

# The Faithful Bible Investigator

## The Investigator's Research on Psalms

### Notes on Psalms 1

Key Reference book for research notes: *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible* by Albert H. Baylis

Type of Psalm: Wisdom psalm – contemplative about life and involves some of the same elements as seen in Proverbs; the fear of the Lord; blessing; righteous versus wicked

Additional examples of wisdom psalms: Pss. 37, 49, 73, 111-112, 127, 128

Psalm 1: Looks at the type of life for the saint in the Psalms

- Avoid the counsel and comradeship (partnership with) of the wicked (vv. 1-3)
- Wicked, sinners, and mockers, NIV (ungodly, sinners, and scorner, KJV) – use of these different words describe the same group of people (the wicked), but the use of different words are used to give emphasis or dimension and depth
- Delight and meditate in the Law of Yahweh (vv. 1-3)
- Healthy, fruitful life – blessedness (tree, v. 3)
- Contrasts the wicked with the blessed person (vv. 4-6)
- Wicked are like the chaff which lacks stability and disappears – (v. 5) Reflects verse 2 – the wicked do not have a place in the righteous assembly
- The final summary (v. 6)

### Examples of Figures of Speech in Ps. 1

- Parallelism – the poet repeats the basic idea in different words

Ps. 1:1 - Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

- Imagery – poetry feature used to illustrate or represent a principle

Ps. 1:3 - And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

This type of tree is used to represent a healthy, fruitful life – blessedness

### **Notes on Psalms 23**

Key Reference book for research notes: *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible* by Albert H. Baylis

#### Meaning of Key Reference: Ps. 23:1-3a

- God will take care of David's needs like a good shepherd cares for his or her sheep. (vv. 1-2)
- He restoreth my "soul" – Often used in Hebrew; references the physical life. Just as the life of the sheep is restored through the shepherd's provision so is the physical life of an individual who is cared for by God. (v. 3a)

#### Examples of Figures of Speech in Ps. 23

- Metaphors

Ps. 23:1-2 - green pastures, quiet waters, a restored "soul"

- Parallelism

Ps. 23:1-3a - The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

### **Notes on Shepherd**

Reference book for research notes on "Shepherd": *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* edited by David Noel Freedman

- Bible writers made extensive use of shepherd imagery.
- Customs of shepherds are used to illustrate spiritual principles (Num. 27:16-17; Ecc. 12:11; Matt. 9:36).
- Shepherd was used to refer to the sovereignty of deity (Gen. 48:15; 49:24).
- Biblical literature refers to kings and princes as shepherds (Nah. 3:18).
- The OT normally applies this title (shepherd) to political leaders in a negative way. Since God was the true shepherd of Israel, human rulers often fell short of God's standards and were condemned for their mismanagement (Jer. 10:21; 22:22; Ezek. 34:1-10)
- David was a shepherd who ruled with an "upright heart" and a "skillful hand" (Ps. 78:70-72).

- It was promised that God’s shepherd would come from Davidic lineage and would suffer on behalf of the sheep (Zech. 13:7; 12:10).
- Jesus refers to Himself as the “good shepherd” who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:1-29). He is also referred to as “the shepherd and guardian of your souls” (Heb. 13:20) and chief shepherd (1 Pet. 2:25).

### Sheep

- Sheep and goats were the most important domestic animals in the biblical world.
- Sheep and goats require constant care as they are practically defenseless (Ezek. 34:5-6; Matt. 7:15: 18:12).
- Sheep are submissive (Isa. 53:7; Jer. 11:19) and trust the shepherd (John 10:3-5).
- Sheep are highly gregarious (like to flock or be in groups, herd). The shepherd had to watch for strays and count the animals as they returned to the fold at night (Lev. 27:32; Jer. 33:13; Ezek. 20:37).
- Expectant ewes, newborn lambs, and sick animals received special attention (Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:16).
- Paul uses “flock” to refer to the church of God (Acts 20:28-30).

### Shepherd

- Earliest biblical shepherd was Abel – a keeper of sheep (Gen 4:2).
- Additional shepherds or pastoralists – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Rachel and their sons, Moses and David
- Shepherds spent most of their time in the monotonous work of guarding their flocks.
- Shepherds endured numerous hardships because they moved around locating food and water for flock (Gen. 31:40; Isa. 38:12).
- The shepherd guarded against thieves (Gen. 31:39) and wild animals like lions, bears, and wolves (1 Sam 17:34-35; Amos 3:12; John 10:12).
- The shepherd was responsible to find any lost sheep (Ezek. 34:11-12; Matt. 18:11-14)
- The shepherd’s work was accomplished with simple equipment – a heavy cloak (Jer. 43:12), a rod and a staff (Ps. 23:4), a bag of food, and a sling (1 Sam. 17:40). Some shepherds used dogs to manage sheep (Job 30:1).