

I. What is the “valley of the shadow of death” in Psalm 23:4?

- A. This Psalm is written with the idea of a shepherd’s relationship with his sheep.
 1. David speaks of the Lord being his Shepherd through this life.
 2. The Lord provides all the things that he is in need of, and He keeps David free from harm.
 3. This type of imagery is familiar to David because he was a shepherd by trade.
- B. The “valley of the shadow of death” isn't thought to be a littler place, but instead represents the difficulties that can be present in this life.
 1. A shepherd might have to, at times, take his sheep through a valley that is surrounded on both sides and that has many dangerous animals in it. This is a pretty precarious situation that might seem impossible to get out of without harm.
 2. But David says that even in that situation, my Lord protects me by His rod and His staff and he is comforted because his trust is in the Lord.
- C. We learn from this that we can have confidence in the dangerous days we live in. God is still our Shepherd. He still comforts us. He is with us and will sustain us if we put our faith, hope, and trust in Him.

II. What does the Bible say about other doctrines?

- A. Actually, the Bible says a good bit and teaches against false doctrines (teachings or beliefs).
 1. Jesus taught against the teaching of Corban in **Mark 7:9-13**.
 2. Paul rebukes the Galatians for following after a different ‘gospel’. (**Gal. 1:6,7**)
 3. Paul constantly deals with those who taught the necessity of keeping The Law. (**Romans, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, etc.**)
 4. Paul also addresses the false teachings concerning the end times. (**II Thess. 2**)
 5. Many other times throughout the New Testament we can see where the inspired writers were having to deal with teachings that were not from God and therefore false.
- B. What does this mean to us?
 1. It means that there is a true doctrine and then there are false doctrines.
 2. It means that it is possible for us to have the wrong doctrine which contradicts the teaching that there is no absolute truth.
 3. It means we must be careful to accurately divide God’s Word. (**II Tim. 2:15**)

III. How do you determine what is an aid and what is an addition?

- A. Why does this question even matter?
 1. We are to only act according to the authority of God. (**Col. 3:17**)
 2. If God has given a binding pattern and example of something then we must be sure to follow it. (**Heb. 8:1-5**)
- B. Defining the terms.
 1. An aid carries out the action without changing the action at all.
 2. An addition, on the other hand, changes the action in some way.
- C. Let’s use our singing of praise as an example.
 1. We are to let the Word of Christ dwell in us and one way of doing that is by singing to one another. While singing we are teaching and admonishing one another, and we show our thankfulness to God.
 2. Lets consider the example of what we having going on on the screen.
 - We see some people leading the group. We use a leader to direct us the singing, but we are still just singing.
 - We see a screen with a projection from a computer with the lyrics on it. We use that as well, but we are also still just singing.
 - However, we also see that a few of those people on the stage are playing instruments. They are no longer just singing, but they are also playing which is not a commandment we have in the New Testament for the Christian.
 - There has also been a big shift over the past few years of going from the pattern of audience participation in the singing to be more of audience being entertained by the performing that is happening on the stage. Can’t tell for sure if that is the case here, but it very well could be since we have all the components of a performance there on the stage. This also violates the command to sing because the audience is not participating in the praise, but is instead just an audience that is taking in the performance without giving praise themselves.
 3. The Lord’s Supper is also a good example to illustrate the point.
 - The Lord instituted unleavened bread and grape juice as the emblems of His death’s remembrance.
 - We use the trays to assist us in passing the emblems, but we are still simply eating the bread, drinking the juice, and remembering.
 - What if we decided to add some peanut butter or jelly to the bread? Then we would not simply be eating the bread, but we would also then be eating the bread and whatever condiment we choose. In doing so we would no longer be simply following the command and example, but we have added another element.

- D. Bottom line: we may use aids to assist us in our obeying of God's commandments, but we cannot add anything that would change what we are actually doing because that would then be disobedience to God's commands and breaking of His pattern.

IV. Does God consider viewing pornography to be adultery?

- A. This is important to ask because of adultery being the only acceptable reason for lawful divorce and remarriage. **(Matt. 19:8,9)**
- B. We need to understand what the 'immorality, sexual immorality, or fornication' of **Matthew 19:9** is.
1. The Greek word we're concerned about is '*porneia*.' This word is used in reference to any type of illicit physical sexual interaction between two unmarried people.
 2. Therefore, the only valid reason for a divorce is if one spouse has physical sexual interaction with someone other than their spouse.
- C. The viewing of pornography, itself, is lusting after another person. This is condemned by Jesus in **Matt. 5:28**.
1. Some have taken this passage and have made it out to mean that any lusting is grounds for divorce. That is not Jesus' point at all.
 2. The Jews had watered down the commandments of God and allowed for lusting because it wasn't 'as bad' as actually adultery, but Jesus is saying that evening lusting (or coveting, same as word for covet in the 10th commandment) is a condemnable sin before God, but simply lust is not grounds for lawful divorce.
- D. No, the viewing of pornography or any type of lusting for someone other than your spouse is not grounds for a just divorce.
1. Both sins will condemn your soul to hell, but one is the action of fornication while another is simply the thought of doing so.
 2. Citing lust as a reason for divorce can get sticky because it is hard for someone to prove what is in the mind of another. It is extremely difficult to know what is in another person's mind. **(I Cor. 2:11)**
 3. While both are sins, only one is a just cause for a spouse to put the guilty party away and be able to remarry.

V. Why are there not miracles, today?

- A. The purpose of miracles was to instill faith and prove the power of the speaker.
1. Jesus' miracles were used to show His power, not for the betterment of mankind physically. **(John 6:26,27)**
 2. Jesus gave His Apostles power to do many miraculous things as they spread the message of the Gospel. **(Matt. 10)**
 3. The Apostle's second commission involved the same use of miracles. **(Mark 16:14-20)**
 4. The Apostles were able share the Gospel message through the the speaking of tongues. **(Acts 2:1-11)**
 5. Paul was able to survive a snake bite and that caused some to think he was a God. **(Acts 28:1-6)**
- B. Miracles are no longer needed because we have the completed revelation of God.
1. Miracles were needed while God's Will was incomplete. **(I Cor. 13:8,9)**
 2. Once the perfect had come, the miracles were no longer needed. **(I Cor. 13:10-12)**
 3. We have that which is perfect **(Jude 3; James 1:25)**
- C. The means of passing of the miraculous gifts is no longer available.
1. The Holy Spirit has come upon 2 groups of people for 2 specific purposes.
 - He fell upon the Apostles on Pentecost for them to begin their teaching of the Gospel message. **(Acts 2)**
 - He fell on the house of Cornelius to show that they were ready to accept the Gospel message as Gentiles. **(Acts 10)**
 2. The Apostles could lay hands and give the gift of miracles, but no one could then turn around and do the same thing. No record of a non-Apostle ever passing on spiritual gifts. **(Acts 8:17)**
 3. Therefore, the source of miraculous power is no longer present.