

## Study for the Week: Thy Rod and Thy Staff

**Background Reading:** Psalm 23; Job 1: 1, 42:1-6; Philippians 3: 1-10; Exodus 14:10-17; Leviticus 27:32; Psalm 139:23-24; Exodus 3:13-14; John 8:56-58

### Day One:

Compare Job 1:1 and Job 42:5. How had Job's relationship with the Lord changed after his time of trial and testing?

### Day Two:

Read Philippians 3:1-10. According to verse eight, why did Paul "count all things but loss"? Should this be our goal as well?

### Day Three:

In Exodus 14:10-17, what simple object did God instruct Moses to use to bring victory over the enemies of Israel?

### Day Four:

Psalm 23:4 tells us that the shepherd used a rod and a staff. How do you think these things brought comfort to the sheep?

### Day Five:

In Psalm 139:23-24, the psalmist is asking the Lord to search for what?

### Day Six:

From Exodus 3:13-14, give the name of God who sent Moses to go before Pharaoh. What does this name reveal about the nature of God?



## Thy Rod and Thy Staff

### Psalm 23:4

Living in perilous times makes comfort hard to find.

However, as sheep we find comfort in the presence of the Shepherd.

## I. Our Shepherd Is Personal

As we move deeper into Psalm 23, we move closer to the Shepherd.

Notice in verse four, the psalmist says, *"I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."*

He is no longer speaking from a distance.

He is now in communion with the Shepherd.

We find that Job moved closer to the Lord through his suffering.

Compare **Job 1:1** and **Job 42:1-6**.

Job was saying, *"Lord, it is as though I had only heard of You before, but now I know You."*

How many of us talk about the Lord but have no real communion with Him?

Often we brag, *"He is my Savior. He meets all my needs!"*

# I. Our Shepherd is not to be viewed from a D\_\_\_\_\_.

He is personal.

He is not a god stuck on a pole or displayed somewhere for us to see; He is the God who lives in us.

The Lord does not want a distant glance from us; He wants a close personal relationship with us.

We are to commune with Him.

Consider the testimony of the apostle Paul in **Philippians 3:1-10**.

His heartbeat was *"that I may know him."*

What will it take for God to break through all the information, facts, and figures, and give us a real desire to know Him?

# II. Our Shepherd Is P\_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 23:4** says, *"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

The rod was a weapon, like a club.

The staff was a long stick with a curved end which could be used to retrieve wandering sheep.

The sheep were comforted to know that the shepherd had his rod and staff.

They realized the shepherd had all the power he needed.

In **Exodus 14:10-17**, we see that the rod was a symbol of power and authority.

God told Moses, *"Lift thou up thy rod."*

When a Hebrew read about the *"rod"* in **Psalm 23**, he thought of God's power to deliver and defeat the enemy.

The rod was also used to count the sheep. We read of this in **Leviticus 27:32**.

The sheep knew of the shepherd's care as they passed under the rod.

The shepherd would gently touch them and call them by name.

A shepherd would also use the rod to part the sheep's wool and search for a wound or disease on the flesh.

**Psalm 139:23-24** gives a vivid picture of this.

The psalmist asks God to search him and try him.

He is saying, *"Look beneath the surface and find what should not be in me!"*

The rod represents the powerful Word of God and the staff the Spirit of God that guides us.

# III. Our Shepherd Is P\_\_\_\_\_

As a child of God, there will never be a time when you have to find God.

We learn this attribute of God in **Exodus 3:13-14**. God said, *"I AM THAT I AM."*

God is a God always present. He has no past and no future.

He is eternally existent. What does this mean for us?

It means that whatever we are facing in life, God is present. He is with us.

In **John 8:58**, the Lord Jesus said, *"Before Abraham was, I AM"*

We need to remember that Christ is with us and that He is greater than anything we face.