

Week #: 14 Text: _____ Title: Follow the Rabbi #3/4

Songs: _____

Audio: Ray Vander Laan – Follow the Rabbi teaching

Can be found online at: <https://oneinjesus.info/2008/10/ray-vander-laans-follow-the-rabbi-lectures/>

Desert Living:

- Hospitality is their way of life.
- Pita bread is made with flour, water, and salt, rolled flat and baked over a fire, then passed around the group to share together.

Shepherds:

- Shepherds in that culture are almost always pre-menstruating girls – sometimes little boys if there are no girls in the family.
- David confronted Saul in an exchange that is very telling.

Green Pastures:

Many Westerners think of the "green pastures" mentioned in Psalm 23 as tall, lush grasslands like those in North America. But such pastures don't exist in Israel.

The regions in Israel where shepherds live are predominantly wilderness areas. They have two seasons: the rainy season from November through March (when even the desert becomes green), and the dry season from April through October when the landscape is brown.

Even during the rainy season, the wilderness grasses remain short. Blades of grass grow in the shade of rocks, where moisture is trapped. At first glance, the "green pastures" of Israel look like a barren, rocky wasteland. But each day, a few blades of grass grow and there is enough to nourish the flocks for another day.

Sheep that graze in the wilderness receive enough nourishment for the moment, but no more. Day to day, the sheep depend on their shepherd to lead them to "green pastures" and water they need.

- Rabbi Akiva said: "Worry is dealing with tomorrow's problems with today's pasture."
- Faith is believing that I don't have to sweat tomorrow, because if I follow the shepherd, he will provide when tomorrow comes.

Psalms 23

- Most of the time sheep are led and the shepherd is out in front, but in the dark this changes.
- Sheep will go to the shepherd's voice even if there's a wadi in between. They always follow the shepherd's voice.
- If the shepherd is killed in a wadi flood, they have to slaughter the flock, because they won't follow another voice.
- Goats will go their own way. They always think their way is better.
- If Jesus called you to go through a wadi, would you go? If you wouldn't, you process His call as a westerner, not an easterner – through your head, not your heart.
- When darkness comes – “the shadows come” – the shepherd drops back to be in the middle of the flock, talking continually so the sheep can hear her voice and follow safely.
- If you're in Jesus' flock, every sheep behind you depends on you. Because if you go off your own way, and the one behind you follows, then everyone from there on takes a wrong path. So part of knowing the Lord's path is to be in a flock of sheep with people who are seeking to be on that path. You have to join a flock that follows the Shepherd.
- The sprigs of grass that pop up will die as soon as the sun hits it. It does not last long. By mid-afternoon there is no more grass. It then appears again the next morning when the dew settles again.
 - It's like manna.
 - Manna came in the desert because you had to learn to depend on God for today.
 - Very few of us need to depend on God for the needs of life today. We are not desert people by nature.

Psalms 23 (Complete Jewish Bible): A psalm of David

⁽¹⁾ *ADONAI* is my shepherd; I lack nothing.

² He has me lie down in grassy pastures,
he leads me by quiet water,

³ he restores my inner person.

He guides me in right paths
for the sake of his own name.

⁴ Even if I pass through death-dark ravines,
I will fear no disaster; for you are with me;
your rod and staff reassure me.

⁵ You prepare a table for me,
even as my enemies watch;
you anoint my head with oil
from an overflowing cup.

⁶ Goodness and grace will pursue me
every day of my life;
and I will live in the house of *ADONAI*
for years and years to come.