

# BaptistWay Bible Series for June 10: God cares for you

May 31, 2012

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This lesson focuses on God's generosity by looking at how he amply cares for people. This lesson features landmark passages emphasizing God's provision for his people.

Each of the psalm passages open with a reference to the Lord. The Hebrew word, Adonai, was substituted for God's covenant name, Yahweh (Jehovah, I Am). The significance of this name cannot be understated. David proclaims the covenant God of Israel ably and responsibly fulfills all his needs. He has not been left on his own, nor has his care been delegated to someone else.

Psalm 23 shows God's care for the believer in classic form. The hymn offers encouragement and confidence in six short verses. Psalm 23 has three imagery motifs. It famously opens with a shepherd motif that dominates the first four verses. The Lord is such a complete provider that we have no needs (v. 1). Green pastures were the delight of sheep which needed pasture land for food and rest. Still waters are important for drinking spots and stream crossings because water laden wool can doom a sheep in a strong current (v. 2). Verse 3 builds upon verse 2, by stating the Lord amply provides everything needed so that one's full being, or soul, is restored.

The point is pressed further by the observation that the Lord leads one down the right paths. The meaning stretches beyond the fulfillment of physical needs to include the wisdom and guidance needed for the correct legal, moral and spiritual passage through life.

Verse 4 speaks of navigating the dangers of life. God's presence amid mortal danger renders people fearless of present evils which cannot prevail against God's protection of his loved one. The rod and staff are implements that symbolize the shepherd's caring presence.

Verse 5 uses kingly imagery to depict the partaking the Lord's provisions. Enemies cannot prevent the Lord's work in the lives of his people. Anointing the head with oil follows the kingly anointing ritual, but applies it to the selection and affirmation of the believer as the Lord's own. The Lord's generous provision, depicting the abundance of God's grace, is seen in the overflowing cup.

Verse 6 uses temple imagery to describe the blessed eternal status of the believer. Goodness and mercy describe the character of the Lord's provision, and dwelling in the Lord's presence forever shows the Lord's presence in the believer's life in verse 1 is extended throughout eternity.

Psalm 27 is a loud, confident anthem celebrating God's salvation. This psalm's message parallels Psalm 23, but uses different imagery. Here the Lord is light, salvation and a stronghold. Nothing can thwart God's plan to save his people (see Romans 8:28-39). The Lord's salvation is so strong that enemies cannot prevail against the believer (vv. 2-3). Verse 4 extends the thought in Psalm 23:6. Here the worshipper expresses his desire to live forever in the Lord's presence. Confidence in the Lord's ability to save and preserve the believer is expressed in verse 5.

The Lord's caring provision is further celebrated in Psalm 116 where the worshipper expresses a heart of love for the Lord. Two reasons for this love are expressed in verses 1-2. Then an initial resolution is declared in verse 2: the pledge to call upon the Lord throughout life. Calling upon the Lord is the initial human response to the Lord's offer of salvation or restoration (see Joel 2:32). Such continual calling does not mean one is ignored, but that one is has made a lifelong commitment to the Lord.

Verses 3-4 resemble Jonah's experience in the fish (see Jonah 2). At the moment of calling for the Lord, God applies his answer of salvation. Finding salvation or acceptance with the Lord only requires one step, and a passive one at that: calling upon the Lord. God willingly and promptly responds.

This leads the worshipper to sing of the Lord's righteousness, mercy, protection and salvation (vv. 5-6). Now the worshipper can say to her or his own soul, "return to rest" (v. 7). Inner peace is the characteristic result of God's personal presence in one's life.

Verses 8-9 present a pledge to walk before the Lord on the basis of the Lord's multifaceted deliverance. The land of the living could mean earthly life, but poetry always extends meanings, so that the land of the living becomes an image for eternal life in the presence of the Living One. Such is the proper use of salvation. God saves the individual to walk with him or her for eternity. The saved one responds by pledging their new life to walk with the Lord forever.

Matthew 6:25-33 provide Jesus' perspective on God's provision and care. There are lower-level human concerns, such as food, clothing and shelter. God wants to provide for these needs so his people can live at the higher levels of human life which include one's life pursuits, interaction with humans and most importantly, walking with the Lord. The believer is instructed not to worry about daily provisions, extending the declaration of Psalm 23:1. Even birds and plants do not worry or toil for the daily concerns which God provides. Likewise, God's people must trust the Lord for daily provision and focus themselves on living for God's kingdom. This extends the pledge in Psalm 116:9.