

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The phrase “**valley of the shadow of death**” comes from **Psalms 23:4**:

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...” (ESV)*

## Possible Locations and Interpretations:

### 1. Literal Geographic Location – Wadi Qelt (between Jerusalem and Jericho)

- **Wadi Qelt** is a deep, steep canyon in the Judean wilderness.
- It runs between **Jerusalem and Jericho** and was a common travel route in ancient times.
- Known for:
  - Narrow and dark ravines.
  - Frequent dangers from robbers, wild animals, and the terrain itself.
- Many scholars and tour guides associate this with the “valley of the shadow of death” because of:
  - Its **looming cliffs** casting **deep shadows**.
  - Its connection to **David**, who may have fled through similar areas during his years of escape.

### 2. Metaphorical Interpretation

- The Hebrew phrase “*tsalmavet*” (צֶלְמָוֶת) can mean:
  - “**deep darkness**” (used in Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.)
  - Or “**shadow of death**” (as translated in the King James Version).
- In this sense, the phrase is not tied to a specific place, but instead symbolizes:
  - Times of **extreme danger, suffering, or mortal fear**.
  - A season of life where death feels close, but God's presence brings comfort.

### 3. Connection to Shepherd Imagery

- David, a former shepherd, may be describing a **dangerous ravine** he led sheep through.
- In Israel, such paths existed where predators or flash floods were common.
- The “valley” could be **any perilous place**, physical or spiritual, where **God’s guidance** was necessary.

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## Summary Table

Interpretation	Description
Wadi Qelt	Physical canyon between Jerusalem & Jericho; likely route for travelers.
Metaphorical	Represents deep darkness, suffering, or near-death experiences.
Shepherd’s Route	A narrow, dangerous path known to shepherds in ancient Israel.

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The **Parable of the Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:30–37) is set on the **road from Jerusalem to Jericho**, which **very likely refers to the same region** as the **"valley of the shadow of death"** — specifically the **Wadi Qelt**.

## Connection Between the Two:

### The Road in the Parable

*"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho..."* (Luke 10:30)

- This **17-mile descent** drops over **3,000 feet in elevation**.
- It's rugged, winding, and historically **notorious for danger** — especially **robbers** hiding in its shadows.
- It fits Jesus' parable **perfectly** as a place where a traveler could be **attacked and left for dead**.

### The "Valley of the Shadow of Death" (Psalm 23)

- Wadi Qelt is commonly linked with this phrase:
  - Deep shadows.
  - Steep cliffs.
  - Solitude and lurking danger.
- David may have known this terrain from his shepherding or flight from Saul and Absalom.

## Side-by-Side Comparison:

Element	Good Samaritan Parable	Valley of the Shadow of Death (Psalm 23)
Location	Road from Jerusalem to Jericho	Likely Wadi Qelt (same region)
Danger	Robbers, left half-dead	Death, darkness, evil
Journey Theme	Man in need of rescue	Psalmist walking through danger
Rescue / Comfort	Samaritan helps and heals	God is with the psalmist, His rod and staff

## Summary:

The **Jerusalem-to-Jericho road** in Luke 10 and the **valley imagery** in Psalm 23 **very likely refer to the same treacherous path** — **Wadi Qelt**.

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The **Priest and Levite** in the **Parable of the Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:30–37) may have had **Torah-based reasons** for not helping, particularly regarding **ritual purity** laws. While Jesus doesn't say why they passed by, here's what likely informed their behavior:

## Possible Torah-Based Reasons for Not Helping

Reason	Torah Basis	Explanation
<b>Avoiding ritual defilement by a corpse</b>	<b>Numbers 19:11–13</b>	<i>“Whoever touches a human corpse will be unclean for seven days...”</i> — If the man appeared dead, touching him would make them <b>ceremonially unclean</b> , disqualifying them from <b>temple duties</b> .
<b>Assumption the man was a Gentile</b>	<b>Leviticus 21:1–4</b> (esp. for priests)	Priests were forbidden from touching corpses except for immediate family. If they assumed the man was a <b>non-Israelite</b> , they may have felt <b>less obligated</b> to help.
<b>Risk of ambush</b> (not Torah, but practical)	—	Bandits sometimes used a “wounded man” as bait. While not a Torah law, this was a <b>cultural fear</b> , perhaps wrapped in <b>self-preservation</b> .
<b>Purity on the way to temple service</b>	<b>Leviticus 22:1–9, Numbers 5:2</b>	If they were traveling <b>to serve at the Temple</b> , touching a possibly dead or bleeding man could make them <b>unfit</b> to enter or perform sacred duties.

## Important Clarification:

- The Torah **never commands** someone to **ignore a person in need** to stay ritually pure.
- In fact, **Leviticus 19:18** says:  
*“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*
- Also, **Deuteronomy 22:1–4** commands rescuing even an enemy's animal — how much more a person!

So Jesus was **exposing a misuse** of the Law — where **ritual purity was prioritized over mercy**, violating the Law's deeper intent.

## Jesus' Point in the Parable:

- The **Samaritan** — who had **no priestly role** and was despised by Jews — showed the **true meaning of the Law**: loving your neighbor.
- Jesus turned the **expected religious behavior upside down**, exposing the heart behind the law.

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The value of **two denarii** in the time of Jesus can be understood in both **economic** and **practical terms**:



## Basic Monetary Value

- **1 denarius** = the typical **daily wage** for a laborer or soldier  
(See **Matthew 20:2** – parable of the workers in the vineyard)  
So: **2 denarii** = **2 days' wages**



## Context in the Good Samaritan Parable (Luke 10:35)

*"He took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Take care of him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'"*

- This was meant to **cover lodging, food, and care** for the wounded man.
- Ancient sources suggest **2 denarii could cover several days to up to 2 weeks** at an inn, depending on the level of care.



## Estimated Cost of Lodging:

- A **modest inn** might charge **1/12 to 1/6 denarius per night**
- So **2 denarii** could pay for **at least 6–12 nights**, maybe more.



## Modern Equivalent (Approximate):

If you translate it into **modern minimum wage**:

- 1 denarius  $\approx$  **1 day's wage**  $\rightarrow$  let's say **\$100–150/day**
- Then: **2 denarii**  $\approx$  **\$200–300**

Enough for:

- **Multiple days of lodging**
- **Food and supplies**  
Possibly some **medical attention**



## Summary

Unit	Value
1 denarius	1 day's wage
2 denarii	2 days' wages = 6–14 days' care in an inn
Modern value (est.)	\$200–300 USD equivalent

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

In **Luke 10:25**, the one who prompts the Parable of the Good Samaritan is described as:  
“an expert in the law” (also translated as “a lawyer” or “scribe” in some versions).

## Who Was the "Expert in the Law"?

The Greek word used is **νομικός (nomikos)**, meaning:  
“an expert in the Mosaic Law” — a **scholar of the Torah** and Jewish oral tradition.

### This person was likely:

- Not a Roman legal professional, but a **Jewish religious scholar**.
- Closely aligned with the **scribes** and **Pharisees**.
- Someone who taught, interpreted, and debated the **Torah** (Genesis–Deuteronomy) and the **oral law** (halakhah).

## His Role in the Passage (Luke 10:25–29)

Verse	What He Does	Implication
v.25	<i>"Stood up to test Jesus"</i>	Not a sincere seeker at first — his question was a <b>challenge</b> .
v.26–28	Gives the correct summary of the Law: <i>"Love God... and your neighbor..."</i>	He knows the <b>correct answer</b> academically.
v.29	<i>"But he wanted to justify himself..."</i>	Reveals pride — he wanted to <b>narrow the definition of 'neighbor'</b> . This prompted Jesus' parable.

## Why Is This Important?

Jesus is confronting:

- The tendency of religious elites to **know the Law** but **not live it**.
- Their habit of **limiting mercy** by defining “neighbor” in **ethnic or moral terms**.
- The expert expected a **Jewish neighbor** — Jesus gave him a **Samaritan** instead.

## Summary

Term	Description
<b>Expert in the law</b>	A Torah scholar — a legal-religious authority in Jewish law
<b>Affiliation</b>	Likely aligned with Pharisees or scribes
<b>Intent</b>	Tested Jesus, then tried to justify himself
<b>Jesus' response</b>	Told the Parable of the Good Samaritan to <b>redefine 'neighbor'</b> and expose the heart of the Law