



## Lab Study Guide Winter 2018

Date: 02.12.18  
Text: Psalm 23

Teacher: Ben  
Any other Text?: John 10:11-15, 27

1. **Read the Text Together** Read the Text for this week out loud with your group.

2. **Make Observations** What stands out? What phrases caught your attention?  
Any repetition, contrasts, comparisons?

3. **Ask Questions** What is confusing or hard to understand? Any details that might be important?  
Ask: who, what, where, when, why, how?

### 4. Background Information

Sheep are the most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible – 400 times if we include references to flocks. Shepherds about 100 times. Biblical Shepherding takes place in the desert where they only get about 2" of rain a year and no rain for 5 or 6 months straight. Often in the late afternoon or evening, during these hot dry summer months, a light breeze blows inland from the Mediterranean Sea (40-50 miles away) carrying moisture in the air that creates a little bit of dew. These tiny water droplets gather on desert rocks and then run off with just enough moisture creating tiny tufts of grass around these rocks. These tiny tufts of grass are known as green pastures.

The topography of the land of Israel is as such that it peaks in the middle of the country, like a rooftop, and the "peak" receives about 24" of rain every year. So if it's raining on the peak, in Jerusalem, the water flows down 3,000 foot drop in elevation, over the span of about 15 miles to the Dead Sea. As the water flows down, it carves out huge channels called wadis, for water to rush through, sometimes the water can become several stories high and often the people at the bottom in the desert have no idea water is even coming. However, after these flash floods rush through, they leave behind these small pools of water for sheep to drink. Just enough to drink.

"*Adonai Ro-iy, lo echsar*" - The LORD is my shepherd, I am in need of nothing. Often translated "shall not want," but to me that always sounds like we shouldn't want stuff/don't covet. עָרִירָה (*Echsar*) *have a need, be lacking*. This Hebrew word in Psalm 23 actually covers both past and future tenses. Literally, "I am and will be in need of nothing." Why? Because God is my shepherd and he will take care of us.

### 5. Application Questions

1. What makes shepherding in the desert so difficult?

2. What do you think it means for God to be our shepherd?
3. As sheep, what does a mean to follow Jesus as the Good shepherd? Do you know the sound of his voice?
4. With what areas of your life is it difficult to trust him to take care of your needs? What makes trusting him so difficult at times?

6. Have everyone answer....

What verse or phrase from this Psalm was most powerful for you this week?

