



Nobody knows for certain what will happen in the next twelve months.

Some people may worry when they look ahead because of the dangers they think might happen: a return to war, a constant

struggle to provide for the family needs; with daily risks of injury or disease.

Other people may be excited looking ahead. This is the year they plan to be married, or to graduate from university, or to finish training at work, enabled to live more independently.

For those who have known bad times, the New Year brings an apparent chance to start afresh. We learn from our mistakes and make sure they will not happen again. We are a year more experienced than we were this time last year. Hopefully, we are a year wiser as well as a year older!

Psalm 23 is a picture of how God looks after his people:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake". Did you notice the *four personal benefits* the Psalm-writer enjoys by knowing God as his friend?

When the Psalmist thinks about the future he remains confident, certain that God will be ever present and always willingly helping: *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – the darkest valley – I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me".*

So, as we go ahead into 2008 ...

*"Let us fix our eyes on **Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him **endured the cross**, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart**",* Hebrews 12:2-3. **He** is our shepherd!