

Paths of Righteousness

Ponder: What path are you following?

Scripture: “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psalm 23:3b, NKJV).

How God’s people behave matters to Him. As David’s Shepherd, the Lord led him “in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (v. 3b).

Daniel 9:14 says, “the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does.” This being so, it follows that His word is righteous; and the “paths of righteousness” would be those ways that are according to His word. Since David lived while the Law of Moses was in force, the “paths of righteousness” for him would have been obedience to that Law. David’s son, Solomon, wrote of the importance of walking this path: “In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death” (Proverbs 12:28).

God loves us and wants us to walk where He leads, in paths of righteousness, because this is what is best for us. However, our well-being is not the only consideration here. Note that David said the Lord led him in the paths of righteousness “for His name’s sake.” Yes, God is concerned for us, but He is also concerned for His own reputation! When His people behave badly, God’s reputation becomes tarnished. Even when God had to punish His people, Israel and Judah, the Gentiles thought badly of Him for it. They erroneously assumed God was incapable of protecting His people. More than once He restrained Himself, not because His people did not deserve destruction, but for the sake of His own name (see Ezekiel chapter 20, where this point is emphasized four times). Paul told the Jews in Romans 2:24, “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Today, obeying God’s will as revealed in the New Covenant is walking in the paths of righteousness. Peter points out the danger of straying from that way: “For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them” (2 Peter 2:21).

Through His word, God is leading you in the paths of righteousness. Are you following His lead?