purpose of preventing such an eventuality. If the shepherd has a dog that animal can take up the "rear guard" position. Sheep, when they aren't lost, know their way home. If there is no assistant shepherd and no dog, the shepherd himself can be the "rear guard."

Kenneth Bailey

[6] Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

BLESSED ARE THE VULNERABLE, THEY WILL EXPERIENCE GOODNESS AND MERCY
IN CHRIST THEIR SHEPHERD

Chiastic Structure

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

F

E

D

C

B

A

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

1 Outsider invited in

28 Insiders sent out

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

- 1 Outsider invited in
 - 2 Jesus born as a refugee

- 27 Jesus dies as a refugee
- 28 Insiders sent out

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

- 1 Outsider invited in
 - 2 Jesus born as a refugee
 - 3 Jesus baptised in water
 - 26 Jesus baptised in suffering
 - 27 Jesus dies as a refugee
- 28 Insiders sent out

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

- 1 Outsider invited in
 - 2 Jesus born as a refugee
 - 3 Jesus baptised in water
 - 4 Jesus tempted in wilderness 3 times
 - 26 Jesus tempted in Gethsemane 3 times
 - 26 Jesus baptised in suffering
 - 27 Jesus dies as a refugee
- 28 Insiders sent out

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

- 1 Outsider invited in
 - 2 Jesus born as a refugee
 - 3 Jesus baptised in water
 - 4 Jesus tempted in wilderness 3 times

PARABLES

- 26 Jesus tempted in Gethsemane 3 times
 - 26 Jesus baptised in suffering - 27 Jesus dies as a refugee
- 28 Insiders sent out

[1] The Lord is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

LORD AS SHEPHERD
CONTENTMENT

[6] Surely your goodness and love
will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

GOODNESS & MERCY
CONTENTMENT

[1] The Lord is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

LORD AS SHEPHERD
CONTENTMENT

[2] He makes me lie down
in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

FOOD & DRINK

[5] You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

FOOD & DRINK

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LORD AS SHEPHERD
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FOOD & DRINK

[3] he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

RESCUE / SECURITY

your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

SECURITY / COMFORT

[5] You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

FOOD & DRINK

[6] Surely your goodness and love
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RESCUE / SECURITY

[4] Even though I walk
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WITH ME

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SECURITY / COMFORT

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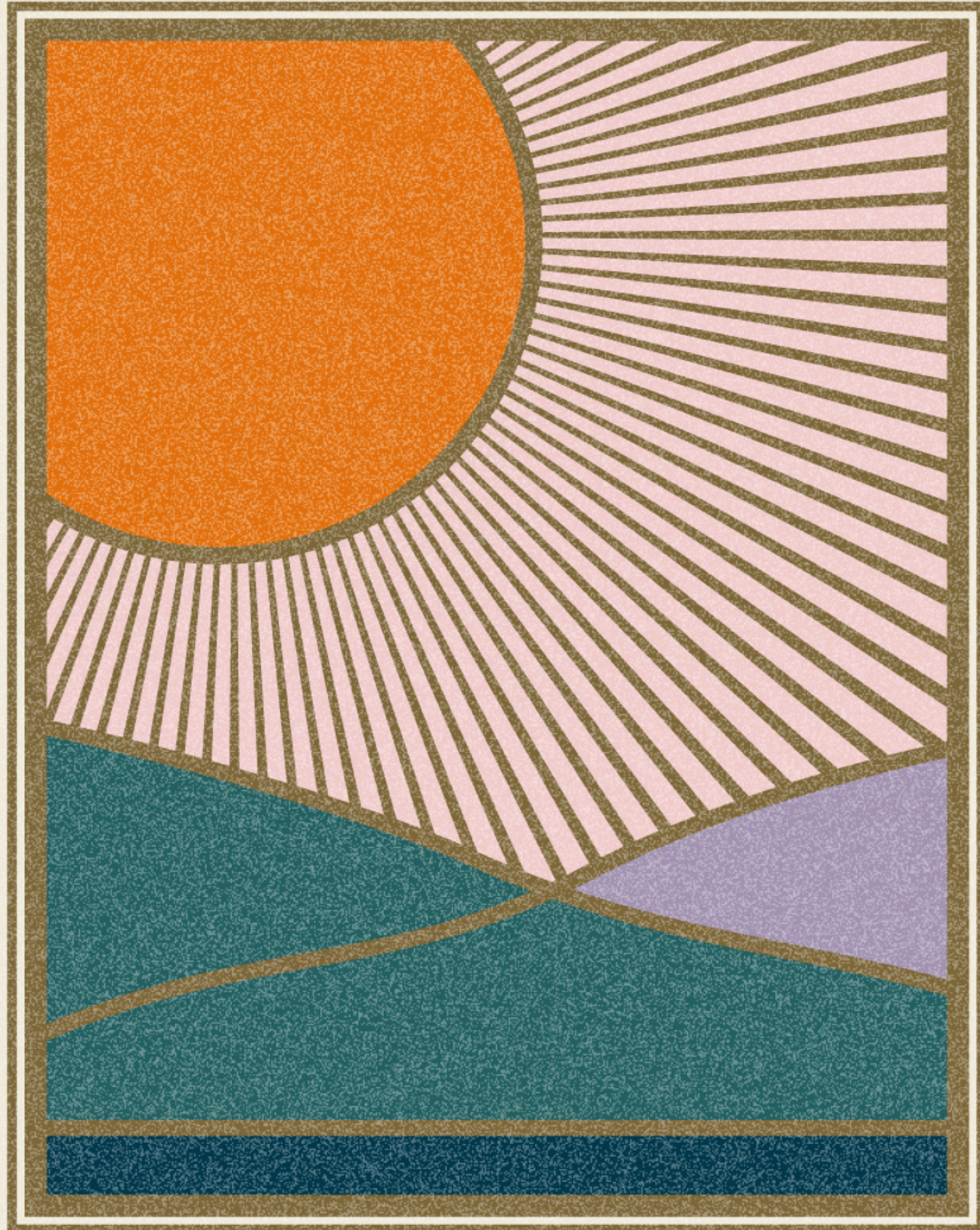
FOOD & DRINK

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GOODNESS & MERCY
CONTENTMENT

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