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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Devotional

The Valley of the Shadow



Day 16/101
Through the Psalms
By Derek Prince

> Even though I walk
> through the valley of the shadow of death,
> I will fear no evil,
> for you are with me;
> your rod and your staff,
> they comfort me.
> (Psalm 23:4)

Everything David says in this psalm is the outworking of the opening statement: "The LORD is my shepherd." It all flows out of his direct, personal relationship to the LORD as his shepherd.

Here David speaks of what this relationship means to him when he walks through "the valley of the shadow of death." God does not guarantee us that we will never walk through this valley. In fact, David's words imply that at some time or other we will. Nor do I believe that "the valley of the shadow of death" is only, or primarily, the experience of physical death when our life on earth ends. Elsewhere in Scripture the same phrase, *the shadow of death,* is applied to situations in this present life.

I believe there can be many occasions in this life when we walk through this valley of the shadow: occasions of bereavement, loneliness, sickness, persecution, discouragement. The LORD does not promise that we will not walk through this kind of valley. But He does promise to be with us. In particular, He makes His rod and His staff continually available to us. The rod represents discipline; the staff represents support. It is significant that the rod comes before the staff. If we want God's support, we must first submit to His discipline. On that basis, His presence with us is guaranteed even in the darkest valley.

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Transcript: WD-B033-016-ENG
Last Updated: 01 Oct 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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