

Lesson 2

The Shepherd(Psalms 22-24)

1. What might have prompted David to write these three psalms? What is the mood in each of them? How would the imagery of the “Shepherd” have been received by the Israelites? How easy is it to relate to a shepherd in today’s Christian culture?
2. Choose one verse or phrase from Psalms 22—24 that stands out to you. This could be something you’re intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further. Write that here.
3. How are each of the burdens described above applicable to David? How are they applicable to Jesus? What other parallels can you see in Psalm 22 between David and Jesus?
4. Go through Psalm 22 and circle phrases that are applicable to Jesus. How does the shift in emphasis from verses 1–21 to 22–31 relate to Jesus’ story? What is the significance of 22:30–31 for today’s church? What does a psalm like this one teach us about the greater plan God has for His people?
5. What do you think accounts for the popularity of this particular psalm? Why do you think it’s especially popular for use in funeral ceremonies? What makes Psalm 23 more compelling to today’s culture than other psalms? What comfort do people find in the words of this psalm?
6. How does the psalm take on a new meaning if David wrote it late in life? What are some of the unique ways this perspective can help people deal with difficult times? How does the psalm speak to the issues David dealt with around the time of his son’s rebellion? What are some similar experiences in today’s world where the psalm fits just as appropriately?
7. How does the shift from he to you in verse 4 change the flavor and meaning of the psalm? Why is this important to the psalmist’s message? How does this personalize the shepherd?

8. Does the meaning of the passage change if the “table” referred to in verse 5 refers to a host’s dining table instead of a flat stretch of land? Why or why not? In what ways does verse 5 speak to believers today? What does it mean that the shepherd prepares a table “in the presence of my enemies”? Who are these enemies? What does it mean to be anointed with oil?
9. How does this psalm take on unique significance by following the narrative of Psalm 23? What is the theme of this psalm? What three privileges does God give His people in this psalm? How is the shepherd presented in this psalm?
10. Why is it significant that David refers to the “King of Glory” so many times in Psalm 24? How does the regal flavor of this psalm compare and contrast with the agrarian textures of Psalm 23?
11. When have you cried out like the psalmist in the first half of Psalm 22? What experiences in your life have led you to wonder if God was far from you? How did you work through those times? What “glory” did you experience on the other side of the suffering?
12. How has Psalm 23 been a comfort to you? What verses from that psalm have had the most influence on your seasons of suffering? How has your understanding of the psalm’s meaning changed since you first heard it? What are some ways it applies to your life today?
13. What is your reaction to the grandeur and majesty of the praise in Psalm 24? In what ways do you see evidence that the world is the Lord’s? How does this affect your daily life? What does it mean to you that God is the “King of Glory”?
14. Think of one or two things that you have learned that you’d like to work on in the coming week. Remember that this is all about quality, not quantity. It’s better to work on one specific area of life and do it well than to work on many and do poorly (or to be so overwhelmed that you simply don’t try).
15. Write a prayer below (or simply pray one in silence), inviting God to work on your mind and heart in those areas you’ve previously noted. Be honest about your desires and fears.

Before you start the next lesson, read Psalms 44—47.