

AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF PSALM 23

A Paper

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AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF PSALM 23

Introduction

The presence of the Lord as shepherd is existent throughout the Holy Scriptures.¹ Whether in description of the principal duty of seeing that animals had enough food and water (Psalm 23), guarding the sheep (Amos 3:12), or simply caring for the sheep as Jacob did (Genesis 30:40), the role of shepherd ensures every aspect of a sheep's life is taken care of. The purpose of this paper is to provide an exposition of Psalm 23 in order to provide sufficient evidence for arriving at an understanding that proves the LORD is the only need in a person's life due to his role as shepherd.

This paper will be divided into two main sections. In the first section of this paper, the historical and literary background of Psalm 23 will be discussed. In the second section of this paper, an exegesis of David's poetical writing of Psalm 23 will be attempted along with a word study of $\text{Y} [\dot{\text{i}}^{\text{a}} \text{r} \text{O} \div$ (shepherd) within the exegesis of the first verse.

Background

Historical Background

This assessment of the historical background of Psalm 23 will include two paragraphs pertaining to the authorship of Psalm 23 as well as an informative paragraph

in relation to the provenance of this chapter. Also, a brief explanation concerning the setting this was written in will give a perspective of the background of the text from an historical perspective.

While further detail of the beginning portion of verse 1 will be examined in the exegetical portion of this paper, the second word of verse 1 pertains specifically to the authorship of this chapter. The word is $\text{דָּוִד} + \text{ל}$. . . The latter portion of the word means “David.”² The former portion of the word, ל , causes some debate regarding the authorship of Psalm 23 and other Psalms.³

While fundamental arguments⁴ such as the ל argument are present, there is an answer for this type of argument: While the possibility is existent to read ל as denoting subject or style, the evidence strongly supports taking it as denoting authorship (“by David”).⁵ Tradition has identified specifically Psalm 23 as being authored by David.⁶

¹Further proof of this will be explicated throughout the word study of יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ in verse 1.

²Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, trans. M. E. J. Richardson [HALOT] (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2001), s.v. “ דָּוִד ”

³The preposition ל preceding דָּוִד may be translated as “by,” “of,” “about,” or “for,” דָּוִד according to Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 215.

⁴Ibid. The other two fundamental arguments against Davidic authorship of certain Psalms include those of suspecting the authorship titles are “late additions,” and the “rigid conception of the development of the Hebrew religion.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Clifton J. Allen, *Esther-Psalms*, The Broadman Bible Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), 216.

The provenance of Psalm 23 may be estimated to have been written in the wilderness at the time of David's flight from Absalom.⁷ The time of the authorship of Psalm 23 likely took place in the range from the monarchic to the Maccabean periods.⁸ While both the location and the time of the origination of Psalm 23 may be estimated, the setting is expounded upon within the chapter.

The setting may be determined by a crisis in the background, as the first four verses can attest.⁹ Although we may not determine what the exact nature of the problem is, the existence of a problem is evident specifically in verse 4. The last two verses infer the presence of a cultic setting, possibly a meal, which reminisces of the trouble and praises God for his trustworthiness in the midst of difficulty.¹⁰

Literary Background

This assessment of the literary background will include two paragraphs pertaining to the presence of Psalm 23 as a poem, and more specifically as a thanksgiving hymn. Also, a brief explanation concerning the happenings in the previous and following chapters' events will give a perspective of the background of the text from a literary perspective.

⁷Jack R. Lundbom, "Psalm 23: Song of Passage," *Interpretation* 40, no. 1 (1986): 6.

⁸Ron Tappy, "Psalm 23: Symbolism and Structure," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (April 1995): 255.

⁹W. H. Bellinger, *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1990), 101.

¹⁰*Ibid.* Bellinger continues on with how the cultic setting shifts from an individual crisis to a more general setting that urges others in trusting $\text{hw} " \text{ïhy} >$.

Of the nine genres of writings within the Bible,¹¹ the genre which Psalms fits within is the poetical genre.¹² More specifically, Psalm 23 is in the first of the five Psalm books, and all of the Psalms in this particular book center on David, and continually ask for protection from God in light of his enemies.¹³

Psalm 23 is considered a thanksgiving hymn and thanks God for his “beneficent protection” and expresses the faith David had in God’s loving care.¹⁴ The existence of Psalm 23 as a thanksgiving hymn and its overall impact in poetical literary study allows one to indicate the compatibility of Psalm 23 with an exilic application.¹⁵ Proper hermeneutics requires a study of both the preceding and following verses or chapters in order to more fully examine the situations being discussed in the particular passage of study.¹⁶ Scholars consider Psalm 23 to be one of “confidence and trust.”¹⁷ The preceding chapter is one in which the reader sees the *cross*, in Psalm 23 the *crook* is

¹¹Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), respectively 185, 200, 222, 242, 258, 275, 291, 312, 323. These nine genres include: Old Testament Law, Narrative, Poetry, Wisdom, Prophecy, Apocalyptic, Parable, Epistle, and the Old Testament in the New Testament

¹²J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua-Psalms*, Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, vol. 2 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 659.

¹³Osborne, 223.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁵Mark S. Smith, “Setting and Rhetoric in Psalm 23,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41, (June 1988): 62.

¹⁶Siegfried S. Schatzmann, interview by author, April 2, 2007, Scarborough Hall, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX.

¹⁷Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant L. Lovejoy, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpretive Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 288.

seen, and Psalm 24 shows the *crown*.¹⁸ Psalm 22 concludes by becoming perfectly associated with the “One Son of God, that is almost impossible to read any other way.”¹⁹ Psalm 24, on the other hand, is a liturgical hymn²⁰ which begins by speaking of the sovereignty of $\text{hw} " \dot{\text{i}}\text{hy} >$ over all the earth.²¹

The historical background of Psalm 23 from both the historical and the literary perspectives allow one to more fully comprehend the occurrences within Psalm 23. The most detailed way to fully comprehend Psalm 23 is to analyze it exegetically.

Exegesis

The objective of this section of the paper is to provide an exegetical analysis of Psalm 23, which will ultimately provide sufficient evidence for arriving at an understanding that proves the LORD is the only need in a person’s life due to his role as shepherd. This section of the paper will analyze each verse individually with the purpose of fulfilling the aforementioned purpose of the paper. Each verse will have a principle role analysis followed by exegesis.

In the exegetical process there will be a detailed word study on the word $\text{y} [\dot{\text{i}}^{\text{a}} \text{r} \text{O} \div$ located in verse 1. This word plays a vital role in the overall chapter

¹⁸McGee, 711. McGee argues for the presence of a “trptych of Psalms that belong together.”

¹⁹G. Campbell Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1947), 47.

²⁰Robert L. Alden, *Psalms: Songs of Devotion*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary, vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 61.

²¹Steven Lawson, *Psalms 1-75*, Holman Old Testament Commentary, vol. 11 ed. Max Anders (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2003), 134.

and will be broken apart in detail in order to more fully understand what David was seeking to communicate in this chapter.

The principle role of verse 1 within Psalm 23 is to introduce the reader to David followed by the role of the LORD in his life. This verse serves as a basic thesis for the following five verses where each of the following five verses direct back to the point made by David in verse 1.

Verse 1 begins by introducing the reader to David as the text says, “dwl+d" l . rAmōz>mi” (A Psalm by David).²² As was mentioned in the historical background portion of this paper, the preposition l plays a significant role in determining authorship of this chapter due to its multiple possibilities of meaning.

After the initial introduction, David proceeded in his writing to introduce the reader to what role the LORD played in his life by saying, “y [i^a ro÷ hw" ihy>” (The LORD is my shepherd). After David’s introduction of himself he immediately introduced his LORD with a possessive word (y [i^a ro÷) which must be analyzed in detail to more fully understand what David was seeking to communicate throughout the rest of this chapter.

y [i^a ro÷ in the original text is a verb which is qal, participle, masculine, singular construct chain; along with a first person, common, singular

²²The author’s translation found in Appendix 6 is used throughout unless otherwise noted.

homonym from the lexical form $\text{h} [\text{r}]$ meaning “shepherd.”²³ The syntax of this word within its particular context reveals to the reader it is a predicate participle; this means it may be translated as “is my shepherd.”²⁴ $\text{y} [\text{i}^{\text{a}} \text{r} \text{o} \div]$ also denotes faithfulness, security, and companion in the qal usage.²⁵

Though God is seldom called a shepherd, the concept was common and remained an idiom of popular choice throughout the history of Israel.²⁶ The usage of this word in verse 1 speaks of the loyalty of God along with his devotion to the sheep he looks after.²⁷

$\text{y} [\text{i}^{\text{a}} \text{r} \text{o} \div]$ is used in the Bible in the participial form of as “shepherd” occurring 63 times.²⁸ In the past, the “shepherd” in the Hebrew tradition draws upon one of the oldest epithets of God in the Hebrew tradition beginning in Genesis 49:24.²⁹ These many uses of $\text{y} [\text{i}^{\text{a}} \text{r} \text{o} \div]$ parallel in the future, in the New Testament, with its

²³Vol. 2, [HALOT], s.v. “ $\text{h} [\text{r}]$ ”

²⁴Allen P. Ross, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 127.

²⁵Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, [BDB] (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “ $\text{h} [\text{r}]$ ”

²⁶Jack W. Vancil, “Shepherd,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5, ed. David Noel Freedman [ABD] (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1189.

²⁷Ibid. It should be noted of the less likely allusion, but still possible of this word being used to speak of the exiled community and is a symbolic expression of their Palestinian return.

²⁸R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2185.

²⁹Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, in vol. 19 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A.

Greek counterpart (ποιμνήν) in the New Testament. Jesus, in John 10:11a said, “Ἐγώ, εἰμὶ ὁ ποιμνήν ὁ καλὸς” (I am the good shepherd). David, who was a shepherd before he became the King of Israel, was a “prototype of God’s shepherd.”³⁰

In the modern usage of the word, “shepherd” is often paralleled with a description of a pastor as the leader of a church due to the qualifications explicated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.³¹ The term “shepherd” has been used since Paul first letter to Timothy to describe the office of the pastor.

The presence of David’s referral to the LORD as his ὕψιστος is a key component to proving throughout the rest of the chapter that the Lord’s role as shepherd is the only need a person has in their life. The importance of this word is evident beginning with the concluding clause in verse 1.

Verse 1 concludes by David saying, “οὐκ ἔλλοιπον” (I will not lack). ἡ ἐπιμέλειά σου ἡ ἐπιμελεία σου was conceived as taking the same patient and attentive care of his followers as the shepherd of his flock and because of this the shepherd provided for all

Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 206.

³⁰Jesus saw himself as embodying the characteristics and expectations attached to this salvation-historical biblical figure of the shepherd as is noted in Andreas J. Kostenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 124.

³¹John R. Bisagno, *Letters to Timothy: A Handbook for Pastors*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 9.

wants.³² רָס ") x . a , is not in a future tense, but in the present; as in a habitual experience.³³ This portion of verse 1 expresses that due to David's LORD being his shepherd, he needed nothing else in life because the Lord provided everything he needed.

Verse 1 introduced the reader to David; and was followed by the role of the LORD in his life. The thesis of David's LORD being his shepherd, and his continual presence of not lacking serves the following five verses which direct back to the point made by David in verse 1.

Verse 2 serves a principle role of expressing how David's LORD causes rest. The verse begins with David saying, "יְנַיֵּץ עֵבֶר יְבִירָהּ: אֵבֶן, דָּבָר
תֵּאֲנִי בִּי" (He makes me lie down in grass).

As the presence of the LORD as shepherd is present, it is then evident that followers of the LORD are sheep. A unique characteristic about sheep is that because of their makeup it is nearly impossible for them to be made to lie down unless four requirements are met: free of all fear, free from friction with others of their kind, free from pests, and free from hunger.³⁴ As the conclusion of verse 1 stated "I will not lack," verse 2 provides an illustration of this as every requirement needed to be met in order to be taken care of is met by the shepherd.

³²Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, in vol. 10 of *The International Critical Commentary*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark International, 1907), 208.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 35.

Not only did the LORD cause David's action of being made to lie down in the grass, but the latter portion of this verse says, "ynlE)h]n:y> tAxânUm. ymeĔ-l [;" (he leads me upon resting waters). As the former portion of verse 2 expresses how the LORD provides rest when it is needed, the latter portion of the verse expresses the LORD always providing a *place* of rest when needed.³⁵ This location to rest was not just any place to lie down, but a calm and gentle place, as to suggest the idea of repose; this denotes the calmness of the soul when salvation flows in a gently running stream as all want is taken away.³⁶

A person needs nothing else in life besides the LORD, and it is evident in verse 2 as the LORD provided rest and a location to rest for David. The rest received in verse 2 allowed David to continue on in verse 3.

The principle role of verse 3 is for the Lord to give direction to David. This is expressed at the beginning of the verse when David said, "bbe_Avy> yviîp.n:" (he restores³⁷ my soul). As sheep's appetites were satisfied with ample grass and water, in verse 3 the restoration of the sheep's soul took place because of the presence of the LORD as shepherd.³⁸

³⁵H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 211.

³⁶Albert Barnes, *Psalms*, in vol. 1 of *Notes on the Old Testament: Explanatory and Practical*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), 211.

³⁷Alden, 60. Alden explains how what is often translated as "restores" may also be translated as "converts" which would load the Psalm with additional theological meaning.

³⁸Ibid.

David telling of the shepherd restoring his soul signifies the bringing back of the flown away soul, and the shepherd therefore imparts new life by causing it, amidst dryness and heat of temptation and trouble, he imparts new life which refreshes and strengthens the sheep.³⁹

The latter portion of verse 3 says, “Am*v . ! [i m i ä l . qd<c , © ÷ - y l e G > [. m i b . y n I x E i n > y :) ” (He leads me in tracks of righteousness for the sake of his name.). This portion of verse three parallels it with verse 2 where David spoke of the shepherd as leading him beside still waters, and now the shepherd is shown as a leader once again.⁴⁰

“For the sake of his name” is a high point in this chapter as it also associates with the same expression used in Psalm 106:8 in the context of the deliverance from Egypt.⁴¹ The shepherd gives his sheep rest and guidance in order to bring glory to his name. The Lord’s role as shepherd reveals the Lord’s to be followed and for his reputation as provider and leader to be kept intact.⁴² The specific role of the shepherd as the giver of guidance is established in verse 3, and it also assists in the development of the belief of the shepherd as the only need in a person’s life.

Verse 4 serves the principle role of the shepherd providing protection. This is

³⁹C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin [COT] (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 330.

⁴⁰Alden, 60.

⁴¹WBC, 207.

⁴²Keller, 80.

evident in the opening portion of the verse which says, “ $\tau w < m' \ddagger l . c ;$

$aygE\acute{a}B . \%le'ae-yKi (\sim G : \ddot{U}$ ” (Moreover that I walk through the valley of deepest darkness).

The hill country of Judah was broken up by “narrow and precipitous ravines” which were difficult to walk through as opposed to finding an easily walked path over the hills.⁴³ As it was difficult to navigate throughout the deep valley of darkness, the Lord, as shepherd, once again expresses through David how the Lord is all a person needs.

David went on to say in verse 4 that, “ $y\grave{d}I_M' [i \ hT' \hat{i}a ; -$
 $yKi [r " ^a \ ar " \hat{U}yai \ll -al$ ” (I shall fear no evil, because you are with me). Despite having walked through the valley of deep darkness, David felt comfortable and safe because of his shepherd.

Even in the danger of a dark valley, the Lord was present to guard and guide his flock, dispelling all fear and evil as he led them to tracks of righteousness as verse 3 teaches.⁴⁴

David concluded verse 4 by saying, “ $ynImU) x] n :) y >$
 $hM'he\grave{a} \ ^T , ^an > [; v . miW \div \ ^\grave{i}j . b . vi$ ” (your rod and your

⁴³Briggs, 209. The desire to depart from the figure of speech too soon is likely responsible for the pointing of the “death shade” as if it implied the peril of death.

⁴⁴Lawson, 127.

staff, they give me comfort). The imagery of this verse is strengthened with the description of the shepherd's rod and staff.

The rod of the shepherd was usually two feet long, and defended the flock from wild bears or lions, as well as serving as a guiding stick.⁴⁵ The staff, on the other hand, served its role as being hooked at the end in order to pry sheep loose from thickets.⁴⁶

The staff was a support in walking while the rod was a source for giving blows.⁴⁷ These two tools for a shepherd were used in order for comfort to be given; which is the last clause of verse 4.

Verse 4, in its principle role of the shepherd providing protection, fulfills its role by David explaining despite having to walk through the valley of deep darkness, fear of evil is taken away because of the protection of the shepherd. Verse 4, in its explication of the shepherd as protector, assists in the development of the theory of the shepherd being all a person needs.

The principle role of verse 5 is one which turns the thought to the food and sustenance the shepherd provides. This is shown as the beginning of the verse says,

“yr" _r>co dg<n<i !x' a l.vu yn: "p' l.

%roî []T;” (You set a table before me in the face of my hostilities).

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Briggs, 209.

It may have been the practices in ancient times for the winter to feast in front of the starving prisoners of war.⁴⁸ Despite facing hostility, the Lord provides food in order for his sheep to be nurtured.

Verse 5 continues to say, “yvi^a aro÷ !m, V, îb;” (You anoint my head with oil). Prior to the banquet of thanksgiving the traditional anointing ceremony of preparation had taken place.⁴⁹ This was a customary tradition to place scented grease or oil on an honoured guest’s head before going into the banquet room.⁵⁰ This portion of verse 5 leads into the last portion of the verse.

The last portion of verse 5 says, “hy")w" r> ysi îAK” (my cup overflows). This “cup” is one of both body and spirit.⁵¹ This continues in the role of this verse as providing food and sustenance.

Verse 5 speaks of how not only are the sheep’s wants provided for, but the shepherd has already given indication of his feelings toward the sheep by anointing his head with oil. The Lord, as shepherd, is the only need in a person’s life.

Verse 6, the concluding verse in this chapter, serves a primary role as a parenthetical summary. The beginning of the verse says, “yY" +x ;

⁴⁸Alden, 60. Judges 1:7 is an example of this, “And Adoni-bezek said, ‘Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me.’ And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.”

⁴⁹WBC, 208.

⁵⁰Briggs, 210.

⁵¹Leupold, 214.

ymeäy>-lK' ynIWpD>r>yIâ ds,x,äw" bAjÜ

%a:Ü" (Surely goodness and kindness shall pursue me all the time of my life).

This verse is stated by David as a result of the previous verses within the chapter.⁵² Through all the difficult times, as well all the times of enjoying rest, direction, protection, and food, goodness and kindness will pursue David as a follower of the shepherd the rest of his life.

The verse concludes by saying, "~ymi(y" %r<aoâl.

hw"©hy>÷-tybeB. yTiîb.v;w>" (and I will dwell in the house

of the Lord forever). These words from David are more than simply a picture, but a truth for the future as God has a "house" for all believers in eternity.⁵³ The thanksgiving of verse 6 was part of a confident rejoicing not only in the present moment, but in the eternal home he will have in the future.⁵⁴

Verse 6 expresses a summary of David, as a sheep, following his Lord, the shepherd. This verse concludes the overall principle taught in Psalm 23 of the Lord being the only need in a person's life.

⁵²Barnes, 213. The effect of God's merciful dealings with him had been to lead his mind to the assurance that God would always be his shepherd and friend.

⁵³Alden, 60-61. Jesus spoke of this in John 14:2 when he said, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

⁵⁴WBC, 208.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to provide an exposition of Psalm 23 in order to provide sufficient evidence for arriving at an understanding that proves the LORD is the only need in a person's life due to his role as shepherd. In verse 1, David introduces the reader to the LORD of his life. In verse 2, David spoke of the rest the shepherd allows the sheep to enjoy. In verse 3, David continues from verse 2 to enjoy a place to rest while receiving direction from the Lord. In verse 4, David expressed his feelings of protection by the shepherd. Verse 5 speaks of David receiving food and nourishment from the Lord. Finally, in verse 6, this chapter concludes with a statement made by David that consists of two statements: "goodness and kindness shall pursue me all the time of my life," and "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

It has been argued that Psalm 23 is one of the best –known and best-loved texts of the entire Bible.⁵⁵ In the twenty-first century Christian context of Bible study, this chapter is important to grasp and implement in people's lives today.

David used this verse to teach of the truth of the Lord as his shepherd and how every aspect of his life was impacted by him. Every need in the life of David was expressed to have been met through the verses of Psalm 23. If all a person had was their Lord, rest, a place to rest, direction, protection, nourishment, followed by goodness and kindness. David had the Lord, and the Lord is all he needed.

⁵⁵Martin J. Steussy, *Psalms*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 99.

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APPENDIX 1

INSPECTIONAL READING

Chapter 19 Use of words

Chapters 20-21 Lord remembers victories

Chapters 22-24 Shepherd

Chapters 25-26 Praise and Thankfulness

Chapter 27 Dwell with the Lord

Chapter 28 Cry to the Lord

Chapter 29 The voice of the Lord

Chapter 30 Exalt the Lord

APPENDIX 2

SENTENCE FLOW DIAGRAM

A Psalm
by David

The LORD is
my shepherd
I will not lack
He makes me lie down
in grass
He leads me
upon resting waters
He restores
my soul
He leads me
in tracks of righteousness
for the sake of his name.
Moreover that I walk
through the valley of deepest darkness
I shall fear no evil
because you are with me
your rod
and
your staff
they give me comfort
You set a table
before me
in the face of my hostilities
you anoint my head
with oil
my cup overflows
Surely
goodness
and
kindness shall pursue
me
all the time
of
my life
and
I will dwell
in the house
of
the Lord forever

APPENDIX 3

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE

Title: Who is your neighbor?

I. The Lord as Shepherd (v. 1)

a) The role of the Lord

b) Ill: Can you think of a time when the minimum standard was appealing. This type of thinking will cause you to miss the point. (e.g. The Youth group is asked to rake leaves for the elderly widows in the church. One student asks, “Who is considered elderly?”)

c) App: While this lawyer missed the point, don’t follow in his footsteps. The question shouldn’t be: who is my neighbor, but whose neighbor am I?

II. The piercing parable spoken by Jesus.

a) Exp: The principle of the story is that compassion should always be coupled with acts of compassion. The most unexpected of the three men showed love to the man in need, for no reason other than compassion! The man in need was by definition a neighbor.

i- A certain man comes across unfortunate circumstances... an innocent victim of society.

ii- The religious priest see’s the man in need and passes by on the opposite side of the street!

iii- The righteous Levite see’s the man in need and passes by on the other side of the street! Why would these two guys, who have been associated with the religious ceremonies, pass by the man in need?

b) Ill: When is the last time you were the priest or the Levite? What about the parent at your child’s school who finds out they have cancer, and they don’t have insurance?

iv- A “dirty,” hated Samaritan sees the man in need and feels compassion which leads to a reaction comprised of action...

b) Ill: The compassionate acts of the Samaritan (vs.34-35). The time, energy, and resources that he spent for a man he doesn’t know. His charity extends until the man is back on his feet. He expects nothing in return. Notice the dispensation of the Samaritan’s heart (love).

v- The “change of direction” question by Jesus.

i) Which of these three became a neighbor to the man in need?

c) App: This parable reveals some important truths which deserve application. 1) Our neighbor is anyone we see that is in need. 2) We are to show compassion toward them regardless of race, ethnicity, etc. 3) we should be willing to go above and beyond what would be expected of us. 4) Our motives should be pure, not doing in order to receive.

III. The painstaking answer. (vs. 37a)

1- The “one” who showed compassion

a) Exp: The Samaritan who showed compassion to a person in need became a neighbor.

b) Ill: Sometimes the truth can be hard to swallow and even life changing. Universal “neighborism” had perhaps just been preached for the first time! The story of Jesus, and His compassion lavishly poured out on us.

c) App: The answer to this question is paramount. The one who shows compassion is the neighbor who loves his neighbor as himself. Your neighbor is anyone you see who is in need and in order to fulfill the commandment you are mandated to show compassion. We have been treated like this and are now expected to treat other future neighbors in the same manner.

IV. The double mandate given by Jesus!

1- Jesus say Go and YOU Do likewise. (vs. 37b)

a) Exp: We are commanded by Christ to continuously go and do as the Samaritan did: show compassion to neighbors whom we see in need.

b) Ill: A Korean student who has expressed that he is experiencing difficulties in expository preaching lab because of his immature English. Will you help that brother?

c) App: The people whom we come into contact with each day that are in need are waiting for you to become their neighbor. Love them by showing them compassion!

