26-1115a Transcript

26-1115a - *Some Thoughts on Psalm 23, Part 1, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: John Kessler and Roger Raines

See a detailed summary: Detailed Summary HTML - Detailed Summary PDF

Some Thoughts on Psalm 23, Part 1

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 0:33): John Kessler

Exodus 15:11-13: (0:04) Good morning. First reading today is from Exodus 15 verses 11 through 13. (0:11) Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, (0:18) working wonders? You stretch out your right hand and the earth swallows your enemies. (0:24) In your unfailing love, you will lead the people you have redeemed. (0:28) In your strength, you will guide them to your holy dwelling. That's the word of the Lord. (0:33)

2nd Reading (0:38 - 2:11): Roger Raines

John 10:11-18: (0:38) Good morning. I'll be reading from the Gospel of John chapter 10 verses 11 through 18. (0:47) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (0:53) He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming

Continued

(1:01) and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. (1:09) He flees because he's a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. (1:15) I am the good shepherd, and I know my own, and my own know me. Even as the father knows me, (1:24) I know the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep which are not (1:34) of the fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice, and they will become one flock (1:42) with one shepherd. For this reason, the father loves me because I lay down my life (1:49) so that I may take it again. [No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own initiative.] (1:58) I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. (2:04) This commandment I received from my father. This concludes this reading. (2:10)

Transcript (0:04 - 31:54), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(2:15) Hello again. Today it's my turn. It calls in the rotation of men who preach.

(2:24) Just remember, you get what you pay for. (2:30) If you notice, a lot of our songs depict Jesus as a shepherd, and (2:39) throughout all of Scripture, we see God leading his people in one form or another, (2:50) and I'll get into that a little later. And so I was thinking about Psalm 23 and the comfort (3:01) that it brings people.

I remember one of our old elders here, (3:08) Julius Zavodny, one of the rare times he got up and gave us an invitation. (3:15) It was on Psalm 23, and he said that that was his favorite Psalm, and I know that (3:27) it might be your favorite passage of Scripture too. It's one of my favorites.

(3:33) So I want to share some thoughts and Scriptures with you that I hope will give us a deeper love (3:39) and understanding and appreciation for the 23rd Psalm. The 23rd Psalm is far and above (3:49) the most beloved passage of Scripture in the Bible. It's given leaders comfort, (3:55) strength, and encouragement ever since David recorded those verses 3,000 years ago.

(4:03) And next to John 3.16, which is a microcosm of the Gospel itself, (4:10) it is the most recognized passage of Scripture. To me, it's a special Psalm that assures me (4:19) of the love and

care of our invisible God that he gives us while we're on our earthly journey. (4:27) And though we can't see him, 23rd Psalm tells us that he is the good shepherd always near, (4:35) ever watchful, always providing, ever leading and guiding, and protecting us even during the (4:43) worst points of our lives when things seem to be really bad, as bad as they can get.

(4:51) This Psalm lets us know that our God is with us. Both believers and non-believers (4:59) who were near the end of their life, facing that valley of the shadow of death, (5:05) have requested to have Psalm 23 read at their funeral. In fact, it was read at my Aunt Ruth's (5:13) funeral just a couple of weeks ago, and I know that she wasn't a church-going type, (5:20) but she had that read for her funeral.

It gives comfort. Before we read Psalm 23, (5:33) I want us to look at some nerdy statistics just to get that out of my system. (5:41) I love getting my nose into research books and looking up all kinds of (5:49) seemingly useless information, but I want to share it with you.

(5:54) So David started out as a shepherd boy and became the king of Israel. He became one of the most (6:03) prolific writers in the whole Bible, believe it or not. Of the 150 Psalms that were written (6:12) in the Book of Psalms, David is attributed to have written 73 of them.

(6:20) And there's 50 that have no signature. They're not sure who wrote them. But in the New Testament, (6:30) inspired writers in the New Testament, Luke and Acts, and perhaps Paul, whoever wrote Hebrews, (6:39) were not quite really sure.

But both of them cite David as writing two of those Psalms that were, (6:48) up to that point, not recognized as a Psalm of David. So David actually wrote half of all the (6:55) Psalms. So who wrote the other Psalms? Well, we have Asaph, who was the director of music.

(7:04) He wrote 12. The sons of Korah, who were also involved in temple worship, they wrote 11. (7:12) King Solomon wrote 2. Moses wrote 1, Psalm 90.

And [Heman,] who was one of the seers of the king, (7:23) he wrote 1. And Ethan, also a Levite priest, wrote 1. So what makes this Psalm so special? (7:34) The 23rd Psalm is only 6 verses long, and depending on what translation you have, (7:43) it's approximately 114 words long. But of those words, those words have a huge (7:51) impact in what they really say. Let's read through it, and then we'll look at it verse (7:58) by verse, exploring many scriptures to give us a deeper understanding of Psalm 23.

(8:06) And again, this Psalm was written by a young Jewish man, David, the son of Jesse, (8:12) who was a humble shepherd himself. And he later became the king of Israel and revealed the true (8:21) good shepherd to all mankind through his Psalms. Verse 1. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

(8:32) He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul.

(8:41) He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley (8:51) of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me, your rod and your staff, (8:58) they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head (9:05) with oil,

my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, (9:14) and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

So let's look at verse 1. The Lord (9:23) is my shepherd, I shall not want. Okay, so we see the main character of this Psalm (9:32) is the Lord, all capital letters. And Lord is the name that the translators (9:42) assign to this main character.

Lord is not this main character's name. (9:51) The translators, with all their degrees and fancy college certificates, (9:57) just condescendingly and arrogantly thought that we wouldn't be able to follow (10:04) the actual names of God and keep them in order. So they said, whenever we see this name, (10:12) we'll just say Lord, so the people can understand who it is.

That is so wrong, in my opinion. (10:24) We've all come to love and appreciate when we see Lord in the Old Testament in caps. We know (10:31) who it is, and we rever even that name, even though it's a title.

But when you see Lord, (10:39) it's actually I Am, which is Yahweh, and that is the most holy name. And so whatever wisdom (10:57) they had, they wanted to generically call God by Lord. Yes, He is Lord, the Lord of Lords, (11:10) and it's a title showing supreme eminence, meaning He's above all.

But Lords in all caps (11:18) is not a substitute for God's personal name, Yahweh. God's name is not Lord, nor is it Jehovah, (11:29) as some versions use. And Jehovah is entirely a man-made name.

He never said, My name is Jehovah. (11:45) Jehovah was a name made up by a Spanish monk named Raymundus Martini for a book that he wrote (11:54) titled Pugio Fidei in 1270 A.D., which was a Catholic apologetic book trying to (12:05) target the Jews, to appeal to them, to bring them under the Catholic umbrella. (12:12) He took the vowels from the title Adonai, which Adonai, by the way, means Lord, (12:21) and the Masoretic Jews, wherever you see Yahweh, they felt unworthy to say that name, (12:30) so they called Him Lord too, but in Hebrew, Adonai.

And so this Spanish monk, Catholic monk, (12:40) got the idea from that. And so he took the vowels from Adonai and interwove them (12:49) in the holy name Yahweh, which is Y-H-W-H, four consonants, and came up with Jehovah. (13:01) So it's really an unauthorized name.

It would be as ridiculous as saying to Steve, (13:10) Steve, today we're going to name you Stavros because we want to appeal to the Greek populace (13:16) around here. I don't have authority to change his name. He might not like his name being changed to (13:23) Stavros.

We got a confirmation on that. And so why would God, Yahweh, want to be called by (13:35) a nickname at best? That's just what I came to understand through my studies. (13:43) So in my little world, I'm just not going to call God willingly by Jehovah.

But should that (13:54) stop anybody else? No. It's a name over the centuries that everyone has revered and regarded (14:03) as God's name, even though it was created out of error. So call Him what you will.

God is God. (14:13) But does that please God when we give Him titles or names that He didn't authorize? (14:27) You may be saying to yourself, Jim, why are you all worked up about this? We're talking (14:31) about David here in Psalm 23. Well, when you take into God's account (14:39) and His explicit instructions to Moses and Israel, you get the idea that it is important (14:48) to God, to

Yahweh.

So we've got a couple of names for God that the translators (14:57) really didn't have the authority to address God as. They gave Him generic titles. (15:07) Like every time you see God in the Old Testament, that is really His name, Elohim.

Elohim is a (15:16) Hebrew plural masculine name for the Godhead, the three holy ones. So when you see God, (15:27) it's talking about the Trinity, Elohim. When you see Lord, it's really talking about (15:36) Yahweh.

Now stick with me on this. In Exodus 3, that's where we have Moses as a shepherd (15:50) seeing the burning bush. And he goes and investigates.

And lo and behold, there's a holy (15:57) being in that bush, because the being says, Moses, remove your sandals, for you are standing (16:05) on holy ground. And within that conversation between Moses and the angel of the Lord that (16:14) that being is called, in the conversation, the angel of the Lord reveals that he is Yahweh (16:24) and that he is Elohim. And not only that, but he's also the God of the patriarchs, (16:32) whom they knew as El Shaddai.

So that being in the burning bush (16:39) is basically the Godhead talking to Moses. And in that conversation later on in (16:54) Exodus 3, 13 through 15, we read, But Moses said to God, Look, if I go to the Israelites and I say (17:05) to them, the God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and they say to me, What is his name? (17:12) Then what shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, I am that I am. (17:21) And that is Yahweh.

And he said, You must say to the Israelites, I am sent me to you. (17:33) And God said again to Moses, So you must say to the Israelites, Yahweh, the Elohim of your (17:40) ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has sent me to you. (17:46) This is my name forever.

And this is my remembrance from generation to generation. (17:55) So for translators or Masoretic Jews to assign any other name to God other than the one he commands, (18:07) shame on them. God wants to be known as Yahweh.

That is the most holy name. It's hard (18:25) to break out of a mold. We've been so used to saying the Lord, and there's nothing wrong with (18:33) that.

Jesus refers to God as the Lord on occasion, but to use a substitute title (18:47) for the personal name of the most holy being, I think shows disrespect. It's not what he wants. (18:56) He commanded otherwise.

Anyhow, let me continue. So Yahweh means I am. And when God told Moses, (19:05) Yahweh, the Elohim of your ancestors, that makes God the Father, Yahweh, the Son, Yahweh, (19:13) and Holy Spirit, Yahweh.

This is called the Shema by the Hebrews, the Israelites. (19:23) And the Shema is Israel's creed. And Jesus quotes this as well.

It's from Deuteronomy 6.4, (19:38) where Moses said, Hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God is one, Yahweh. Jesus cites this as the greatest (19:49) commandment. So it's something we must know and understand and obey.

(19:57) In Mark 12.30, Jesus quotes it. And he said, And you shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your (20:05) heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And this is the (20:13) first commandment, said Jesus.

And this is so important to the Jews, that this Shema, (20:23) they would write and put in their little phylacteries, and they would wear those on (20:29) their foreheads or on their wrists so that they would thoroughly understand and really get this. (20:41) So in verse 1 of Psalm 23, David is saying, Yahweh is my shepherd. And in Hebrew, (20:49) that is Yahweh Ra'ah, God the shepherd.

Jesus uses the allegory of Yahweh being a shepherd to show (21:00) the close relationship between Yahweh and his people. With God as our shepherd, we as sheep, (21:08) all have our needs met. Yahweh shepherded Israel through the wilderness.

When they left Egypt, (21:21) the angel of the Lord, who appeared to them as a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by (21:28) night, led them. And the angel of Yahweh, as I said before, is the second person of the Godhead, (21:40) the pre-incarnate Christ. And it's always this second person of the Godhead that would have (21:49) one-on-ones with humans throughout all of time.

He was the interface between Elohim and mankind. (22:03) He was the one who walked in the cool of the evening through the Garden of Eden, (22:09) you know, talking with Adam and Eve. He is the one who would appear at different stages guiding (22:18) his people.

And in Exodus 33, 13 through 14, another conversation between Moses and the angel (22:31) of the Lord, it says, now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your way (22:41) that I may know you so that I might find favor in your sight and consider that this nation is (22:50) your people. Yahweh said, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. (22:58) The Hebrew word for presence is panim, which means faces, plural, different faces.

(23:07) And so his faces would go with them. But faces in Hebrew is always written in singular. That's why (23:16) he says my presence.

And so that means that Yahweh would be with them in one of his many faces or (23:25) forms, such as the pillar of fire or the cloud of smoke leading them through the desert, (23:34) or in the cloud of glory on Mount Sinai. Paul revealed that he was the rock that followed (23:42) them around, providing them with water in the desert that Moses struck. So he was striking (23:52) Christ.

That's why he got very upset with Moses. He also appeared as the captain of the heavenly (24:04) host to Joshua, where once again, when Joshua met him, he said, Joshua, take off your sandals (24:11) for you're standing on holy ground. Familiar words? Because it's the same being in a different (24:21) form, a different panim, a different presence, a different face.

Look at verse two. He makes (24:31) me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters.

It is said of sheep, (24:39) I'm not a farmer, but I've heard it said that sheep are skittish and they need to be in a state (24:47) of total peace before they can actually lay down. They must be calm and feel secure. (24:55) And it's up to the shepherd to make them feel that way.

The shepherd has to know his flock (25:02) and what it is that unnerves them, such as inclement weather or the scent of a predator, (25:10) being overstressed from travel, improper nutrition or

hydration, etc. God knows how (25:19) much we can bear and he won't push us beyond our limits. And Jesus, who is Yahweh Shalom (25:30) and called the Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9.6, is able to do that.

(25:37) And just as a side, in Isaiah 9.6 shows that the child who was to be born to the virgin (25:46) has all the titles of the Godhead in him. In 9.6 it says he will be called Wonderful, (25:57) Wonderful, Holy Spirit. He will be called Counselor, Holy Spirit.

He will be called (26:06) Everlasting Father, Mighty God, El Shaddai, Prince of Peace. So it's always been Jesus (26:23) dealing with his sheep, with his people, always guiding and leading us from the garden (26:33) up until present. And in Philippians chapter 4, Paul tells us when you follow God's remedy (26:46) to rid yourself of anxiety, following what's written in the fourth chapter of Philippians, (26:57) anxiety is the absence of peace.

It says that you will not only have the peace of God (27:04) that surpasses understanding, but the God of that peace will be with you. (27:13) And then you will be able to lie down and take rest. Verse 3, he restores my soul, (27:22) he guides me in paths of righteousness for his namesake.

Jesus is Yahweh-Rapha, (27:33) which is Jesus the healer and restorer. David writes in Psalm 119.50, (27:42) this is my comfort in my affliction, for your word has revived me. (27:50) God is a comforter.

And just by reading Psalm 23, you can feel those words comfort your soul. (28:00) And those are the words of our God. Paul has felt God's comforting hand as well.

(28:08) In 2 Corinthians 1, 3-5, Paul says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (28:18) the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, (28:25) that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction through the comfort with which we (28:32) ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ [abound] to us, even so (28:39) our comfort also abounds through Christ. Jesus' words in Matthew 11-28 say, (28:48) come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(28:55) That sounds an awful lot like what the angel of the Lord said to Moses, where in Exodus 33-14, (29:04) he says, my presence will go with you and you will find rest. God cares for us and has always (29:14) cared for us. Those who take him on as their God, as their all in all, to become his people, (29:26) and he's always given his people rest.

And one more example of this great peace and rest (29:39) is Psalm 23 says, we can have, or God will give us. And that's when the angel of the Lord, (29:46) the angel of Yahweh, appeared to Gideon to commission him to lead Israel. During the period (29:57) of judges, men were selected, and even a woman on occasion, were selected to lead the people.

(30:06) And in Judges 6-22-24 it says, now Gideon perceived that he was the angel of Yahweh. (30:15) So Gideon said, Ahah, so Yahweh, Elohim, for I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face. (30:23) Then Yahweh said to him, peace be with you, do not fear, you shall not die.

So Gideon built an (30:31) altar there to Yahweh and called on it and named it, Yahweh is peace, Yahweh shalom. (30:43) God gives us peace, restoration, comfort, and healing. And he is also Yahweh Tsedeq, (30:52) and that means righteousness.

He's the Lord of righteousness, and he guides us in paths (31:01) of righteousness. When we as

sheep follow our good shepherd's path, we're following the way (31:09) of righteousness. When we follow his teachings and conform to his will and be transformed into (31:18) his image, we become little Christ's, Christians.

And the king of righteousness (31:25) shares his own righteousness for [us] who don't have any of our own. And he's always with us. (31:36) So right now we're halfway through this psalm, come back this evening and hear the last three (31:42) verses.

So I'm going to offer the invitation. If you need Yahweh shalom to restore you, (31:51) now is the time. This is the invitation. (31:54)