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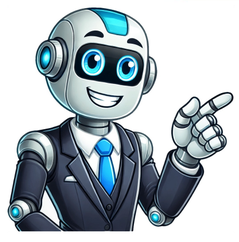

This article is based on teaching by Pastor Colin Smith, Senior Pastor of The Orchard from his series The Lord Is My Shepherd. Follow his teaching on YouTube, the Open the Bible app or by searching Open the Bible in your favorite podcast app. Psalm 23 deals with the realities of life. When you face difficult decisions, this psalm is for you. When you are losing heart, this psalm is for you. When you face enemies, this psalm is for you. When you have seen the face of evil, this psalm is for you. And since you will one day walk through the valley of death, this psalm is for you. You need a Shepherd. Below is a line-by-line summary for this beloved Psalm, explaining the meaning of some of the most comforting words ever written, and pointing you to our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ (John 10:11,14). God has used Psalm 23 to encourage His people for more than 3,000 years. May He use these familiar words to bring strength, hope, comfort, and courage to you today. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23 is about the Lord. Every line is about who He is and what He does. It is also about us. Every line is about us and about what is ours when we belong to the Lord. The relationship between a shepherd and his sheep is one of ownership. The shepherd owns the flock. When we say, The Lord is my shepherd, we are saying, The Lord owns me. This is true of you if you are a Christian. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price. The Lord Jesus purchased you at the cost of laying down His life. When we are in the flock of God, the Shepherd owns us. What will the Shepherd do for the flock that He owns? Psalm 23 gives us five marvelous answers to this question: He leads us, He restores us, He protects us, He provides for us, and He loves us. When the Lord is your Shepherd, you have all that you need. Go deeper on Psalm 23:1 in the sermon He Owns Me or the article Wholly Owned by the Good Shepherd. He makes me lie down in green pastures.He leads me beside still waters. David states this as a fact. He leads you. There is not something you have to do in order to make this happen. If you are in the flock of God, this is true of you. This is what He does for you. Where does He lead us? First, He leads us into rest. Green pastures provide grazing for the sheep. He makes me lie down in green pastures. And He leads me beside still waters. The main point here is not feeding or drinking, but resting. Maybe you find it hard to rest. There is a problem you need to solve, an overwhelming challenge you face, or some fear you are battling. You feel like you cant rest until you have the answer. But you can lie down and rest when you know the Shepherd is near. Go deeper on Psalm 23:2 in the sermon He Leads Me or in the article The Good Shepherd Leads Us Into Rest. He restores my soul.He leads me in paths of righteousness for his names sake The first place God leads us is into rest. The second place He leads us is into righteousness. There is an order hereas we find rest, we have the strength we need to walk on the right path. There will be times when the path seems impossible, or when you find it hard to see God, or when His direction comes through other people that He has placed in your life, but the Shepherd will always lead you on the right path. The Shepherd restores us when we wander away. He restores us when we falter. Are you experiencing injustice, conflict, disappointment, suffering, or great demands? God will restore you in a unique and individual way, through a fresh encounter with Himself. Go deeper on Psalm 23:3 in the sermon He Restores Me or the article The Good Shepherd Leads Us On Right Paths. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Death is not the only valley that casts its shadow over us. Dying is the last valley. But there are other valleys we walk through along the way. Maybe you are walking through the dark valley of failure, illness, or loneliness. If you are a Christian today, God is with you in the darkness as much as in the light. Not only is He with you, but He will guard you from evil. The rod was a club carried by the shepherd to fend off wild animals. The staff is the shepherds crook that he uses to lift the lambs into his arms. So, the rod and staff speak of the strength and love of the Good Shepherd. However dark the valley may be, you do not need to fear because the Lord is with you. No power can snatch you from His hand. Nothing can separate you from His love. Go deeper on Psalm 23:4 in the sermon He Guards Me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. God often uses material things to speak to us about spiritual things, and here God uses three thingsa table, oil, and a cup to communicate how He sustains us. Someone prepares a meal for you, and when it is done you come to the table. You sit down, and as you eat, your strength is renewed. The table reminds us that God sustains by giving us new strength. Oil was used in the Old Testament to commission prophets, priests, and kings. They were anointed with oil because God had given them a particular assignment. Oil reminds us that God sustains by giving us new purpose. There is a version of Christianity that says, Life stinks, but heaven is coming. You have to endure, and if you do, youll be blessed in the end. But that is not what David is saying here. He says, My cup overflows! Jesus said the same thing: In this world you will have trouble (John 16:33). But He also said, These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full (John 15:11). The cup reminds us that God sustains by giving us new joy. Go deeper on Psalm 23:5 in the sermon He Sustains Me and the article Three Ways Our Good Shepherd Sustains Us. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord Forever. Think of a shepherd walking in front of his sheep. The sheep follow him, and behind them are two sheep dogs named Goodness and Mercy, chasing the stragglers and keeping them close to the shepherd. The Good Shepherd keeps you close to Himself through His goodness and mercy always chasing after you. Everything good in your life comes from the hand of God, so thank Him for it. Goodness is God giving us what we dont deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve. This is good news, because if God chased after us in justice, we would all be in trouble. If God was chasing after you with judgment and condemnation, of course you would run. But why would you run when you are being chased by goodness and mercy? When David looks beyond the days of his life in this world he sees what comes after: the joy of eternity in the immediate presence of the Lord. Dwelling with the Lord will be incomparably better than the greatest joys any of us have known in this life. Go deeper on Psalm 23:6 in the sermon He Loves Me. Recommended Article: Why You Should Memorize Psalm 23 by Kevin Halloran Jesus is the Good Shepherd who fulfills Psalm 23. When He came into the world, He said, I am the good shepherd (John 10:11). Yes, but why should you trust Him? Why should you follow Him? Jesus went on to explain, The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turnedevery oneto his own way (Isaiah 53:6). Because of our rebellion, the wrath of God was hanging over us. Hell was coming to us. But Jesus endured all that hell is on the cross, so that we would never know what it is like. He willingly saved us from hell at the cost of His own life. Jesus is the Good Shepherd because He died to rescue the sheep, and because He lives to care for the sheep. Jesus care involves knowledge and commitment. Jesus knows you completely! You may be a mystery to yourself, but you are not a mystery to Him. And Jesus is committed to you. The Good Shepherd will never leave His sheep. If Jesus is your shepherd now, He will be your shepherd forever. The greatest blessing you can know in life is to be wholly owned by Jesus, the Son of God. This Psalm happens to be one of the most memorized and remains an all-time favorite chapter of the Bible in the Old Testament. The writer paints an enticing picture of who God is to him and uses metaphor to relate his experiences while walking with God. Let us look at this beautiful chapter in the Bible,Psalm 23 meaning and significance. This post contains affiliate links. See myfull disclosurefor more details. Psalm 23 begins with a powerful statement of declaration by David about who God is to him. He begins Psalm 23 with this sentence,The Lord is my Shepherd. And then goes on to describe God as a guide, provider, sustainer, and protector. Who better than King David to describe hisrelationship with Godusing a shepherd and his sheep? He was the teenage boy who was called on from tending sheep and anointed king before his family. This psalm of David shows that he did not just tend sheep, but in that moment and season of his life, he could see and feel the hand of God present in his life. Hence, he could clearly talk about his relationship and experience with God using the metaphor of a shepherd and his sheep. Psalm 23 explained beautifully gives a picture of an intimate relationship with a heavenly father who knows and cares about you. David calls God a shepherd and declares that because God is his shepherd, hence he shall not lack any good thing. God is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Some of the keywords used in this Psalm include green pastures, restore, still waters, cup, overflow, paths of righteousness, namesake, valley of the shadow of death, table, comfort, thy rod and thy staff, goodness, right paths, and mercy. These words are rich in their meaning as they speak of peace, comfort, security, guidance, and Gods unfailing love. It is a beautiful Psalm that paints a beautiful picture of life and how God leads us through our journey if we can learn to walk closely with him. Jesus Christ is called the good shepherd and we as Gods children are the sheep of his pasture. The sheep often goes where the shepherd leads. The sheep rests in the assurance that his shepherd is always watching and looking out for it. Also, Psalm 23 reveals the various parts of God to us his children. It shows us how God is a sustainer, a guide, a leader, a provider, the ever-present one, and an amazing host who has prepared a table of abundance before us to feast on. As a child of God this Psalm is a great source of comfort and hope to many in trying times, difficult seasons of life, and even in the face of death. Get the Monthly Bible Reading Plan The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside quiet waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names 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. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.Psalm 23 KJV Psalm 23 begins with the sentence above. King David boldly declares who God is to him as he speaks of his relationship with God borne out of personal knowledge and his experiences with God using a shepherd and his sheep. God had proven to be a shepherd of Israel and lead them towards good things. This gave him the confidence to boldly declare those words. Is your relationship with God intimate enough for you to boldly call him your Shepherd? The Hebrew word for shepherd means, to be a shepherd, to care for flocks, graze; by extension: to rule, with a focus on care and concern. David did not call God a deliverer or a king, he was specific with the word Shepherd. This is because he had come to understand that the Shepherd was everything to the sheep. He also knew that God would care for him just like a shepherd will care for his sheep. Are you resting in Gods care? One of the high points of your relationship with God is when you come to the full knowledge of your identity in God. David knew this because he had come to see God as a personal shepherd to him. The shepherd knows each sheep by name and the sheep knows his shepherds voice. With this assurance comes faith to declare boldly your identity in God. The bible calls us the sheep of his pasture. Today, you too can boldly declare that the Lord is my Shepherd. Psalm 23:1-3 ESV TheLordis myshepherd; I shall notwant. He makes me lie down in greenpastures. He leads me beside still waters. Herestores my soul. Heleads me inpaths of righteousness for hisnames sake. These Bible verses show us that intimacy with God births confidence in us as his children. David said I shall not want because God is my Shepherd and will always meet my needs. This means that no matter how things may look, I will rest in this truth I will lack nothing and all my needs will be met because God will provide what I need when I need it. This verse also talks about rest and comfort. It paints a beautiful picture of serenity, peace, and the security that comes with trusting in God. David said he makes me to lie down in green pastures meaning that it is God that gives rest. God knows how to give his children the rest they need to calm their fears and anxiety. He is a God who cares about the state of our well-being spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. And that is why, he will lead you beside still waters to give peace and comfort amid lifes chaos. Whenever a sheep strays, the shepherd finds and restores him back to the flock. Restoration speaks of refreshing and renewal. It can also mean bringing back to repentance or rescuing from a lost state. David knew that God would restore his soul from a broken and weary state. This verse also shows God as a guide who leads us through life on paths that honor his name and bring glory to him. This makes you know that you are not alone, even when you dont feel like it. God is right by your side walking you through life. Psalm 23:4 Even though Iwalk through the valley ofthe shadow of death, I willfear no evil, foryou are with me, yourrod, and your staff, they comfort me. David had built his confidence so much in God as a shepherd boy tending his fathers sheep. We see this come to play as he stood before Goliath. He was fearless knowing that God was with him, and his victory was assured. So, even when we walk through the darkest valley of life and death is staring us in the face, we are not afraid knowing that God is with us and will shield and protect us from danger and evil. The presence of the shepherd eliminated any fear of evil for the sheep. The shepherds rod and staff were used to guide and protect the sheep and lead them away from potential predators. David rested in the comfort that with God as his shepherd, he would walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death victoriously. Psalm 23:5-6 ESV Youprepare a table before me inthe presence of my enemies; youanoint my head with oil; mycup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of theLord forever. Imagine you are invited to a magnificent banquet with a huge table filled with all kinds of food and drinks to feast on. David said God prepares a table for me in the presence of my enemies. This speaks of blessings and abundance that are visible for all to see. The enemy cannot stop the blessings of God in your life because God has chosen to bless you abundantly right before their watching eyes. God anoints your head with oil speaks of being filled with his presence daily. It talks about renewal and strength in every area of life. Your cup overflows with blessings and abundance from God. This speaks of increase and being a blessing because you have more than enough. David ends this rich Psalm with a picture of the goodness of God and His grace, presence, and favor following him all the days of his life. He declaresSurelymeaning it was his reality and he rested in this truth Gods goodness and mercy were following him through his lifes journey on earth. Psalm 23 ends with these words And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. It is a calming assurance that comes with choosing to abide daily in Gods presence. It is about making a choice to cultivate intimacy with God. For the more we know him, the more we become confident of his love, grace, and blessings. It is in Gods presence that we grow, change, and are transformed forever. Eternal life with God is something we can experience now through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Do your own in-depth Bible study of Psalm 23 with this free Bible study guide. In this Bible study, you will explore the depths of Psalm 23, seeking not only to understand its meaning but also to apply its truths to your life. Psalm 23 is not just talking about David and his relationship with God, it speaks deeply about our personal relationship with God. It is a Psalm that speaks about seasons in our lifes journey and what matters in those seasons. Psalm 23 is so important to us today because it will speak to you in the good and bad times. Here are some reasons why Psalm 23 is so important. Without a personal and deep-rooted relationship with God, you cannot know and understand his ways. David through this 23rd Psalm talks about his personal relationship with God using the metaphor of a shepherd and his sheep. Throughout the chapter, he addresses God by name. He knew God as a provider hence he could confidently declare I will not lack. God wants an intimate relationship with his children. And knowing him can only come when you spend time with him in prayer, worship, and through his word. Our faith in God must not be only when the times are good. The meaning of Psalm 23 starts with a beautiful picture of joy, peace, rest, and abundance. The writer uses words like green pastures, still waters and I shall not want. But then, he quickly switches to phrases likevalley,shadow of death, andfear no evilin the following verses. However, one thing remained throughout the entire chapter: David trusted that God was always with him, and that he was not alone walking through life. He could trust God in the stillness and calmness, and yet still trust him in the valley and chaos. God wants you to trust him at all times in all seasons of life while resting in the assurance that he is always with you. Someone or something will lead us through life. It may be your fears, insecurities, unbelief, and pride. Sometimes, you may even be led by culture, traditions, and the worlds way of doing things. Psalm 23 helps us see God as a father who leads his children on paths of righteousness, progress, and victory. God is not a blind guide; he always leads you on the path of purpose and prosperity. Will you let God take the lead today in the affairs of your life? It is not enough to sing and memorize the words of Psalm 23. It is about knowing and embracing the shepherd whom David spoke about. Jesus is called the good shepherd, and he said my sheep know my voice and a strangers voice they will not follow. When God calls, will you answer? As you walk through life, will you trust God to lead and guide you into the fullness of his purpose for your life? God can be a guide, comforter, helper, and friend to you today. Can you trust him to shepherd you through life? Related Posts and Resources: Ufuoma Fijabi writes onher blogwhere she shares God-inspired articles that focus on motherhood, faith, hope, and spirituality. Her passion is to inspire, encourage, support, and build up faith in the heart of moms in their motherhood journey. She loves learning from peoples stories/experiences and getting lost in the words of a good book. She is wife to an amazing man and mom to two children. She currently lives in Lagos, Nigeria with her family. A Psalm Of David1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.2He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,3he refreshes my soul, He guides me along the right paths for his names sake.4Even 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.5You prepare a table before mein the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil;mycup overflows.6Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lordforever. Psalm 23 is one of the most well-known passages in the Bible and arguably the most famous and beloved Psalm. It has become so popular that we often dont give it a second thought; after all, we already know it. So, the meaning of Psalm 23 and how it applies to our lives is often missed. This passage deserves a closer look. We are going to break down Psalm 23 verse by verse, and I think what you see will encourage you. The 23rd Psalm is found in the Old Testament and was written by David. In it, he reflects on how God has cared for him. This beautiful Psalm is not only famous, but it also contains practical and powerful lessons for us today. To help you better see and understand Psalm 23, we will break down this passage verse by verse. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1) The rest of Psalm 23 follows through with this image, the Lord is my shepherd. The duties of a shepherd were difficult and burdensome. They were charged with caring for an entire flock of sheep, which was no easy task. They would lead the flock back and forth to pastures to feed, protect them from animals and thieves, rescue them from dangers, and keep watch over them day and night to keep them from wandering. To make the job more difficult, sheep arent exactly the smartest animals. They tend to wander and get themselves in sticky situations frequently. It was a demanding and exhausting job. For more about shepherds, check out: Shepherds In Bible Times David knew this life well. He spent much of his youth working as a shepherd. When David says that the Lord is his shepherd, he is picturing God caring for him as he cared for the sheep in his flock. This image is powerful. It shows a God who cares for us, protects us, provides for us, and leads. Just as a good shepherd tends to their flock, God cares for His people. Its a picture that is used throughout the Bible to describe how God cares for His people. (Isaiah 40:11, Isaiah 44:28, Jeremiah 25:34, Jeremiah 25:35, Nahum 3:18, John 10:11, John 10:14, Hebrews 13:20, 1Peter 2:25, Peter 5:4) The meaning of Psalm 23 is tied to this opening verse; it sets the tone for what is to come. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters. (Psalm 23:2) David starts by saying that the Lord is his shepherd. Throughout the rest of Psalm 23, he lists how God provides. David starts with an idyllic picture of a place of peace and restgreen pastures and still waters. You can picture it, cant you? A calm, babbling brook running through rolling green hills as animals wander by. This serene picture speaks of the peace a good shepherd provides. This is what God does for His people;He provides rest in green pastures and beside still waters. David experienced this firsthand. After he was anointed king of Israel, he spent years running for his life from Saul who refused to step down as king and continually tried to kill him. Throughout that time, God continued to guide and direct David. He provided rest and nourishment. I dont think its by mistake that this is the first item David lists. He has experienced lifes burdens and knows the relief that comes when they are lifted. God provided rest and green pastures for David, and he will for us too. He restores my soul, He leads me in paths of righteousness for His names sake. (Psalm 23:3) This verse builds on the previous. The Lord provides spiritual restoration and renews our strength. After we are restored, He leads us down the right paths so that we do not wander aimlessly. Take note of the order of events here. We often work first and rest second. But God does the opposite. He allows us to rest, to be restored, and then, He leads us into what He has for us. The goodness of God is on full display here. God isnt a slave master who demands his flock work till exhaustion. Rather, He provides rest and then leads us into what He has created us to do. Hes a good shepherd who does what is best for His flock.He cares for us and restores us. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4) This is where Psalm 23 takes a bit of a turn. The shepherd leads not only to still waters but also through troubled valleys. Theres a false belief that has been floating around for years that, if you are a child of God, you will have an easy life. But thats not what Jesus promised. Rather, He promised Hed be with us in the dark valley. The great shepherd is with us in the green pastures and in the valley of the shadow of death. His rod and His staff protect us, guide us, and comfort us. He will not abandon us, and He will guide us through it. The message of the Gospel is not an absence of pain and trials. Rather, it is a message that God will not abandon us in them. This Psalm of David reminds us that even, in the darkest valley of life, God is still with us, and we can have hope. You might also like: Why Does God Allow Suffering? and What Does The Bible Say About Death? (7 truths you need to know) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (Psalm 23:5) In this verse, David switches the description of God from a shepherd to a host. God is not only providing for our needs but also our desires. David says his cup overflows with blessings. Its not just what he needsits more. Whats interesting about this verse is that all this is done in the presence of our spiritual enemies, not in the absence of them. Its in the midst of conflict that we can find Gods provision and His abundant blessings. Tom Constable says it this way, As a gracious host, God provides hospitality for His people. He supplies us with what we need and desire lavishly, and He does so, not by removing us from the presence of our spiritual enemies, but in their presence. In the ancient East, a thoughtful host would welcome an honored guest into the protection of his home by pouring some oil on his head. This refreshed and soothed a weary traveler. Anointing with oil in Scripture pictured Gods bestowal of His Holy Spirit on the believer Davids cup symbolized his lot in life that overflowed with abundant blessings. Psalm 23 reminds us of Gods provision and abundant blessings. For more about this verse check out: The Powerful Meaning Of Psalm 23:5 (you prepare a table before me) Surely goodness and love shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:6) David ends this incredible Psalm by painting a picture of how Gods goodness and love (Hebrew word:hesed) will go with him for the rest of his life. The idea that hes trying to get across is that Gods love passionately pursues him. But the goodness of God isnt just for this life. David boldly proclaims that he shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. This picture is one of enjoying full communion and unhindered fellowship with God. A glorious time that will never end. This Psalm found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He pursued us, paid the price for our sins on the cross, and brought us back into His house.Because of the work of Jesus, we can dwell in the house of the Lord forever. This last verse of Psalm 23 is filled with hope. Its a hope thats found time and time again in the word of God. We are secure, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23 paints a beautiful picture of how God cares for us. This verse should encourage us to continue trusting Jesus. I would encourage you to go back and read Psalm 23 a few more times throughout this next week. Meditate on these words. Underline the words that stand out to you. Consider what it means for you that God is your shepherd. Think about how he has cared for you in the past. Maybe even write out this Psalm and place it somewhere you will see it. Psalm 23 is still powerful today. It tells us that God is with us. He will provide for us. He will walk with us through the storms of life. Go to the Good Shepherd and let Him lead you and guide you throughout all the days of your life. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over. Psalm 23:5 NKJAll through this study of Psalm 23, weve seen how the Lord is our good Shepherd, our Protector, our daily Provider, our Peace and Rest, and our Guide through every circumstance. We know about Gods faithfulness, that He leads us through dark valleys while watching over us with His rod and staff. All of that is amazing enough to prompt us to praise Him, but we may wonder what happens after we pass through the valley? What does the Lord do then?Thankfully, the Lord is not content to leave us alone. In the last part of this Bible study, Understanding Psalm 23, lets look at the rest of the chapter (verses five through eight) and discover what more the Lord does to bless us beginning with His holy table.Preparing a TableI remember visiting my Aunt Jeanne with my family when I was about eight years old. It was Thanksgiving Day and almost every member of my family was there. I knew most everyone, but not everyone. I met cousins I had never even heard of! But, there we were, all crammed into my Aunts beautiful house for a great day of fun and a wonderful feast.The men were watching football, the boys were in the basement playing pool and cards, and the girls and women were packed into Aunt Jeannes kitchen preparing the food. I wasnt allowed to cook, but I was allowed to set the huge table (actually two huge tables).With my Aunts help, I carefully put the plates at each setting, then the silverware, napkins, salad bowls, and glasses. Then, I put out the condimentsbutter, salt and pepper, cream, gravy, and ketchup for the kids. It ended up being a beautifully set table.This is sort of what the Lord does for us. In verse five of Psalm 23, He prepares a beautiful table for us, only instead of it being with friends and family, its set before our enemies or adversaries. Why does God do that?Many people think verse two is where God promises to provide for us. Remember, that verse was about making us lie down in green pastures (Psalm 23:2). We now know that green pastures mean something else. The table, however, is a better illustration of how God provides for us and satisfies us.Provision and SatisfactionWhen we put our trust in God, Psalm 23:5 reminds us that He can and will do everything to provide what you need, when you need it, until your soul feels satisfied. Even if you have walked through a dark valley, perhaps the darkest of all valleys ever, God will lead you through it so you successfully reach the other side. The danger will be behind you, and you will transition into His marvelous light.It is then, after you leave the valley, you will find His holy table. The table illustrates abundance, satisfaction, and everlasting love. Gods people can feast at His table of endless love and grace and no enemy of any sort can ever take it away. They can only feel annoyed that you were victorious and prosperous in spite of them.To reiterate the point, the psalmist reminds us of valleys and Gods table again in Psalm 118:5-6:I called on the Lord in distress. The Lord answered me and set me in a broad place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?And, in the New Testament, Peter says it again in 1 Peter 1:3:Thou hast provided for me all things pertaining both to life and godliness, all things requisite both for body and soul, for time and eternity.Dont give in to Satans lies and tricks. Continue walking with God until you reach His holy table. It is there you will find what youre looking for in great abundanceHis provision and ultimate satisfaction.That sounds incredible, doesnt it? But God doesnt stop there.Anointing OilThe second half of verse five says, You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Any time we read in the Bible of the anointing of something or someone, its a beautiful illustration of Gods blessing. But, its not just a blessing for the moment or even in your current situation.According to Bible scholar Matthew Henryand his complete commentary of the Biblewritten in 1710, Gods anointing in this verse refers to Him blessing you for your entire life with the Holy Spirit so much that your cup of salvation overflows. His anointing isnt just to meet your needs, but also to give you ornament and delight.In other words, after bringing you through the dark valley, you can look forward to the victory of reaching the Lords table and His anointing with the Holy Spirit. Did you catch that? Theres victory when you reach the other side. Its almost as if God pats you on the back and says, Well done! simply because you hung in there and trusted Him. Hallelujah!The whole experience serves to strengthen our faith, draw us closer to our heavenly Father, and to realize just how faithful He truly is. If we can grab hold of that, then we can boldly proclaim without any hesitation the truth of verse six:Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. God is FaithfulPsalm 23 is a famous chapter of the Bible with deep meaning thats especially encouraging during times of trouble, whatever it may be. I have often thought of Gods words and promises in Psalm 23 and they have brought amazing comfort to me when it seemed there was no way out of the valley.Now I knowThe Shepherds rod and staff protect me because He calls me His own.He provides my daily needs and gives me peace when I dont know what tomorrow will bring.He keeps me on the right path, and He helps me make the right choices so I dont wander away from Him.He walks with me during the dark times, and He never leaves me. I never need to fear because He is constantly faithful.After I pass through the valley, He prepares a table of abundance for me, and He blesses me with the Holy Spirit and salvation because I continued to trust Him even when it was hard to do.The main takeaway of Psalm 23 you should always remember is that GOD IS FAITHFUL. Always. Without fail. Period. Thats a promise you can count on no matter what youre going through. His mercy and goodness follow you, and He invites you to dwell in His house forever. All you have to do is let Him lead you.Whats happening in your life today? Will you trust Him? Go to Psalm 23 for encouragement and when you need your hope renewed. Discover again Gods great, endless, unchanging love and faithfulness to you.Your TurnThank you for studying Psalm 23 with me. Its so rich with comfort and love. How has it affected your view of the Shepherd? How does it reassure you of His grace and faithfulness? Or, maybe you have a different perspective of Psalm 23. Id love to hear it! Please, wont you share your thoughts and comments with me? You can do that either in the box below or you can do it privately here. Lets continue helping each other understand the Bible even better.Further ReadingIf you missed any of this four-part series of Understanding Psalm 23, you can catch up on it here. Thanks again for reading! God bless you! Understanding Psalm 23: What Do the Staff and Rod Actually Mean? Understanding Psalm 23: What God Meant by Green Pastures and Still Waters Understanding Psalm 23: What is the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Please follow and like us: Are you wondering how to be saved, or questioning How do I go to heaven? The answers are clearly found within Gods Word. Sadly, many today arent teaching the full truth of what the Bible actually says. God loves you and wants you to be saved, more than you can ever know! 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God desiresall people to be saved andto come tothe knowledge of the truth. For several years Ive wanted to publish a blog post outlining how to be saved according to Gods word. I wanted a clear, concise bible study in one simple place. Sadly, most of the top search results for how to be saved are filled with false teachings, and not outlining the full truth of what the Bible actually says about salvation. As Christians, our aim is to take the word of God seriously and follow it as closely as possible especially regarding how to be saved. The purpose of this post is to help people who are new to Christianity, or just want to learn more about Gods plan of salvation and what the bible actually says about it. Recently, God placed a wonderful soul named Megan Marchesano in my path. She is an absolute inspiration, and her words on how to be saved could not be more clear or Scripture-filled. She has graciously allowed me to share this wisdom with you, and I pray you are blessed by it. A little background: Megan suffers from a debilitating illness called Mast Cell Activation Syndrome which prevents her from eating. Each day, she has to give herself an IV bag of nutrients. Megan suffers more than most of us can ever imagine, yet she is filled with so much joy. (You can see a video about her story at the end of the post.) She found the truth of the Gospel a few years ago at the beginning of her illness. Before this, she doubted Gods existence for a time, but now she spends every moment she can sharing the word of God. She uses her social media platforms to share bible studies, one of which I am publishing here. Read Next: Dear Christian Living with Doubt I have learned so much since I started to truly read my Bible, and heartbreakingly there are many false churches and individuals who are like I was. They are sincerely misguided, and are not obeying Jesus or following his commandments. God does expect for his followers to keep his commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-4), the greatest of these being to love him and to love others (Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). Those who do not keep his commandments and dont love others do not know Jesus, according to the Bible (1 John 3:6; 1 John 4:8). God is absolutely incredible, and he loves you so much. Please, read his word (the Holy Bible) and find out for yourself. This is how you will come to know him (Romans 10:17). I fell in love with God through reading his word, and it is the greatest love story ever penned. For more info, read this detailed guide on how to read the bible for beginners. As you read, I think you will be surprised to see just how wrong the religious world can be, and sadly how many truly dont know Jesus and are teaching and preaching error. The Bible warns about another Jesus and false teachers (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Peter 2; 1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:15). In his warning, Jesus even goes as far as calling them ravenous wolves, and tells us that we will be able to know them by their fruit (their actions). Furthermore, Jesus said that the path to eternal life is narrow, and very few would actually find it (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus also said that on the very last day of this earth, when everything is destroyed, when he returns to judge the world righteously, and to take his followers with him for eternity there will be MANY who have believed they were following him and heartbreakingly will be told to depart into everlasting fire because they did evil and never knew him (Matthew 7:21-23). They did not obey him and keep his commandments. I would have been one of those people. So I write this to for a couple of reasons. Because 1) God loves you and wants for you to spend eternity with him. He gave you his word so that you could come to know him, and know how to be saved. 2) I love your soul, and I want for you to be saved too. So, what does the Bible actually say about how to be saved? Lets dive in! So heres the deal God is a righteous judge, and he will judge the whole world on the last day through his Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). Every person who has ever walked this earth will stand before God one day, and we will be judged according our actions, by the words that Jesus spoke and taught (2 Corinthians 5:11; John 12:48). God has given us his law (his commandments). He has a standard that he expects us to live by, and we have all fallen short of this, and broken his law by our own choice and free will (Romans 3:23). Moreover, our bodies are temporal and mortal, but our souls are eternal, and will live on forever after we die. Every soul that has ever existed will spend eternity in one of two places. Those who have done evil will experience eternal punishment in the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:15), and those whom have done good will experience eternal life with Jesus in heaven (John 5:29). Furthermore, God wants to have a relationship with us, but our sin separates us from God. The definition of sin, according to James 4:17 is: So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. And the penalty for our sin is death (Romans 6:23). Since God is holy, righteous, and just, he cannot simply excuse sin. If he is a just judge, he has to punish us for breaking the law. What judge would be just if they let everyone who did evil go free, without punishment? God is just, but he does not want to punish us for our rebellion (Romans 3:26). He desires to show mercy, and for us to know him (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 12:7). So he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us and to pay the price for our sins so that we could be saved from its punishment! Jesus Christ is Gods son. Although he is eternal and lived in heaven beforehand, Jesus willingly left the comforts of heaven and came down to earth. He took on a human body for our sakes (Philippians 2), lived a perfectly sinless life, experienced what we as humans go through, and then took the punishment for our sins by dying an excruciatingly painful death on the cross. He died in our place. Then, he was raised from the dead on the third day, and ascended back to heaven. This is the Gospel (or good news)! Jesus is now currently sitting on the right hand of God the Father, reigning over his church (the body of saved believers), and waiting until the day when he will return for the judgment (Acts 2:30-35). In order for us to receive forgiveness of our sins through Jesus, and therefore eternal life, we must accept the salvation which Christ has made possible. There are six steps which we must take to receive this salvation, as outlined in the Bible. First, we must hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). One is not a Christian because his parents are. Faith cannot be inherited (Ezekiel 18:20). Each person must believe in Jesus Christ for himself. Christianity is based on solid teaching (Matthew 28:19-20). Unless one has heard the Gospel and learned that Jesus Christ died for his sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, he cannot be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The apostle Paul wrote: How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?(Romans 10;14). One must first hear the Gospel before he can believe it. Second, one must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). Jesus said: if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins (John 8:24). The jailor at Philippi asked Paul and Silas, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They told him to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household (Acts 16:30-31). Jesus also said: He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16). One comes to believe in Jesus Christ when he hears the Gospel taught. Faith comes only by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). This is the reason it is so important that the Gospel be preached to the whole world (Mark 16:15). Hebrews 11:6 also tells us we cannot please God without belief. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to Godmust believe that he exists andthat he rewards those who seek him. Read Next: 100 Best Bible Quotes to Turn Your Day Around Third, one must repent of his sins in order to be saved (Acts 17:30-31). Jesus commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). Repentance is a result of being sorry for ones sins (2 Corinthians 7:10). When the Jews on Pentecost Day learned from Peter that they had crucified the Son of God, they were cut to the heart (Acts 2:37). They wanted to be forgiven of their sins, so they asked, What shall we do? They were told to Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38). When one repents, he turns away from his sins (1 Thessalonians 1:9). He shows he has repented by doing good works (Matthew 3:8). Fourth, one must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). This great truth is the very foundation upon which the church of Christ is built (Matthew 16:18; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus said that we must be willing to confess Him before men if we want Him to confess us before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33). The apostle Paul wrote: But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:8-10). When Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, the eunuch asked, What hinders me from being baptized? Philip told him he could be baptized if he believed. The eunuch then confessed, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:35-38). We must make this important, yet simple confession also in order to be saved. Fifth, one must be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus said: He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark 16:16). Please note that baptism follows belief. One who does not believe the Gospel cannot be truly baptized. Therefore, babies cannot be baptized for they are too young to (1) have sin, (2) hear the Gospel, (3) repent of sins, and (4) confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Baptism also follows repentance. On Pentecost Day, Peter told those who asked what to do to be saved to Repent, and let every one of you be baptized (Acts 2:38). One cannot be truly baptized who has not truly repented. Baptism is a burial in water (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12). The original Greek word means to immerse or completely submerge under water. It is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are not proper baptism. Baptism is done in order to be saved, according to Gods Word (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21). One is not saved before he is baptized, as many denominations teach. Look at Acts 22:16, in which Saul desires to become a Christian. He is instructed: And now why do you wait?Rise and be baptized andwash away your sins [emphasis added],calling on his name. Saul was clearly told to have his sins washed away through baptism, and it is for the remission (forgiveness) of sins (Acts 2:38). Just as Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28), so we are baptized in order to receive the remission of sins. In baptism, the sinners sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16). When a person completes each of the steps listed above, he/she is added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). He is born again (John 3:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17). He is in Christ where all sp

lament itself and pleas for help, and often ending with an expression of confidence.[22]In individual thanksgiving psalms, the opposite of individual laments, the psalmist thanks God for deliverance from personal distress.[22]In addition to these five major genres, Gunkel also recognised a number of minor psalm-types, including:communal thanksgiving psalms, in which the whole nation thanks God for deliverance;wisdom psalms, reflecting the Old Testament wisdom literature;pilgrimage psalms, sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem;entrance and prophetic liturgies; anda group of mixed psalms which could not be assigned to any category.[28]David composing the Psalms, Paris Psalter, 10th century[29]The composition of the psalms spans at least five centuries, from the 10th-century Psalm 29 to others clearly from the post-Exilic period (i.e., not earlier than the 5th centuryBCE). The majority originated in the southern kingdom of Judah and were associated with the Temple in Jerusalem, where they probably functioned as librettos during Temple worship. Exactly how they did so was unclear, but there are indications in some of them: "Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar"[30] suggests a connection with sacrifices, and "Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense"[31] suggests a connection with the offering of incense.[3]According to Jewish tradition, the Book of Psalms was composed by the First Man (Adam), Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah.[32][33] According to Abraham ibn Ezra, the final redaction of the book was made by the Men of the Great Assembly.[34]Some of the psalms show influences from related earlier texts from the region; examples include various Ugaritic texts and the Babylonian Enma Eli. These influences may be either of background similarity or of contrast. For example, Psalm 29 shares characteristics with Canaanite religious poetry and themes. Robert Alter points out that the address to "sons of God" at the opening "[is] best thought of [as] the flickering literary afterlife of a polytheistic mythology" but that "belief in them…is unlikely to have been shared by the scribal circles that produced Psalms".[35] The contrast between the Psalmist's theology and the surrounding area's polytheistic religion is well seen in Psalms 104:26,[36] in which locals' mythical fierce sea-godsuch as the Babylonian Tiamat, Canaanite Yam and the Leviathan which also appears in the Hebrew Bibleis "reduced to an aquatic pet with whom YHWH can play".[37]The biblical poetry of Psalms uses parallelism as its primary poetic device. Parallelism is a kind of symmetry in which restatement, synonym, amplification, grammatical repetition, or opposition develops an idea.[38][39] Synonymous parallelism involves two lines expressing essentially the same idea. An example of synonymous parallelism:"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).Two lines expressing opposites is known as antithetic parallelism. An example of antithetic parallelism:"And he led them in a cloud by day/ and all the night by a fiery light" (Psalm 78:14).Two clauses expressing the idea of amplifying the first claim is known as expansive parallelism. An example of expansive parallelism:"My mouth is filled with your praise/ all the day with your lauding" (Psalm 71:8).Psalm 11 in the ninth-century Utrecht Psalter, where the illustration of the text is often literal.Many scholars believe the individual Psalms were redacted into a single collection during the Second Temple period.[40] It had long been recognized that the collection bore the imprint of an underlying message or metanarrative, but that this message remained concealed, as Augustine of Hippo said, "The sequence of the Psalms seems to me to contain the secret of a mighty mystery, but its meaning has not been revealed to me" (Enarr. on Psalms 150:1). Others pointed out the presence of concatenationthat is, adjacent Psalms sharing similar words and themes. In time, this approach developed into recognizing overarching themes shared by whole groups of psalms.[41]In 1985, Gerald H. Wilson's The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter proposedby parallel with other ancient Near Eastern hymn collectionsthat psalms at the beginning and end (or "seams") of the five books of Psalms have thematic significance, corresponding in particular with the placement of the royal psalms. He pointed out that there was a progression of ideas from adversity through the crux of the collection in the apparent failure of the covenant in Psalm 89, leading to a concert of praise at the end. He concluded that the collection was redacted to be a retrospective of the failure of the Davidic covenant, exhorting Israel to trust in God alone in a non-messianic future.[42] Walter Brueggemann suggested that the underlying editorial purpose was oriented instead towards wisdom or sapiential concerns, addressing the issues of how to live the life of faith. Psalm 1 calls the reader to a life of obedience; Psalm 73 (Brueggemann's crux psalm) faces the crisis when divine faithfulness is in doubt; Psalm 150 represents faith's triumph when God is praised not for his rewards but for his being.[43] In 1997, David. C. Mitchell's The Message of the Psalter took a quite different line. Building on the work of Wilson and others,[44] Mitchell proposed that the Psalter embodies an eschatological timetable like that of Zechariah 914.[45] This programme includes the ingathering of exiled Israel by a bridegroom-king; his establishment of a kingdom; his violent death; Israel scattered in the wilderness, regathered and again imperiled, and then rescued by a king from the heavens, who establishes his kingdom from Zion, brings peace and prosperity to the earth and receives the homage of the nations.These three viewsWilson's non-messianic retrospective of the Davidic covenant, Brueggemann's sapiential instruction, and Mitchell's eschatological-messianic programall have their followers. However, the sapiential agenda has been somewhat eclipsed by the other two. Shortly before he died in 2005, Wilson modified his position to allow for the existence of messianic prophecy within the Psalms' redactional agenda.[46] Mitchell's position remains essentially unchanged, but he now sees the issue as identifying when the historical beginning of the Psalms turns to eschatology.[47]James VanderKams The Dead Sea Scrolls Today examined the large Psalms scroll from Qumran, 11QPs(a), showing that while the first three books (Psalms 1-89) were largely fixed by the early 1st centuryCE, Psalms 90-150 show variations in ordering and content, suggesting the collection was still being finalized into the mid-1st centuryCE and included material not found in the later Masoretic Text.[5] Peter Flint argues that the findings show there were three different versions of the Psalter circulating during the Second Temple period, with the Masoretic version being attested among the scrolls found at Masada.[48]The Psalms were written not merely as poems, but as songs for singing. According to Bible exegete Saadia Gaon (882942) who served in the geonate of Babylonian Jewry, the Psalms were originally sung in the Temple precincts by the Levites, based on what was prescribed for each psalm (lineage of the singers, designated time and place, instruments used, manner of execution, etc.), but are permitted to be randomly read by anyone at any time and in any place.[49] More than a third of the psalms are addressed to the Director of Music. Some psalms exhort the worshipper to sing (e.g. Pss. 33:1-3; 92:1-3; 96:1-3; 98:1; 101:1; 150). Some headings denote the musical instruments on which the psalm should be played (Pss. 4, 5, 6, 8, 67). Some refer to the Levites who sang one of eight melodies, one of which was known simply as "the eighth" (Hebrew: sheminit) (Pss. 6, 12).[50] And others preserve the name for ancient eastern modes, like ayelet ha-shachar (hind of the dawn; Ps. 22); shoshanim / shushan (lilies / lily; Pss. 45; 60), said to be describing a certain melody;[51] or almuth / alamoth (mute;[52] Pss. 9, 46), which, according to Saadia Gaon, is "a silent melody, nearly inaudible."[53]Despite the frequently heard view that their ancient music is lost, the means to reconstruct it are still extant. Fragments of temple psalmody are preserved in ancient synagogue and church chant, particularly in the tonus peregrinus melody to Psalm 114.[54] Cantillation signs, to record the melody sung, were in use since ancient times; evidence of them can be found in the manuscripts of the oldest extant copies of Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls and are even more extensive in the Masoretic text, which dates to the Early Middle Ages and whose Tiberian scribes claimed to be basing their work on temple-period signs. (See Moshe ben Asher's 'Song of the Vine' colophon to the Codex Cairensis).[55]Several attempts have been made to decode the Masoretic cantillation, but the most "successful" is that of Suzanne Hak-Vantoura (19282000) in the last quarter of the 20th century.[56] Her reconstruction assumes the signs represent the degrees of various musical scales that is, individual notes which puts it at odds with all other existing traditions, where the signs invariably represent melodic motifs; it also takes no account of the existence of older systems of notation, such as the Babylonian and Palestinian systems. Musicologists have therefore rejected Hak-Vantoura's theories, with her results dubious, and her methodology flawed.[57] In spite of this, Mitchell has repeatedly defended it, showing that, when applied to the Masoretic cantillation of Psalm 114, it produces a melody recognizable as the tonus peregrinus of church and synagogue.[58] Mitchell includes musical transcriptions of the temple psalmody of Psalms 120134 in his commentary on the Songs of Ascents.In "The Flow of the Psalms," O. Palmer Robertson posits a thematic progression throughout the five books of Psalms, delineating distinctive characteristics and emphases:[59]Book 1: Opposition Predominantly attributed to David, these Psalms are perceived as the earliest in origin, characterized by a focus on trust in God, with Yahweh as the dominant name.Book 2: Communication Despite continued opposition, this book reflects an outreach even to enemies of God. The prevalent name for God shifts to Elohim, especially when borrowing sections from Book 1. Robertson suggests Book 2 may have Northern Kingdom origins.Book 3: Devastation Marked by the overtaking of Jerusalem, this book holds out hope for Jacob and Joseph, possibly symbolizing the Southern and Northern kingdoms. Expressions like "trust in God" diminish.Book 4: Maturity Notably, with over 10 quotes from Chronicles, indicating a temporal progression beyond the initial three books.Book 5: Consummation Robertson proposes that the Psalms of Ascent and Hallel Psalms are post-Babylonian exile compositions, portraying a culmination of themes and perspectivesMost individual psalms involve the praise of God for his power and beneficence, for his creation of the world, and for his past acts of deliverance for Israel. They envision a world in which everyone and everything will praise God, and God in turn will hear their prayers and respond. Sometimes God "hides his face" and refuses to respond, questioning (for the psalmist) the relationship between God and prayer which is the underlying assumption of the Book of Psalms.[60]Some psalms are called maskil (or maschil), meaning 'enlightened' or 'wise saying', because they impart wisdom. Most notable of these is Psalm 142 which is sometimes called the "Maskil of David"; others include Psalm 32 and Psalm 78.[61]A special grouping and division in the Book of Psalms are fifteen psalms (Psalms 120134) known in the construct case, shir ha-ma'aloth ("A Song of Ascents", "A Song of degrees"), and one as shir la-ma'aloth (Psalm 121). According to Saadia Gaon, these songs differed from the other psalms in that they were to be sung by the Levites in a "loud melody" (Judeo-Arabic:).[62] Every psalm designated for Asaph (e.g. Psalms 50, 7383) was sung by his descendants while making use of cymbals, in accordance with 1 Chronicles 16:5.[63][62] Every psalm wherein is found the introductory phrase "Upon Mahalath" (e.g. Psalms 53 and 88) was sung by the Levites by using large percussion instruments having wide and closed bezels on both sides and beaten with two wooden sticks.[64]O. Palmer Robertson observes that many of the Psalms concern the subject of death and says "This unatural conclusion to every human life can be understood only in the context of the original threat to the original man: 'in the day you shall eat of it you shall surely die.'"[65] Robertson goes on to say "The anticipation from redemption fom the grave overcomes the inevitability of death. The psalmist is fully aware of his need for total deliverance from the last great enemy, and attests to expectation of deliverance."[66]David Playing the Harp by Jan de Bray, 1670Hebrew text of Psalm 1:1-2A Jewish man reads Psalm 119 at the Western Wall.Individual psalms were originally hymns, to be used on various occasions and at various sacred sites; later, some were anthologised, and might have been understood within the various anthologies (e.g., Psalm 123 as one of the Psalms of Ascent); finally, individual psalms might be understood within the Psalter as a whole, either narrating the life of David or providing instruction like the Torah. In later Jewish and Christian tradition, the psalms have come to be used as prayers, either individual or communal, as traditional expressions of religious feeling.[67]Many authors have commented on the psalms, including:Hilary of Poitiers[68]Augustine of Hippo[69]Saadia Gaon[70]Salmon ben Jeroham[71]Yefet ben Ali[72]Rashbam[73]Abraham ibn Ezra[74]David Kimhi[75]Obadiah Sforno[76]Joseph Gikatilla[77][pageneeded]Joseph Kara[78]Benjamin ben Judah[79]Rashi[80]Menachem Meiri[81]Isaiah di Trani[82]Thomas Aquinas[83]John Calvin[84]Emmanuel (pseudonym), Jewish Commentary on the Psalms.[85]Isaac Satanow[86]Some of the titles given to the Psalms have descriptions which suggest their use in worship:Some bear the Hebrew description shir (; Greek: , d, 'song'). Thirteen have this description. It means the flow of speech, as it were, in a straight line or in a regular strain. This description includes secular as well as sacred song.Fifty-eight Psalms bear the description mizmor (; , psalmos, 'psalm'), a lyric ode set to music; a sacred song accompanied with a musical instrument.Psalm 145 alone has the designation tehillah (; , hymnos, 'hymn'), meaning a song of praise; a song the prominent thought of which is the praise of God.Thirteen psalms are described as maskil ('wise'): 32, 42, 44, 45, 5255, 74, 78, 88, 89, and 142. Psalm 41:2, although not in the above list, has the description ashrei maskil.Six Psalms (16, 5660) have the title michtam (, 'gold').[87] Rashi suggests that michtam refers to an item that a person carries with him at all times, hence, these Psalms contain concepts or ideas that are pertinent at every stage and setting throughout life, deemed vital as part of day-to-day spiritual awareness.[88]Psalm 7 (along with Habakkuk chapter 3)[89] bears the title shigayon (). There are three interpretations:[90] (a) According to Rashi and others, this term stems from the root shegaga, meaning "mistake"David committed some sin and is singing in the form of a prayer to redeem himself from it; (b) shigayon was a type of musical instrument; (c) Ibn Ezra considers the word to mean "longing", as for example in the verse in Proverbs 5:19[91] tishge tamid.Psalms are used throughout traditional Jewish worship. Many complete Psalms and verses from Psalms appear in the morning services (Shacharit). The pesukei dezimra component incorporates Psalms 30, 100 and 145150. Psalm 145 (commonly referred to as "Ashrei", which is really the first word of two verses appended to the beginning of the Psalm), is read three times every day: once in shacharit as part of pesukei dezimrah, as mentioned; once, along with Psalm 20, as part of the morning's concluding prayers; and once at the start of the afternoon service. On Festival days and Sabbaths, instead of concluding the morning service, it precedes the Mussaf service. Psalms 9599, 29, 92, and 93, along with some later readings, comprise the introduction (Kabbalat Shabbat) to the Friday night service. Traditionally, a different "Psalm for the Day"Shir shel yomis read after the morning service each day of the week (starting Sunday, Psalms: 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93, 92). This is described in the Mishnah (the initial codification of the Jewish oral tradition) in the tractate Tamid. According to the Talmud, these daily Psalms were originally recited on that day of the week by the Levites in the Temple in Jerusalem. From Rosh Chodesh Elul until Hoshanah Rabbah, Psalm 27 is recited twice daily following the morning and evening services. There is a Minhag (custom) to recite Psalm 30 each morning of Chanukkah after Shacharit: some recite this in place of the regular "Psalm for the Day", others recite this additionally.When a Jew dies, a watch is kept over the body and tehillim (Psalms) are recited constantly by sun or candlelight, until the burial service. Historically, this watch would be carried out by the immediate family, usually in shifts, but in contemporary practice this service is provided by an employee of the funeral home or chevra kadisha.Many Jews complete the Book of Psalms on a weekly or monthly basis. Each week, some also say a Psalm connected to that week's events or the Torah portion read during that week. In addition, many Jews (notably Lubavitch, and other Chasidim) read the entire Book of Psalms prior to the morning service, on the Sabbath preceding the calculated appearance of the new moon.The reading of psalms is viewed in Jewish tradition as a vehicle for gaining God's favor. They are thus often specially recited in times of trouble, such as poverty, disease, or physical danger; in many synagogues, Psalms are recited after services for the security of the State of Israel. Sefer ha-Chinuch[92] states that this practice is designed not to achieve favor, as such, but rather to inculcate belief in Divine Providence into one's consciousness, consistently with Maimonides' general view on Providence. (Relatedly, the Hebrew verb for prayer, hitpalal , is in fact the reflexive form of palal , to intervene, petition, judge. Thus, "to pray" conveys the connotation of "judging oneself": ultimately, the purpose of prayertefilah is to transform ourselves.)[93]St. Florian's psalter, 14th or 15th century, Polish translationChildren singing and playing music, illustration of Psalm 150 (Laudate Dominum)David is depicted as a psalmist in this 1860 woodcut by Julius Schnorr von KarolsfeldNew Testament references show that the earliest Christians used the Psalms in worship, and the Psalms have remained an important part of worship in most Christian Churches. The Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Anglican Churches have always made systematic use of the Psalms, with a cycle for the recitation of all or most of them over the course of one or more weeks. In the early centuries of the Church, it was expected that any candidate for bishop would be able to recite the entire Psalter from memory, something they often learned automatically during their time as monks.[94] Christians have used Pater Noster cords of 150 beads to pray the entire Psalter.[95]Paul the Apostle quotes psalms (specifically Psalms 14 and 53, which are nearly identical) as the basis for his theory of original sin, and includes the scripture in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 3.Several conservative Protestant denominations sing only the Psalms (some churches also sing the small number of hymns found elsewhere in the Bible) in worship, and do not accept the use of any non-Biblical hymns; examples are the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Presbyterian Reformed Church (North America) and the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).Psalm 22 is of particular importance during the season of Lent as a Psalm of continued faith during severe testing.Psalm 23, The LORD is My Shepherd, offers an immediately appealing message of comfort and is widely chosen for church funeral services, either as a reading or in one of several popular hymn settings;Psalm 51, Have mercy on me O God, called the Miserere from the first word in its Latin version, in both Divine Liturgy and Hours, in the sacrament of repentance or confession, and in other settings;Psalm 82 is found in the Book of Common Prayer as a funeral recitation.Psalm 137, By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, the Eastern Orthodox Church uses this hymn during the weeks preceding Great Lent.Psalm 145 by title 'A psalm of praise", is an accrostic of praise and David's final Psalm. Verses from it are frequently used in many contemporary worship songs and read by many contemporary worship leaders in services.New translations and settings of the Psalms continue to be produced. An individually printed volume of Psalms for use in Christian religious rituals is called a Psalter.Imam-ud-Din Shahbaz (1845-1921), a Punjabi evangelist and a poet, produced the first metrical translation of the Psalms in Punjabi, known as Punjabi Zabur. For a hundred years, Punjabi Zabur have been used as an essential part of singing and praising in majority of Urdu and Punjabi Churches around the globe.[citation needed]Furthermore, psalms often serve as the inspiration for much of modern or contemporary Christian worship music in a variety of styles. Some songs are entirely based on a particular psalm or psalms, and many quote directly from the Book of Psalms (and other parts of the Bible).[96]See also: KathismaOrthodox Christians and Greek-Catholics (Eastern Catholics who follow the Byzantine rite) have long made the Psalms an integral part of their corporate and private prayers. The official version of the Psalter used by the Orthodox Church is the Septuagint. To facilitate its reading, the 150 Psalms are divided into 20 kathismata (Greek: ; Slavonic: , kafizmy; lit. "sittings") and each kathisma (Greek: ; Slavonic: , kafisma) is further subdivided into three stases (Greek: , staseis lit. "standings", sing. , stasis), so-called because the faithful stand at the end of each stasis for the Glory to the Father....At Vespers and Matins, different kathismata are read at different times of the liturgical year and on different days of the week, according to the Church's calendar, so that all 150 psalms (20 kathismata) are read in the course of a week. During Great Lent, the number of kathismata is increased so that the entire Psalter is read twice a week. In the twentieth century, some lay Christians have adopted a continuous reading of the Psalms on weekdays, praying the whole book in four weeks.Aside from kathisma readings, Psalms occupy a prominent place in every other Orthodox service including the services of the Hours and the Divine Liturgy. In particular, the penitential Psalm 50 is very widely used. Fragments of Psalms and individual verses are used as Prokimena (introductions to Scriptural readings) and Stichera. The bulk of Vespers would still be composed of Psalms even if the kathisma were to be disregarded; Psalm 118, "The Psalm of the Law", is the centerpiece of Matins on Saturdays, some Sundays, and the Funeral service. The entire book of Psalms is traditionally read out loud or chanted at the side of the deceased during the time leading up to the funeral, mirroring Jewish tradition.Several branches of Oriental Orthodox and those Eastern Catholics who follow one of the Oriental Rites will chant the entire Psalter during the course of a day during the Daily Office. This practice continues to be a requirement of monastics in the Oriental churches.See also: Responsorial psalmodyA singing and dancing David leads the Ark of the Covenant, c.1650.The Psalms have always been an important part of Catholic liturgy. The Liturgy of the Hours is centered on chanting or recitation of the Psalms, using fixed melodic formulas known as psalm tones. Early Catholics employed the Psalms widely in their individual prayers also; however, as knowledge of Latin (the language of the Roman Rite) became uncommon, this practice ceased among the unlearned. However, until the end of the Middle Ages, it was not unknown for the laity to join in the singing of the Little Office of Our Lady, which was a shortened version of the Liturgy of the Hours providing a fixed daily cycle of twenty-five psalms to be recited, and nine other psalms divided across Matins.The work of Bishop Richard Challoner in providing devotional materials in English meant that many of the psalms were familiar to English-speaking Catholics from the eighteenth century onwards. Challoner translated the entirety of the Little Office into English, as well as Sunday Vespers and daily Compline. He also provided other individual Psalms such as 129/130 for prayer in his devotional books. Bishop Challoner is also noted for revising the DouayRheims Bible, and the translations he used in his devotional books are taken from this work.Until the Second Vatican Council the Psalms were either recited on a one-week or, less commonly (as in the case of Ambrosian rite), two-week cycle. Different one-week schemata were employed: most secular clergy followed the Roman distribution, while regular clergy almost universally followed that of St Benedict, with only a few congregations (such as the Benedictines of St Maur[97]) following individual arrangements. The Breviary introduced in 1974 distributed the psalms over a four-week cycle. Monastic usage varies widely. Some use the four-week cycle of the secular clergy, many retain a one-week cycle, either following St Benedict's scheme or another of their own devising, while others opt for some other arrangement.Official approval was also given to other arrangements[Notes 1] by which the complete Psalter is recited in a one-week or two-week cycle. These arrangements are used principally by Catholic contemplative religious orders, such as that of the Trappists.[Notes 2]The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 122 sanctions three modes of singing/recitation for the Psalms:directly (all sing or recite the entire psalm);antiphonally (two choirs or sections of the congregation sing or recite alternate verses or strophes); andresponsorially (the cantor or choir sings or recites the verses while the congregation sings or recites a given response after each verse).Of these three the antiphonal mode is the most widely followed.[citation needed]Over the centuries, the use of complete Psalms in the liturgy declined. After the Second Vatican Council (which also permitted the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy), longer psalm texts were reintroduced into the Mass, during the readings. The revision of the Roman Missal after the Second Vatican Council reintroduced the singing or recitation of a more substantial section of a Psalm, in some cases an entire Psalm, after the first Reading from Scripture. This Psalm, called the Responsorial Psalm, is usually sung or recited responsorially, although the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 61 permits direct recitation.Psalm 1 in a form of the Sternhold and Hopkins version widespread in Anglican usage before the English Civil War (1628 printing). It was from this version that the armies sang before going into battle.Following the Protestant Reformation, many of the Psalms were set as hymns. These vernacular translations of the psalms were arranged into rhyming strict-metre verses, known as metrical psalms and used for congregational singing. The metrical psalms were particularly popular in the Calvinist tradition, where in the past they were often sung to the exclusion of other hymns (exclusive psalmody). John Calvin himself made some French translations of the Psalms for church usage, but the completed Genevan Psalter eventually used in church services consisted exclusively of translations by Clment Marot and Thodore de Bze, on melodies by a number of composers, including Louis Bourgeois and a certain Maistre Pierre. Martin Luther's "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God") is based on Psalm 46. Among famous hymn settings of the Psalter were the Scottish Psalter and the paraphrases by Isaac Watts. The first book printed in North America was a collection of Psalm settings, the Bay Psalm Book (1640).By the 20th century, they were mostly replaced by hymns in church services. However, the Psalms are popular for private devotion among many Protestants and still used in many churches for traditional worship.[98] There exists in some circles a custom of reading one Psalm and one chapter of Proverbs a day, corresponding to the day of the month.Metrical psalms are still widely sung in many Reformed congregations.Anglican chant is a method of singing prose versions of the Psalms.In the early 17th century, when the King James Bible was introduced, the metrical arrangements by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins were also popular and were provided with printed tunes. This version and the New Version of the Psalms of David by Tate and Brady produced in the late seventeenth century (see article on Metrical psalter) remained the normal congregational way of singing psalms in the Church of England until well into the nineteenth century.In Great Britain, the 16th-century Coverdale psalter still lies at the heart of daily worship in Cathedrals and many parish churches. The new Common Worship service book has a companion psalter in modern English.The version of the psalter in the American Book of Common Prayer prior to the 1979 edition is the Coverdale psalter. The Psalter in the American Book of Common Prayer of 1979 is a new translation, with some attempt to keep the rhythms of the Coverdale psalter.Main article: ZaburAccording to the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an, God has sent many messengers to mankind. Five universally acknowledged messengers (rasul) are Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad,[99] each believed to have been sent with a scripture. Muslims believe David (Dwd) received Psalms (Zabur)[100] (cf. Q38:28); Jesus (s) the Gospel (Injeel); Muhammad received the Qur'an; and Abraham (Ibrahim) the Scrolls of Abraham;[101] meanwhile, the Tawrat is the Arabic name for the Torah within its context as an Islamic holy book believed by Muslims to have been given by God to the prophets and messengers amongst the Children of Israel, and often refers to the entire Hebrew Bible.[102] God is considered to have authored the Psalms.[103]The Psalms are one of the most popular parts of the Bible among followers of the Rastafari movement.[104] Rasta singer Prince Far I released an atmospheric spoken version of the psalms, Psalms for I, set to a roots reggae backdrop from The Aggrovators.Psalms have often been set as part of a larger work. The psalms feature large in settings of Vespers, including those by Claudio Monteverdi, Antonio Vivaldi, Marc-Antoine Charpentier (84 settings H.149 - H.232) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who wrote such settings as part of their responsibilities as church musicians. Psalms are inserted in Requiem compositions, such as Psalm 126 in A German Requiem of Johannes Brahms and Psalms 130 and 23 in John Rutter's Requiem.Melodie na psaterz polski by Mikoaj Gomka1580Psalmi Davidis poenitentiales (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143) by Orlande de Lassus1584Psalmen Davids (1619), Symphoniae sacrae I (1629) and Becker Psalter (1661) by Heinrich SchtzChandos Anthems by George Frideric Handel171718Zwei englisch Psalmen (1842), Sieben Psalmen nach Lobwasser (1843), Elijah (1846), and Drei Psalmen (1849) by Felix MendelssohnEighteen Liturgical Psalms by Louis Lewandowski1879Biblick psn by Antonn Dvok1894Le Roi David by Arthur Honegger1921Symphony of Psalms (38, 39, 150) by Igor Stravinsky1930Chichester Psalms by Leonard Bernstein1965Tehillim by Steve Reich1981Four Psalms (114, 126, 133, 137) by John Harbison1998There are many settings of individual psalms. One of the better known examples is Gregorio Allegri's Miserere mei, a falsobordone setting of Psalm 51 ("Have mercy upon me, O God").[105] Settings of individual psalms by later composers are also frequent: they include works from composers such as George Frideric Handel, Felix Mendelssohn, Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Psalms also feature in more modern musical movements and popular genres.Bible portalExclusive psalmodyHistory of music in the biblical periodPenitential PsalmsPsalm of communal lamentSelahZaburGenevan PsalterPesher^ See "Short" Breviaries in the 20th and early 21st century America Archived 18 January 2006 at the Wayback Machine for an in-progress study^ See for example the Divine Office schedule at New Melleray Abbey^ "Psalm." Longman Pronunciation Dictionary. Pearson.^ Mazor 2011, p.589.^ a b Kselman 2007, p.775.^ a b Berlin & Brettler 2004, p.1282.^ a b VanderKam, James. 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