

**THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH-PT 2
PSALM 23:4**

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Introduction

We began looking at this verse last week from the perspective of there being an actual place in ISRAEL that is called “*the valley of the shadow of death.*” We said SHEPHERDS would look out for their SHEEP as they led their SHEEP through that narrow VALLEY that was full of DANGERS from one side to the other to PASTURES they could not get to any other way.

So, we were looking at what it means to “*walk through the VALLEY of the SHADOW OF DEATH*” from that perspective. This is the only place where this particular VALLEY is mentioned in the SCRIPTURES.

We said this pictures the help that our SHEPHERD gives us when we as BELIEVERS are led by our SHEPHERD thru the VALLEYS in this life! (A VALLEY being indicative of “*low times*” like times of TROUBLE, TRIALS, or TRIBULATION in this life). Those times would be more difficult, or even impossible for us to get through were it not for the abiding PRESENCE OF OUR SHEPHERD to help us through those times!

But this evening I want us to look closer at the expression “*THE SHADOW OF DEATH*” from the SCRIPTURE and see what we can learn about it.

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I found the term “*SHADOW OF DEATH*” used 10 times in the BOOK OF JOB alone which is believed to be the oldest book of the SCRIPTURES!

The HEBREW word translated “*shadow of death*” is used poetically for *thick darkness (Job 3:5); as descriptive of Sheol (the grave or the abode of the dead (Job 10:21-22; 38:17); figuratively of deep distress (Job 12:22; 16:16)*

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This expression is also found in *Psalms 44:19 and Psalm 107:10, 14.*

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Look at the PROPHET ISAIAH’S use of it in *Isaiah 9:2.*
MATTHEW quoted JESUS’ fulfillment of this verse in *Matthew 4:16.*
(For context read verses 12-16)

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Look also at the PROPHET JEREMIAH’S use of it in *Jeremiah 2:6; 13:16.*

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And now let’s look also in the NEW TESTAMENT writings of LUKE at how ZACHARIAS the PRIEST (*JOHN the BAPTIST’S father*) was filled with the HOLY GHOST and used it in his song recorded in *Luke 1:67-80!*

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Now, we should realize that the understanding of DEATH was limited in OLD TESTAMENT times and so, we often see how they referred to it as DARKNESS, but understand that they were limited in what was revealed to them about DEATH! When one’s eyes close in DEATH it may seem like DARKNESS!

But we as NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS have more knowledge about DEATH than the OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS did because we have the LORD’S COMPLETED WORD which they did not have!

For those of us that know the LORD and thereby have JESUS as our SHEPHERD, look at an important truth found in *1 John 1:3-5.* It says here that in GOD IS LIGHT and IN HIM “*is no darkness at all*” and we know that JESUS IS GOD!

Now, if there is a SHADOW, we know a light is shining somewhere to cast that SHADOW. We should not think of DEATH as a sudden veil of DARKNESS that is going to come over us as BELIEVERS, because the NEW TESTAMENT sheds more LIGHT on DEATH and also on what comes after DEATH than the OLD TESTAMENT does!

We are familiar with the word SHADOW...it implies the APPROACHING of something or the nearness of something. (e.g. *On a sunny day if a SHADOW appears, it has done so because something has blocked the fullness of the LIGHT of the sun...usually a cloud, especially a STORM cloud!*)

When we think of our APPROACHING APPOINTMENT with PHYSICAL DEATH in this life it CASTS A SHADOW! The same is true when a loved one who is near DEATH. It casts a SHADOW OF DARKNESS that we’d rather not see!

Hebrews 9:27– “And as it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Certainty!)

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We know we have an **APPOINTMENT** with **DEATH** because of our **RELATIONSHIP** with and **IDENTIFICATION IN ADAM**.
(1 Corinthians 15:22–“For as in Adam all die...”)

Romans 5:12–“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

The **SHADOW** is **OF DEATH** is because **DEATH** is approaching!
Whatever **DARKNESS** happens to be there is because it is **“CLOTHED IN MYSTERY”** because none of us has ever **DIED** before!

But, wait a minute, but we have **DIED! WE HAVE DIED IN CHRIST!**
And IN CHRIST we have been RAISED AGAIN to LIFE EVERLASTING! That is a **BIBLE TRUTH** that the **LORD** desires for us to **LIVE** in the **REALITY OF!**
(Romans 6:3-11, 22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:45-58)

And that is why even when we **WALK THROUGH** this **VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH** that we **FEAR NO EVIL! OUR VERY LIVES ARE WRAPPED UP IN CHRIST, OUR SHEPHERD!**
OUR SHEPHERD will be **WITH US** each and every step of the way!

When we **BY FAITH, TRUSTED CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOUR**, we were placed **IN HIM!** For the **BELIEVER**, there can be no veil of **DARKNESS** at **DEATH**, because the **BELIEVER** is **IN CHRIST**, and with **HIM** being **GOD**, *“in Him is no darkness at all!”*

Now, **THE KNOWLEDGE THAT PHYSICAL DEATH IS COMING** should help us to **PUT OUR PRIORITIES IN PLACE**. *(Colossians 3:1ff)*

So, we have not yet reached that point of **PHYSICAL DEATH**, but its **SHADOW** we can see and know it is coming one day! But **IN CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD**, though we **WALK THROUGH THIS VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH**, we don't have to **FEAR ANY EVIL** because **HE IS WITH US AND HE HAS ALREADY FACED DEATH FOR US AND WAS VICTORIOUS IN IT!** (**“VICTORY IN JESUS!”**)