

“Long Live the King: God, Our Provider, Protector, and Promise”
Psalm 23

Trust God as Your Provider (vv. 1-3)

- His provision is personal. (v. 1a)

To [the shepherd] the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10:3)

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. (John 10:14)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27)

If he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is a Shepherd to me; he cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me. The words are in the present tense. Whatever be the believer's position, he is even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah. (Charles Spurgeon)

- His provision is plentiful. (v. 1b-2)
 - He provides from the bounty of His Word.
 - He provides through the gifts of His church.
- His provision is perfect. (v. 3)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28-29)

Trust God as Your Protector (vv. 4-5)

- He protects us by His presence. (v. 4)

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (Revelation 6:15-17)

- He protects us for His honor. (v. 5)

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

Trust God as Your Promise (vv. 6)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." (Revelation 21:3)

The Anti-Psalm 23

I'm on my own. No one looks out for me or protects me.
I experience a continual sense of need. Nothing's quite right.
 I'm always restless. I'm easily frustrated and often disappointed.
 It's a jungle—I feel overwhelmed. It's a desert—I'm thirsty.
My soul feels broken, twisted, and stuck. I can't fix myself.
 I stumble down some dark paths.
 Still, I insist: I want to do what I want, when I want, how I want.
 But life's confusing. Why don't things ever really work out?
I'm haunted by emptiness and futility—shadows of death.
 I fear the big hurt and final loss.
Death is waiting for me at the end of every road,
 but I'd rather not think about that.
 I spend my life protecting myself. Bad things can happen.
 I find no lasting comfort.
I'm alone ... facing everything that could hurt me.
 Are my friends really friends?
 Other people use me for their own ends.
I can't *really* trust anyone. No one has my back.
 No one is *really* for me—except me.
 And I'm so much all about ME, sometimes it's sickening.
 I belong to no one except myself.
 My cup is never quite full enough. I'm left empty.
Disappointment follows me all the days of my life.
 Will I just be obliterated into nothingness?
 Will I be alone forever, homeless, free-falling into void?
Sartre said, "Hell is other people."
 I have to add, "Hell is also myself."
It's a living death, and then I die.

—David Powlison