



Definitions are from the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (condensed edition), edited by Mark Allan Powell, 2009.

Psalms (sahlmz), **the**, the collection of some 150 songs, prayers, and various other, less easily classified compositions that forms the nineteenth book of the OT.

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shepherd, one who pastures or tends a flock of sheep or goats. Many important figures in Hebrew history were shepherds, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jacob's sons, Moses, and David. The occupation first appears in Gen. 4:2, when Abel, "a keeper of sheep," comes into conflict with Cain, "a tiller of the ground," and the shepherd's humble

status can be seen in the contrast drawn between David's pastoral and royal careers (2 Sam. 7:8; cf. Ps. 78:70–71). Most of the shepherd's work involved a routine of leading the sheep to food and water and returning them to the safety of the fold. Shepherds were often nomads, required to put up with simple food, harsh weather (cf. Gen. 31:40), and primitive lodging (Song of Sol. 1:8; Isa. 38:12). Such routine hardships were occasionally accompanied by danger from wild animals, e.g., lions, bears, and wolves (1 Sam. 17:34–35; Isa. 31:4; Amos 3:12; Mic. 5:8; John 10:12). Shepherds also had to be on guard against thieves (Gen. 31:39; John 10:1, 8, 10). In the NT shepherds are the first to hear the announcement that a Savior has been born, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:8–20). Throughout the Bible, the customs of shepherds are often used to illustrate spiritual principles (e.g., sheep without a shepherd are like those who have strayed from God; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34), and shepherds are compared to spiritual overseers (Num. 27:16–17; Eccles. 12:11; John 21:15–17). The shepherd's work is also used to describe God's activity (cf. Gen. 48:15; 49:24; Ps. 23; Ezek. 34). It figures frequently in the figurative speech of Jesus (Matt. 18:12–14; 25:32–33; John 10:1–29), and Jesus himself is later identified as the "great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20), the "shepherd and guardian of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25), and the "chief shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4).