

Psalm 23:3a: The Lord Leads, then Guides

God leads us through His Word. In the Bible, “water” is often used figuratively to refer to Bible doctrine. The Lord leads the positive believer to an understanding of doctrines which bring to him refreshment. This is application of doctrine to experience. God leads but we must volitionally follow.

When we follow God’s lead, we learn the problem-solving devices found in the water of the Word. In this manner we acquire the ability to solve life's problems which in turn brings refreshment to our souls.

Therefore, Psalm 23:2 speaks of doctrinal orientation to reality followed by its application under pressure to the exigencies of life. This process results in the reversionist’s soul being restored. This is the subject of Hebrews 12:13 and Psalm 23:3.

The third verse begins with the piel imperfect of the verb: *shub* - “restore”

This verb is causative and means to cause to turn back therefore “to restore.” What is restored in the believer comes up next as the object: *nephesh* - “soul”

When a believer is out of fellowship, his soul is turned over to the dictatorship of the sinful nature. Thus, his thinking becomes contorted as the sinful nature seeks to assuage the desires of the flesh expressed in the various trends of the sinful nature. Trends run all the way from extreme asceticism to antinomianism, expressed by legalism in the former and lasciviousness in the latter.

As the soul’s inventory begins to atrophy due to lack of spiritual gymnastics, its defenses begin to fail. Its power source has been extinguished due to personal sin and its growth process and decision-making and problem-solving procedures are neutralized.

Poor decisions are daily cutting deep ruts into the soul thus developing a reversionistic lifestyle. This process is reversed and recovery is attained by confession of sin and resumption of Bible study. This recovery is referred to by David as the restoration of the soul.

Please note that the One who does the restoring is God and the one who receives the restoration is David’s soul.

Psalm 23:3 - He (God) causes my soul to be restored.

The second phrase of Psalm 23:3 comes next and it begins with our old friend from Proverbs 4:26 and its counterpart in Hebrews 12:13, the prepositional phrase: *be ma'gal* - “A rut in which wheels revolve; a track, a way, a path; a wheel-track” Next comes the verb: *nahal* - “to lead or to guide.”

This verb has two connotations in this verse.

Since David is involved in reversion recovery, he is forced to first orient and then adjust to his circumstances. His orientation must first be to the leadership of the God of Israel whom we know as Jesus Christ. His adjustment must be to His guidance in the resolution of the problems he faces.

The Lord first leads, then guides.

We better understand this process in the Church Age since we have as an historical reference the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

In the incarnation, Jesus Christ established precedence for the Christian way of life. In this way our Lord established the straight wheel-tracks of righteousness.

Following salvation, we are guided by Him in one of two ways, either direct guidance through divine discipline or indirect guidance through the function of the three spiritual skills.

For our Lord in the incarnation, point **a** was the Virgin Birth and point **b** was the cross. Getting from one to the other required Him to blaze a perfect trail and follow it impeccably. His blazing established the prototype divine power system which we now have as wheel-tracks for guidance.

As our Leader, Christ was out on the point, going ahead of us, blazing the straight wheel-tracks of righteousness in which we are to follow. As our guide, He provides information for our utilization as we follow the wheel-tracks He established.