

## GETTING THE WHOLE STORY

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10

For the most part, news and media commentators make no references to spiritual matters, God, an afterlife, or the eternal results or consequences of a day's activities. For Christians, filtering the "news" through a biblical worldview can be a major challenge. But if we don't, we miss the rest of the story.

For instance, if a famous individual is accused of a crime, we follow the proceedings—sometimes spread out over months or years—without hearing any reference to God's perspective. Eventually we may find ourselves agreeing that the defendant's peers are the real jury, and that the judge's sentence is the real punishment. We lose sight of the truth that the ultimate sentence awaits people who violate God's laws on this earth, whether or not they are ever apprehended, arrested, tried, or convicted.

The apostle Paul had to remind a group of Christians in the city of Thessalonica of this truth. They were being persecuted for their faith, and they apparently wondered if justice was ever going to be done. From a human perspective, it seemed that those who were opposed to God were meeting no opposition as they went about their destructive work. Paul's words to this group of Christians were as strong as any in the Bible concerning the ultimate end of people "who do not know God and . . . do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess. 1:8). While the Thessalonians were concerned about people who persecute Christians, Paul cast a wider net: All people who are outside of a relationship with God in Christ will suffer everlasting destruction.



**50% OFF**

USE CODE:  
**CODE50**

Expires January 31<sup>st</sup>

THIS TEACHING LETTER BY  
DR. KEN BOA IS MADE POSSIBLE  
THROUGH THE GENEROUS  
DONATIONS OF OUR PARTNERS.

[KENBOA.ORG/DONATE](http://KENBOA.ORG/DONATE)

[KENBOA.ORG](http://KENBOA.ORG)

Reflections Ministries

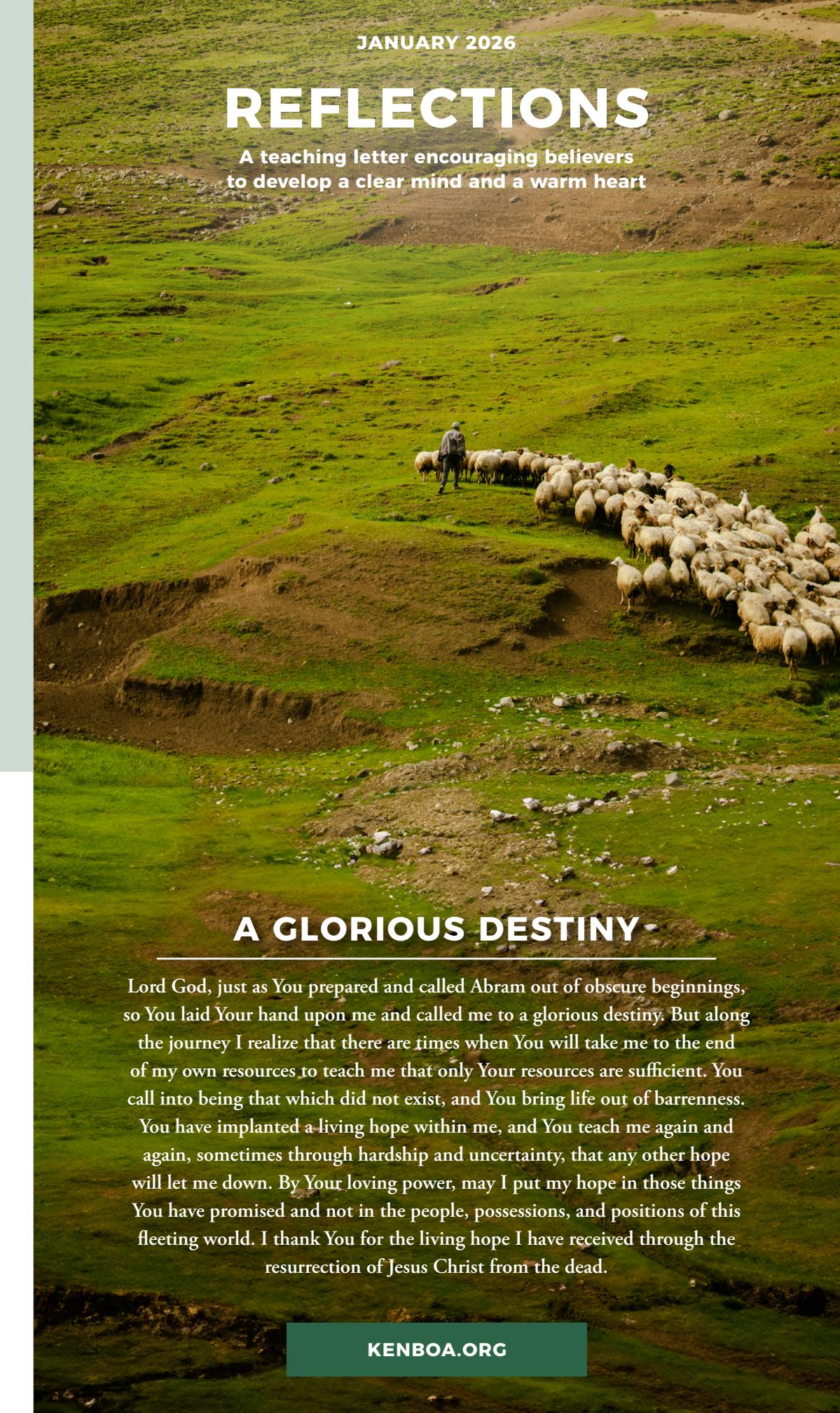
One Piedmont Center, Suite 130 • Atlanta, GA 30305

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## REFLECTIONS

A teaching letter encouraging believers to develop a clear mind and a warm heart



## A GLORIOUS DESTINY

Lord God, just as You prepared and called Abram out of obscure beginnings, so You laid Your hand upon me and called me to a glorious destiny. But along the journey I realize that there are times when You will take me to the end of my own resources to teach me that only Your resources are sufficient. You call into being that which did not exist, and You bring life out of barrenness.

You have implanted a living hope within me, and You teach me again and again, sometimes through hardship and uncertainty, that any other hope will let me down. By Your loving power, may I put my hope in those things You have promised and not in the people, possessions, and positions of this fleeting world. I thank You for the living hope I have received through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[KENBOA.ORG](http://KENBOA.ORG)

# Psalm 23:1–2—A Shepherd Who Loves and Cares

In this first installment of a three-part series on Psalm 23, we will focus on verses 1–2.

The best known of all the psalms is a brief but rich meditation by a shepherd who draws an analogy between his caring relationship to his flock and the Lord's care for him. Reflection upon the truths so beautifully captured in these six verses is a source of great encouragement and comfort, especially in times of stress and affliction.

## “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD” (v. 1a)

The world is always ready to define us in terms of our relative position, power, performance, or possessions. But the wisdom of the Word tells us to let God, not the world, define us. Our greatest source of dignity and worth is found in our relationship to the infinite, personal Creator of the heavens and earth. We are His by virtue of creation and redemption, and in Christ we are the special

objects of His attention and affection.

“All of us like sheep have gone astray,” says Isaiah 53:6. Like sheep, we humans are often stubborn, foolish, and fearful. Yet the Good Shepherd (as Jesus calls Himself in John 10) has chosen us, called us by name, and marked us for His own.

Because it cannot take care of itself, a sheep's lot in life depends on the character and provision of its shepherd. If we are under any shepherd other than Christ, we will be subject to a master that is indifferent or tyrannical. Only when we submit to Christ's ownership will we flourish in the pastures of forgiveness, freedom, and the gentleness and firmness of His personal care.

## “I SHALL NOT WANT” (v. 1b)

David's affirmation is not a promise that obedience to God leads to material prosperity or immunity from

hardship and grief. This was certainly not the experience of the apostles and prophets who were obedient to the Lord's call. “I shall not want” speaks of the special care and security that Jesus provides for each member of His flock.

Our Shepherd calls us to find our joy and contentment in Him and not in our possessions or circumstances. He came to give us abundance of life (John 10:10), and this abundance flows out of our relationship with Him and not out of the inferior pasturage of the world's goods.

## “HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES” (v. 2a)

The sheep cannot lie down unless their needs have been met. If the forage is dry and brown, the flock will have little rest as it grazes for longer periods of time to find nourishment. Fear of predators, aggravation caused by flies and parasites, and tension produced by overly aggressive sheep are other anxieties that can prevent the sheep from lying down in the pasture. A good shepherd will reduce these anxieties by providing the sheep with good

pastures, protecting them from predators, treating them for pests and parasites, and disciplining belligerent sheep. By analogy, we will not be able to enjoy the spiritual fruit of joy, peace, and contentment unless we find our provision, protection, and serenity in Christ.

## “HE LEADS ME BESIDE QUIET WATERS” (v. 2b)

If sheep are not led to good water, they will seek to satisfy their thirst in polluted and stagnant sources. On a spiritual level, we are blessed if we thirst for the living water that the Good Shepherd wants us to drink. “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37–38; see also John 4:10, 13–14). We should pray for the grace to thirst more deeply for this water of life and righteousness.

The prophet Jeremiah affirmed that no substitute for the living water that Jesus offers us will satisfy the deepest longings of our heart:

My people have committed two evils:  
They have forsaken Me,  
The fountain of living waters,  
To hew for themselves cisterns,  
Broken cisterns,  
That can hold no water.  
(Jer. 2:13).

If any person, pursuit, or passion other than the Lord Jesus is the primary focus of your heart, you will not know the satisfaction He invites you to find in Him.

This is not to say that by following Jesus we will find ourselves on a path of ongoing tranquility and delight. But it would be foolish for us to leave the Shepherd when the journey becomes difficult. On our own, we will only find muddy, infested pools rather than the pure, clear mountain stream between banks of trees to which Jesus is leading us.

No matter how dark or dangerous the journey may be, our Shepherd is always with us, and not even death can separate us from His love and care (Rom. 8:38–39). This is why the apostle Paul could write from prison, “To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

One Piedmont Center, Suite 130 • Atlanta, GA 30305  
(404) 842-0707 • [info@kenboa.org](mailto:info@kenboa.org)

**KENBOA.ORG**