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Psalm 23

Don Burgess

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LORD OF THE SHEEP

Report on Tarahumara Translation

Since so many of you have prayed for the Baja Tarahumara work in Mexico and supported it in so many ways over the past 40 years, I want to give a quick report on what is happening. We are actually getting near the end of our main translation project, the New Testament. I only need to do some final checks on three more books and turn them into the consultant for his ideas and approval.

Some final checks need to be done on words and phrases that have given us such great problems down through the years. The most famous of those has been the word circumcision. Never in their wildest dreams would a Tarahumara ever think of something like that. And how do you translate the word in a way that the whole congregation does not break out in laughter every time it comes up? Another problematic area has to do with a lack of what are called class nouns. For example, the Baja Tarahumara language does not have a general word for tree. It has specific names for each of the species but does not have a word that covers the whole group. So if there is a tree mentioned in Scripture for which the Tarahumaras do not have a specific name, we have to make a number of adjustments. We might have to introduce a new name, like date palm, or tamarisk, and compare it to some known tree and then put in a picture. There is also no general word for birds. There is one that covers all the little birds of the forest, but it does not include hawks, or ducks or buzzards; they only have specific names. Also there is no word for body. Each body part has a name, but there is no word that stands for the whole body.

And hardest of all, there is no general word for ancestor. There is a general word that covers a few generations, but when they get beyond great great grandparent, they hardly have anything. Apparently they do not want to think about those old relatives because they do not want to encourage them to come back from the dead and cause them problems! There is an illustration of this that I have shared before with some of you here, but I'll use it again. We were translating in Mark where it talks about a man and woman being married and the man dies. His brother then marries the woman, and then he dies. And then the next brother marries the woman, and so on until all seven of the brothers have died. The Tarahumara man translating with me wanted to add: "And she finished off all seven of them." I had to figure out what was going on in his head. Apparently there is the belief that if a husband dies, the wife must perform certain ceremonies over a three-year period. If she does not, and if she remarries before the three years are up, then the spirit of the dead husband will come back and kill the next husband, and it will be the wife's fault because she did not perform the necessary ceremonies.

There are still plenty of things to pray about for the translation. We hope to record the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament soon. We will put that onto a chip that will hold 160 hours of recording and put that into a small player that works off of solar power and distribute as many of those as we can. The actual printing of the New Testament will come later. We do not feel the urgency of getting the printed word to them as much as we feel the urgency of getting the recorded word, because so many of them are not good readers or cannot read at all.

Into the Twenty-third Psalm

About four years ago, we were wondering if we would ever get this far or if we would ever finish the translation, because I started having heart irregularities (A-fib). About that time, we decided to do a translation of the Psalm 23 into Tarahumara to put onto a calendar. I thought, only six verses. No problem. We'll whip it out in a day or so. We did, but in the process I discovered that those six verses are just like every other six verses of Scripture: there is no end to their meaning. They are a well with no bottom. So my own personal

study has continued and hardly a week goes by that I do not find something else to add to it. It is now up to 75 pages. If God allows me to live as long as Moses, the study will have lots more pages.

The study of this psalm is what God has given me to help me through some difficult times. So I want to share with you some of the things I have learned about it and how it has helped in my life. Hopefully you will get some ideas of how it can be of help in your own life. We all end up with some kind of sickness sooner or later. God seems to use such things to grab our attention and force us to focus to him. So, when God forces you into a corner, so to speak, you do not want to waste that opportunity to draw closer to God. One of John Piper's papers is entitled, "Don't Waste Your Cancer" (Feb. 15, 2006). Don't waste your irregular heartbeat. Don't waste anything that God allows you to go through by failing to allow it to draw you closer to him.

It is helpful to have some Scripture that you have saturated your mind with to turn to at those times. God will take that and teach you things you would never have learned otherwise. Some of the best insights I have into Psalm 23 have come when I was flat on my back, wondering what was going on with my heart. It is at times like that that God is able to get our undivided attention. We need to be paying attention to what he might have in mind.

It is appropriate to be talking about Psalm 23 today. Last week marked the fifth anniversary of 9/11, when Todd Beamer prayed the Psalm 23 with an Airfone operator before he and the others rushed the terrorists on Flight 93.

**The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul,
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness
For his name's 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 annointest my head with oil,
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Context

First, let's put the psalm into some context (this will take up most of our time). The book of Psalms divides into five sections or books, each ending in a type of doxology. The first section goes from Psalm 1 to Psalm 41 and ends with the words, "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! Praise him now and forever! Amen! Amen!" According to the Talmud, these five divisions "correspond with the five-part division of the Pentateuch. It says: 'Moses gave Israel the five books of the Law, and David gave Israel the five books of the Psalms' (Midrash Tehillim)."¹

If the first book of Psalms is related to Genesis, and Psalm 23 is located in that section, then let's ask the question of how Psalm 23 is related to Genesis. It does not take much to see that all of the major themes of Psalm 23 can be related to Genesis. Let's just look at one of them, the most obvious one, that of shepherd and sheep. You can't read through Genesis without noting that almost everyone who was anyone was a shepherd. The first vocation mentioned in Scripture is that of shepherding. Genesis 4:2 says that was the occupation of Abel, the son of Adam and Eve. Abraham and Lot and Isaac and Jacob were all shepherds. Isaac and Jacob both found their wives among the shepherdesses.

And at the end of the book, when Joseph introduced his family to Pharaoh, he introduced them as shepherds. The whole book is about shepherds.

As an aside, we noted that the first mention of a shepherd was in Genesis 4. If you go to the end of the Old Testament, and come backwards about the same distance, to Zechariah 13:7, you will find the last reference to a shepherd. The first one in Genesis talks about a shepherd who was murdered, whose blood cried out for vengeance. The last one talks about a shepherd who would be murdered in the future, an obvious reference to the coming Messiah, whose blood would heal the nations.

When we talk about shepherds in the Old Testament, it is helpful to understand that the Hebrew word for shepherd does not mean exactly what the English word does. The English word means “one who herds sheep.” But the Hebrew word has more the meaning of “one who takes animals out to pasture.” The animals could be donkeys (Gen 36:24), or cattle (Gen 41:2), or even gazelles (Song of Songs 4:5), but the main animal seems to be sheep.

One day I got interested in just how many sheep were being talked about in Old Testament times. How large were their flocks? I grew up in West Texas where there are some big sheep ranches, and once worked at one of those ranches during sheep-shearing time. At times my job was to help count sheep. We would run them through a narrow place and count them by twos – two, four, six, eight, etc. So I was interested in the number of sheep the Israelites had and I started looking around in the Scriptures and found some clues. Just before the Israelites went into Canaan they fought the Midianites and took all their animals. There were 675,000 sheep among those that they took as spoils of war that were added to the who-knows-how-many they already had. Later, when the armies of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh defeated the Hagrites, it says, “the plunder taken from the Hagrites included 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 captives” (I Chron 5:18-22). When David got upset at Nabal for treating his men shamefully, it mentions that Nabal had 3,000 sheep that he had just sheared, plus a thousand goats (I Sam 25:2). (Job, by the way, ended up with 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys – Job 42:12.) And finally, when Solomon finished the temple, in two weeks of celebration he sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep (I Kings 8:63). Any way you look at it, we are talking big numbers of sheep. Sheep-herding was a major factor in the Hebrew culture.

The Israelites occupied Canaan and many of them became city dwellers. When the kingdom began to fall apart and many were deported to Assyria and Babylonia, you can imagine that the occupation of sheep herding, and the respect given to shepherders, diminished. This makes me think of the range wars that took place in the Old West between sheep herders and cattlemen. Sheep eat grass right down to the roots, and the cattlemen did not like that. Hollywood has exploited that theme a number of times. Around the time of Jesus, things were not looking good for shepherds. A Jewish *midrash* on Psalm 23 states: “The pious were forbidden to buy wool, milk or meat from shepherds. Civic privileges (functions of judge and witness) were withdrawn from them as from the tax collectors. No position in the world is as despised as that of the shepherd.”²

It must have come as a great surprise to the shepherds watching over their flocks by night, that angels would appear to them and that they would be the first people mentioned in Scripture to see the Son of God, even before the three kings. I imagine they were pleasantly surprised when they found that this newborn babe was living in a stable, a place they would have had no hesitation entering.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus restored that occupation to its rightful position of respect. Many times he used figures of speech relating to shepherds and sheep. For example in John 10 (NLT) he says, “I assure you, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! For a shepherd enters through the gate. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t recognize his voice” (Also Luke 15:4-7, Matt 9:36, 18:12, John 21:15). Jesus was not an occupational shepherd of animals, but the figurative use of that word was very important in his teaching about himself.

Taking this idea of shepherding on through the New Testament, in the letters of Paul and the others there is not much mention of sheep-herding, probably because the people being written to were basically city folk from Athens, Corinth, Rome and Ephesus. So instead of the words shepherd and sheep, we start getting words that are more relevant to the culture, such as *kyrios* (“Lord”) instead of Shepherd, and *ekklesia* (“church”) instead of sheep. About the only times we find the figurative use of shepherd and sheep are in the letters written to the churches in what is today Turkey (for example I Pet 2:25, 5:4). I’m not sure whether or not that was a big sheep-herding area back in the days of the apostles. I suspect it was, but today it certainly is. We picked up a story off the Internet recently about how some Turkish shepherders had taken their sheep up on a mesa and left them sitting there while they went over to one side to have something to eat. Very casually, one of the sheep got up, walked over to the edge of the cliff, and just walked right off. And 900 sheep followed him over the edge. The pile got so big that the ones landing on top survived because the landing spot got softer with every sheep that jumped.

What does that news story teach us about sheep? Among other things it teaches us that sheep are stupid. And who does the Bible compare you and me to? Sheep! Why? Figure it out. The Tarahumara girl who helped us translate the Psalm 23 kept asking, “Why does God compare us to sheep? Sheep are the dumbest animals around. I much prefer goats.” I would say: “Yes, yes. You’re getting the idea.”

Let me make just one more point concerning this usage of sheep and shepherd in the Scriptures. The languages of the Ancient Near East, like Egyptian, often used the idea of shepherd metaphorically, i.e. in a figurative way. They referred to their kings as their shepherds, or Pharaoh as the shepherd, or the general of an army as the shepherd. But this was not the case with the Israelites. They might have said that a king functioned as a shepherd – he did the work of a shepherd in taking care of the people – but they did not give him the title of shepherd, because there is only one Shepherd, and that Shepherd is God. And in the New Testament, Peter and others state that Jesus is that Shepherd.

Structure of Psalm 23

Now the structure of Psalm 23. Jan Fokkelman divides it into four sections.³ I think he is right, especially on the basis of the syllable count he has done. Among other things, he says that if you add the number of syllables found in the first section to those found in the third section, and then add the number of syllables found in the second section to those found in the fourth section, you find that each one of those adds up to 57 syllables.

When I mentioned that to a friend, his response was, “So what? How is knowing that going to help me in my Christian walk?” I said, “It might not, but what it says to me is this: In the same way that our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made, so the Scriptures, and the complicated languages that have gone into them, are fearfully and wonderfully put together.” As an Israeli linguist has written about Semitic languages, “It won’t come as a surprise that the verb is the cause of some consternation for learners of Semitic languages.... Think for a moment about all the meticulous planning which must have gone into developing such a system – it almost defies belief that such an algebraic scheme could have been conceived in any other way except through the inspiration of a gifted designer.”⁴ I stand in awe of a God who can put together languages and literature, and especially such a book as the Bible.

There are some strong reasons then to divide the psalm into four parts. There are also some good reasons for dividing it into three parts. For example, the first part of the psalm is written in indirect address, referring to God as “he”; the middle part is in direct address, referring to God as “you”; and the last part goes back to indirect address. The first part says, “The Lord is my shepherd, he makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul and he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” The shepherd is out in front or off to one side and the sheep are talking about him, not directly to him. But in verses 4 and 5 it changes. The scene has switched from a pleasant Garden of Eden-like situation where the shepherd is out front leading the sheep, to a very dangerous situation where the shepherd is right next to the sheep. “Yea though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I will fear no evil, because you are with me. Your rod and your staff they comfort me.” And then in the last part, verse 6, where it talks about the future, it goes back to the indirect address and simply says, “Surely

goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” It does not say, “I will dwell in your house forever,” as if he were talking directly to God.

So, what can we learn from this? We can learn that God is in front of us, he is right next to us, and he is behind us. In good times he is teaching us to follow his voice. In difficult times he is right there next to us. And at the end of our lives we can look back and see that he is coming along behind us. And he is not just dragging up the rear; he is actively pursuing us from behind. He has all the bases covered.

I noticed something similar in the book of Acts. At times it says that God or an angel appeared to someone in a vision, sort of like a dream. But when Paul was about to be shipwrecked on his way to Rome, it does not say that he had a vision or a dream. It says, “Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood right beside me, and he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar!’” (Acts 27:23-24). You and I will experience something similar when we are in those kinds of situations.

This change of address is quite common in the Psalms. One man has written: “The lesson I learned from this form is that it is good not to talk very long about God without talking to God... Not far behind the theological sentence, ‘God is generous,’ should come the prayerful sentence, ‘Thank you, God.’”⁵ We should not be spending all of our time talking about God. We need to be talking to God as well.

Daily Cycle

The first section (1-3) gives the daily cycle of a shepherd and his sheep, and it breaks into that cycle at noontime. When David writes: “He makes me to lie down in green pastures,” that is what happens at midday. Song of Songs (1:7) says, “Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you cause your sheep to lie down at midday.” After the sheep get their fill in the morning, the shepherd makes the sheep lie down so they can ruminate. That means that they bring it all up again and re-chew it. Tarahumaras and other shepherds all make their sheep lie down around noontime so they can get the most out of what they’ve been eating (see Phillip Keller’s *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23*). When you leave here in a few minutes I hope that is what you will do, that you will regurgitate what you’ve learned this morning, discuss it, question it, add your own insights to it. Get the most out of it. If you come up with something good, let me know. I would like to be a part of your ruminating process.

The second part of the daily cycle takes place in the afternoon, where the shepherd leads the sheep to still waters, waters of *menuhot*, as the Hebrew says. The same root is used in Genesis 2:2 where it says that God “rested on the seventh day.” The shepherd takes us to quiet, restful waters.

Let’s relate this idea of quiet, restful waters to the Jewish idea of “living water.” Water from a spring, or rainwater, was called “living water.” This was what was preferred when an Israelite dipped himself into a *mikveh* for ceremonial cleansing. Jesus applied the term to himself on several occasions. To quote Bargil Pixner, during the Passover, a ceremony occurred in Jerusalem where “the priests went down to the Shiloah Pool, where the water was conducted from the Gihon Spring. They drew water and went up with it in a joyful procession to the Temple, where they circled the altar of burnt offerings with the water seven times. Jesus apparently refers to this water drawing rite, when, on the last day of the feast, which John calls “the Great Day,” he stood and said in a loud voice:

‘If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.
Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,
streams of living water will flow from within him’ (John 7:37-38).⁶

Whether we are talking about still waters or rushing waters or any other kind of water, we must never forget that apart from water there can be no life. As the Jewish writer Harold Kushner says, “When the psalmist thanks his faithful shepherd for leading him to water, it is more than thirst-quenching refreshment for which he is grateful. It is life itself.”⁷

The third part of the daily cycle, “he restores my soul,” which is literally, “He causes my soul to return,” is talking about nighttime in a safe pen. The reasons I suggest that this restoring of soul is taking place in the sheep pen is because 1) it fits into the daily cycle, and 2) because the root for the Hebrew word for sheep pen is the same as the root for the Hebrew word for the Holy

of Holies (*dvr*). The Holy of Holies was where the presence of God was in the tabernacle, so I think David is relating the restoration of our souls in the sheep pen to that of being in the presence of God. It is the presence of God that restores our souls.

Thinking of a sheep pen as a place of restoring our souls, two ideas occur to me. One is that the sheep do not make the pen, the shepherd does. Any walls that you and I try to build up around ourselves thinking that we are protecting ourselves from the world are doomed to failure: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain” (Psa 127:1). And the other idea is that the pen is usually open (it has no roof), and does not offer much protection either from the elements or from a large predator such as a lion or a wolf. By separating us off in a pen, the Shepherd is not pulling us out of the world with all its problems. The Shepherd has made the pen in an open way so that we will not forget that our protection comes not so much from being in the pen as from the Shepherd who is guarding the gate.

The fourth part of the daily cycle, being led in paths of righteousness, would then relate to the leading of the sheep out to pasture in the morning, thus completing the daily cycle. It seems to me that the idea of going in paths of righteousness denotes a relationship with the Shepherd. We walk in paths of righteousness because he is with us. If he were not leading us along those paths they would not be paths of righteousness. He walks out in front of us and we follow his voice.

The Tarahumaras have a hard time with this verse because they do not lead sheep. They direct sheep from behind, yelling at them and throwing rocks and depending on sheep dogs to keep the sheep and goats in line. They actually will suckle a puppy with a ewe or a nanny goat in order to get the puppy to stay with the animals.

In the Bible, by the way, there is only one mention of dogs being used to herd sheep. That is in the book of Job, and it is not complementary in regards to the dogs; it is very negative. Job said, “But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs” (Job 30:1 NIV).

The Israelite shepherds trained their animals to follow the voice of the shepherd, and you and I need to be trained to follow the voice of our Shepherd. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice ...” And he usually does not shout at us. Usually it is a still, quiet voice, one that we will miss if we are not alert to what is going on. If we don’t hear it and don’t pay attention to it, he *will* have to shout at us, or else send someone like King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to get our attention. Wouldn’t it be much better to be led by the still, small voice of the Shepherd, than to be herded by sheep dogs barking at us or a sheep-herder throwing rocks at us?

Some have translated “paths of righteousness” as “circles of righteousness,” saying that David is referring to the paths that actually go somewhere as opposed to the many sheep trails that criss-cross any hill where sheep have grazed and go nowhere.⁸ Kushner translates this as “roundabout ways that end up in the right direction.” Numerous times I have gotten off on goat and sheep trails in Tarahumara country. They might start out looking like major trails that go somewhere, and then just sort of disappear, or else lead you out to the edge of a cliff. At times, I could hardly figure out how to get somewhere, even though I could see off in the distance where I wanted to go, because there were so many goat and sheep trails that went nowhere. In that country of rugged mountains and deep canyons, to get off the main trail puts you in all sorts of dangers.

We need to be sure that we are on paths of righteousness, not some sheep trail that only goes in circles.

Rest

Note that so far the author has taken us through three periods of rest: lying down in green pastures, drinking from still waters, and restoring our soul. Only then, when we have become obedient in resting and learn to rely on the strength and abilities of the Shepherd, are we taken out on paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

When we hear that phrase “for his name’s sake,” a little flag ought to go up in our minds. We need to be thinking, “Something is going on here.” Knowing that Jesus is our Shepherd, and the dramatic and dangerous life that Jesus led, we ought to start getting a little suspicious that life is not just going to be lying around stuffing ourselves and regurgitating and drinking cool drinks and

hanging out with the gang. God might have something else in mind. It might involve getting us out of our comfort zone. I meet so many people who are not willing to get out of their comfort zones, maybe for a weekend or a month or even a year. But God's claim to our lives is not limited in time, and it might involve some hardships, long-time hardships, for the sake of the gospel.

So, when we hear the words, "he leads us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake," we need to become more alert. Our senses need to be turned up a notch. Look at the next verse, "Yea though I walk through the valley of deep darkness." All of a sudden, we are no longer in the Garden of Eden. Life gets exciting, even dangerous. We find ourselves in situations where we are no longer in control. We even start wondering if God is in control.

That is where we are going to have to leave our study.

Ways of using Psalm 23 in hard times

Before we close, I want to briefly mention a couple of ways that this psalm can be used to help you when you do find yourself in a valley of deep darkness. The first is the time-honored way that this psalm has been used down through the years, and that is to go through the psalm emphasizing the different words as you go along and thinking about each word. For example, say to yourself, "The *Lord* is my Shepherd." Think about the word translated Lord. David of course did not write Lord, he wrote YHWH, which we gentiles usually pronounce Yahweh. The translation "Lord" showed up more than 200 years before Christ, in the Septuagint translation. But no matter how it is translated, it is referring to the one who has no beginning or end, the one who just "Is," and as Brian Morgan has pointed out, he is the one who is always faithful (sermon, April 18, 2004). The word is found in the first line and the last line of the psalm. It is as if David is saying, "He is the beginning and the end. The alpha and omega. Everything starts and ends with him, even into eternity." We are in good hands.

Then say to yourself, "The Lord *is* my shepherd." Not was. Not someday. The Lord is my shepherd, right now. And then, "The Lord is *my* shepherd. He might be other people's shepherd also, but what I need to know is, he is *my* shepherd. And then, "the Lord is my *shepherd*." Thinking about that word shepherd helps me to remember something very important, and that is: I am not the shepherd. He is. He is the one who makes me lie down in green pastures, who leads me by still waters and restores my soul and leads me in paths of righteousness. When I forget that I am not the shepherd and start acting as if I was, I get in trouble. I wander off checking out things I have no business checking out. Some anthropologist comes by and says, "Hey, Donaldo, come with me. We're gonna be checking out the sex habits of the Tarahumara frog." Wow!" I say. "I didn't even know that there was a Tarahumara frog. Let's go." And at that point it is good to have a wife around who says, "You're gonna what?" That is usually the end of that.

A second way I have used this psalm is this: At any time in my life I can ask myself, At what point am I, at this very moment, in the Twenty-third Psalm? I go through the psalm thinking, Am in green pastures? Am I in a dark valley? And if I am, do I see the Shepherd's rod and staff, poised to defend and guide me? Or am I at the point, in my older age, of wondering if God's goodness and covenant love are pursuing me, cleaning up some of the mess I have left? What is going to be my legacy after I am gone from this place? Going through the psalm like this gives me a framework that I can use to check up on myself and helps me to pull my life back into the Word.

A free translation

In closing, I want to read a free translation of Psalm 23 that I did, trying to include a number of the different ideas that I have learned in this study:

The One Who Is Eternal, who always does what he says,
is like a shepherd to me,

I will never be lacking in anything that is good for me.

2 In the middle of the day he causes me to rest in lush meadows,
and in the cool of evening he leads me to still, pure waters.

I am well cared for.

3 At night, when my emotions are frazzled,
his presence restores strength and stability to my soul.

And in the morning when he leads me out to pasture,
he leads me along paths of tranquility into ways that God has ordered.

And he does that not just for my sake,

he does it so that people will respect who he is.

It is his name and character that are at stake.

4 Even when I walk in places of spiritual darkness and physical violence,
I have no reason to fear evil,
because you are by my side.

I see the weapons you carry
and I gain confidence and courage.

5 And even when my enemies surround me
and are watching every move I make,
you set up a table and receive me as an honored guest,
at a banquet of exotic foods.

My cup of joy is full and overflowing.

6 How can I expect anything but the goodness of God and God's covenant
of love

to follow me, in fact pursue me, all the days of my life.

And I will live in the presence of the Eternal God,
the one who always does what he says, forever.

1 David Noel Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, "Book of Psalms" (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

2 Colin Brown (ed.), *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 3, "Shepherd" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 564-569.

3 J. P. Fokkeman, *The Psalms In Form: The Hebrew Psalter in Its Poetic Shape (Tools For Biblical Study)* (Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2003), 47.

4 Guy Deutscher, *The Unfolding of Language* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2005), 47.

5 John Piper, *Restful Words for Labor Day* (sermon), Aug. 31, 1980. http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1980/248_Restful_Words_for_Labor_Day/

6 Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus In Jerusalem* (Rosh Pina: Corazin Publishing, 1996), 46.

7 Harold Kushner, *The Lord Is My Shepherd* (New York: Random House), 47.

8 Nogah Hareuveni, *Desert and Shepherd in Our Biblical Heritage* (Neot Kedumim: The Biblical Landscape Reserve, Israel, 1991), 126.

9 Harold Kushner, *The Lord Is My Shepherd*, 72.

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