

Worship and Ethics: A Reflection on Psalm 15

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Inspired by the very character and nature of Yahweh, with whom evil shall not dwell, Psalm 15 establishes the inextricable relation between worship and conduct and thus highlights important characteristics of the true worshiper. This short study reviews the context, structure and message of the passage, and concludes by drawing some of the implications of Psalm 15 for individual worshipers and the worshipping community.

I. Context

1. Literary context

The literary placement of Psalm 15 in the book of Psalms deserves some brief attention. First, one notes its relation to Psalm 14. As noted by commentators, Psalm 14 presents a poignant description of the wicked, while Psalm 15 introduces in strong lines the profile of the righteous person. Second, Psalm 15 has been regarded as part of a larger literary unity formed by Psalms 15-24. There are links between psalms in this group so that the larger unit emerges as editorially and theologically meaningful. Such links are as follows: Psalms 15 to 24; 16 to 23; 17 to 22 and 8 to 20 and 21. So Psalms 15 with Psalm 24 envelop the entire literary unit and, interestingly enough, both psalms ask the question as to who may dwell in the presence of Yahweh (15:1; 24:3). Noting the absence of penitential psalms from Psalms 15 through 24," Geoffrey Grogan aptly concluded that "the emphasis in this section of the Psalter is on godliness."¹

2. Historical Context

Scholars have advanced several suggestions for the setting of Psalm 15. Some commentators have hypothesized that David composed this psalm when the ark of the covenant was transferred to Zion (2 Sam 6:12ff.; 1 Chr 16:1ff) in order to move the people to honor God with sincerity.² This seems a plausible hypothesis, but unfortunately there is no textual evidence to support it.

Some scholars argue that Psalm 15 functioned as an entrance liturgy for the Jerusalem temple.³ In this case, the opening question was to be asked by a pilgrim when approaching the temple to attend one of the great religious festivals. A priest would answer by listing the qualities expected from the worshiper and pronouncing a blessing. However, the interpretation of this psalm as an entrance liturgy has been challenged on the basis of form and content. Although entrance liturgies have been attested in the ancient Near East,⁴ there is no clear description of the liturgical procedures of the Israelite Temple.⁵ Other scholars have modified the entrance liturgy hypothesis and came to propose the view of Psalm 15 as a torah liturgy or priestly instructions for those approaching the temple mount.⁶ Nevertheless, as attractive as these views may be in their explanatory intention, they lack support from the Biblical texts.

So the precise occasion for the composition and setting of Psalm 15 seems to be a moot point. Some exegetes, without denying the cultic connections, tend to regard the psalm as a "piece of wisdom teaching"⁷ used to instruct the congregation, since the focus of the psalm on righteous living may indicate its belonging to wisdom circles.⁸ It must be noted, however, that although Psalm 15 exhibits some conceptual affinities with the wisdom literature, the psalmist developed his composition against the background of a larger theological framework. And although this latter view has much to commend it, some additional refinements are necessary.

At this juncture, due consideration needs to be given to the superscription, which claims the composition as a "Psalm of David" (Mizmor leDavid). The title of the poem as a mizmor (song/psalm) of David defines it as a song, since the term mizmor, usually translated as "psalm," means literally "a song sung to an instrumental accompaniment."⁹ Recognizing the implications of mizmor, J. Mays notes that "the

heading of Psalm 15 identifies it as a text for musical performance in religious gatherings, and that is the use to which it has been put as part of the Psalter.”¹⁰ Considering also the canonical claim that David composed many psalms and organized the liturgy of the Temple (1 Chr 25), this psalm was probably composed as a hymn for public adoration in the Jerusalem cult. As such, Psalm 15 most likely served for “instructional purposes to teach the congregation about the character of its relation to the Lord.”¹¹

3. Structure

From a structural and literary point of view, the text is a concise and well organized piece of work. A double question sets the theme of the poem, followed by a sequence of answers or injunctions expressed in general statements (vs. 2), accompanied by concrete examples (vss. 3-4). A promise concludes the psalm by asserting that those whose lifestyle accords with the demands of Yahweh will never be moved (v. 5).

Some scholars have found ten separate injunctions, which would have served as an aid to memory—since they could be counted on the fingers—and possibly allude to the Decalogue.¹² Yet upon closer scrutiny, one finds eleven injunctions which incidentally accords with the long held view of the Talmud, according to which “Six hundred and thirteen commandments were given to Moses,” but “David came and reduced them to eleven” (in reference to Ps 15)¹³ P. Craigie identified a tenfold structure, alternating positive and negative conditions.¹⁴ The table on the next page follows Craigie’s overall outline according to an elevenfold structure and some other adjustments.¹⁵

Some attempts have been made to identify a more formal and precise literary structure in the psalm. Among such attempts, the one by L. Barré seems more consistent since it takes into consideration both formal and semantic criteria.¹⁶ According to his proposal, this psalm can be so organized:

A. <i>Positive Conditions</i> (v 2)	B. <i>Negative Conditions</i> (v 3)
(i) walking uprightly	(iv) no falsity
(ii) practicing justice	(v) no evil
(iii) speaking truth	(vi) no reproach
C. <i>Positive Conditions</i> (v 4a-b)	D. <i>Negative Conditions</i> (v 4c-5)
(vii) despise reprobates	(ix) no change after swearing
(viii) honor those who fear the Lord	(x) no usury
	(xi) no bribery

A. Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?

Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

B. The one who walks uprightly,

The one who practices justice,

The one who speaks the truth in his heart;

C. Who does not trip over his tongue,

Who does not commit evil against his friend,
 And does bear reproach against his neighbor.
 D. Despised in his eyes is the reprobate
 But those who fear the LORD he honors
C' Who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
 Who does not put out his money at usury,
 And who does not take a bribe against the innocent
B' The one who does these things
A' shall never be moved

A formulates two rhetorical questions by means of imperfect verbs, while **A'** expresses a promise with an imperfect verb. The semantic correspondence between **A** and **A'** may not be clear at a first glance, which makes the connection to appear more formal than conceptual. Nonetheless the idea of abiding and dwelling on the tabernacle/hill of the Lord may correlate with the notion of firmness conveyed by the negative verbal phrase (*lo' yimot*) expressing the idea of “not moving, tottering.” As Barré observed, “The prepositional phrases in **A** indicate the place of security while the one in **A'** qualifies its duration.”¹⁷

B contains three participial phrases introducing in general terms the virtues and qualities of the one fit to abide on the holy hill. **B'** appears to be a resumptive statement pointing back to **B**. It should be noted that **B'** contains a participial phrase formally similar to those of **B** and a plural demonstrative pronoun pointing back to antecedents mentioned earlier. Thus a formal and semantic relationship between both members of the chiasmic structure is identified.

C correspond to the **C'** inasmuch as each member contains three negative sentences. Furthermore, the sentences in both members are structurally and semantically similar. Both **C** and **C'** express in negative statements what the true worshiper would not do against her/his neighbor. So **C** defines the true worshiper as one who does not use improper speech, while in **C'** the true worshiper does not use money as a weapon against his/her fellow israelite.

According to the structure delineated above, **D** stands in the apex of the chiasmic structure. And apex element can also be further identified as a micro chiasm **ABB'A'**, as noted in the Hebrew order of the clause constituents: “Despised in his eyes is the **reprobate**; but **those who fear the LORD** he/she honors.” The central elements of the literary structure emphasize the appropriate attitude towards two categories of people: the “reprobate” and those “who fear the Lord.” The admonition to honor the pious and reject the wicked functions as an important motif in the Psalms tradition (see, e.g, Ps 1) and receives special emphasis in Psalm 15.

II. Message

Theological motifs from wisdom, prophetic, and legal traditions are brought together to bear upon the main issue being expounded by the psalmist: “Who is worthy of being a guest of Yahewh.” Such a rhetorical question brings the topic of worship into sharp focus in this short Psalm. What essentially characterizes the true worshiper is primarily not conformity with the minutia of the sacrificial system or other liturgical procedures of the Tabernacle/Temple. Without denying the importance of worship formalities—but rather presupposing them—the psalm raises some important and crucial issues that pertain to the inner life of the worshiper, viewed especially in relationship to the neighbor and the community.

In emphasizing appropriate interpersonal relationships as fundamental prerequisites for communing with Yahewh, this short psalm touches upon the heart of Israelite worship theology. As well expressed by R. Davidson, the essence of such a worship theology, “is the celebration of the wonderful deeds of God, deeds

which are the expression of a divine steadfast love which Israel can neither explain nor deserve (see Ps 136). *To live in the light of this steadfast love is to accept a discipline, the discipline to demonstrate the same steadfast love in daily relationships with other people.*¹⁸ And it is within this framework of true and genuine worship that the theology of Psalm 15 must be understood. Such a theology, without denying the value of formal adoration, brings ethics to the foreground of worship and makes appropriate relationships with the neighbor a prerequisite to communion with Yahweh.

The first three injunctions bring to the foreground important characteristics of the true worshiper, which are theologically expressed by means of three key Hebrew words: *tamim*, *tsedek* and *'emet*. Each of these terms is governed by an action verb (walk, practice, speak, respectively), which means they are not to be regarded as passive qualities, but something to be experienced in daily life.

1. “Walks uprightly”

The first statement characterizes the ideal worshiper as someone who walks *tamim* (“uprightly”). From a root meaning “to be complete,” *tamim* in most of its occurrence applies to sacrifices. An animal that is not *tamim* makes the sacrifice invalid.¹⁹ When applied to human beings the term has a relational connotation and expresses an untroubled relationship with Yahweh or with fellow humans.²⁰ Combined with words for “walk” (*halak*) and “way” (*derek*) *tamim* emphasizes the idea of a consistent and honest behavior.²¹ In the text under study the term seems to be used primarily to indicate integrity and honesty in interpersonal relationships within the human sphere. But it should be noted that ultimately integrity between humans and Yahweh cannot be disjointed from integrity among humans, since one’s integrity with Yahweh goes hand in hand with one’s integrity toward other humans beings, as Psalm 15 itself makes clear. Integrity expressed in upright behavior (*tamim*) is crucial characteristic of those who stand in a right relationship with Yahweh and therefore are acceptable to him. This wholesome integrity, expressed by *tamim*, is predicated of Noah (Gen 6:9), and describes what was expected of Abraham (Gen 17:1) and Israel in their relationship with Yahweh (Deut 18:13; Josh 24:14). Psalmic and wisdom texts make ample use of *tamim* not only to qualify the lifestyle accepted by Yahweh but also to set the divine standard before humans (Pss 18:24; 37:18; 101:2; Job 12:4; Prov 2:21; 11:20; et al.).

2. “Practices justice”

As a second characteristic, the true worshiper is described as a person who “practices justice” (*tsedeq*). The Hebrew root underlying *tsedeq* “basically connotes conformity to an ethical or moral standard.”²² Its broad semantic range includes relational overtones and deals with behavior based on some standard.²³ In theological terms, *tsedeq* (“justice”) defines how God treats his people within the framework of the covenantal relationship and reveals how God expects humans to treat one another. So in ethical terms, *tsedeq* “involves the conduct of men (sic.) with one another”²⁴ and sets the standards for inter human relationships. Legal, prophetic, and wisdom texts use *tsedeq* in a variety of contexts. *Tsedeq* refers to honesty and integrity in dealing with other people, especially the poor (Ecc 5:7; Jer 22:13; Ps 72:2). Murder and disruption of the community’s well-being equals a breakdown of *tsedeq* (Isa 1:21). Court procedures should be based on *tsedeq*, that is, equity and conformity to the law (Lev 19:15; Deut 1:16, 18; Ps 58:1, 2; Isa 32:1; Prov 31:9). In Psalm 15, *tsedeq* occurs as direct object of the verb *pa'al* (to practice, to do). As such, it refers to concrete actions of mercy and expressions of loyalty that should characterize interpersonal relationships within the community/society. However, on the basis of the various usages of *tsedeq* and related words, such actions of mercy and loyalty must be in harmony with Yahweh’s standards as revealed in his Word (Ps 119:132; Isa 51:7).²⁵

3. “Speaks the truth in his heart”

Inner attitude comes to the fore in the third statement: “And speaks the truth in his heart.” Since “heart” (*leb*) as an anthropological term can connote the activity of the will,²⁶ it implies that “to speak the truth from the heart” means to be free of falsity and double talk. It means to speak with sincerity and transparency, so that what one speaks is consistent to one’s innermost intentions (Pss 12:2; 28:3; Prov 12:17-19; Zech 3:16).

4. “Does not trip over his tongue”

In characterizing the true worshiper as someone “who does not trip over his tongue,” this injunction seems to mirror the previous one, but upon closer examination it emerges as a distinct preoccupation. The issue here is not of truthfulness, as above, but the danger of using one’s speech as a weapon against others. So the guest of Yahweh “does not trip over his tongue.” A very graphic imagery is used here by the psalmist. The verb *ragal* (trip over), appears to be a denominative of *regel* (“foot”) and means to slander or gossip.²⁷ Hence the translation: “The one who does not trip over his tongue.”²⁸ As oxymoronic as such an imagery may be, it paints with impressionistic artistry the incongruity of gossip and slander within the community of worshipers. Such practices equal stumbling over the tongue. The danger of improper use of the tongue appears in other major literary genres of the Old Testament, being dealt with in legal (Lev 15:16), prophetic (Jer 6:28; Ezek 22:9), wisdom and psalmic texts (Prov 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; Ps 31:20).

5. “Does not commit evil against his friend”

A person who wants to be a guest of the Lord does not “commit evil against his friend.” By playing on the words *ra’ah* (evil) and *re’ehu* (friend) the psalmist embellishes the rhetoric of Psalm 15. The word *ra’ah* in itself has a broad meaning and could mean disaster or any other harm inflicted upon other people. However, this statement should be understood in connection to the next line which mentions the reproach against the neighbor.²⁹ Besides, structurally, this poetic line also stands in parallelism with the previous line forming a tricolon. So “evil” in this context denotes the misuse of speech in relationship with friends and neighbors. This evil plagues every society and God’s people are not immune to its devastating consequences. Wisdom warns one not to devise evil against the neighbor (Prov 3:29) and makes clear the dangerous connections between such evil and improper use of the tongue (Job 20:12; Prov 15:28; 16:27; cf. Ps 50:19).

6. “Does not bear reproach against his neighbor”

The true worshiper “does not bear reproach against his neighbor.” The Hebrew word behind “reproach” is *herpah*, which combined with *nasa’* means to “carry, take, bear shame/reproach.” It usually describes a situation in which an individual or the community has to bear the shame for some unduly committed action or because of some underserved disgrace inflicted upon them by others (see. e.g.: Jer 31:19; Ezek 36:15). In the present psalm the statement reads that the guest of Yahweh “does not bear reproach against a neighbor.” The statement is not a warning against slandering, a point already made in a previous injunction, but seems to require that the true worshiper should “not “bear reproach against the neighbor” in not mocking or harassing him/her.³⁰

7. “Despised in his eyes is the reprobate”

This statement and the next form the apex of the literary structure of this psalm. The true worshiper avoid associations with evil people: “Despised in his eyes is the reprobate” (15:4a). The word “reprobate” translates *nim’as*, which is a passive form of a verbal root that means “to reject.” This term is often used to define those who reject Yahweh or his law (1 Sam 5:23; Isa 30:12) and consequently they are also “rejected” (*nim’as*) by

Yahweh (Ps 53:5; 89:38). So the reprobate is a category of people defined theologically. They are the evil ones that have been rejected by the Lord because of their wicked ways. Therefore, such persons are to be rejected (*nim'as*) by the true worshiper. So the psalm echoes a recurring motif of wisdom, which advises God's followers not to associate with evil and despicable people. The importance of such a concept is already clear in the opening of the Psalter, where the blessed person is described as one "who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Ps 1:1; see also Pss 26:4, 5; 31:6; 139:21; Jer 15:17).

8. "Those who fear the LORD he honors"

As a logical counterpart to the previous injunction, comes the affirmation that the one who enters God's presence honors those who fear the Lord. It must be kept in mind that there are two categories of people who appear throughout the psalter: the righteous (*tsadiqim*) and the ungodly (*resha'im*), as described in the first psalm. And a point constantly made is that it is not enough to stay away from the former, but it is equally important to be in relationship with and bestow honor on the latter (Ps 16:3; 101:6; 119:63). Besides, honoring those who "fear the Lord" and enjoying their company reinforce right attitudes and good habits.

9. "Swears to his own hurt and does not change"

An injunction to keep oaths now becomes part of the list: "He *who* swears to his own hurt and does not change." The Hebrew text presents some challenges in the grammar and vocalization, but it is still preferable to follow the Masoretic Text and interpret the clause in the sense of "swearing to one's own hurt."³¹ To keep one's promise and word even when it entails personal injury or financial loss becomes an important preparation for those entering the presence of Yahweh. Other passages also emphasize the importance of keeping oaths and vows (Lev 5:4; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21-23; Eccl 5:4-5).

10. "Does not put out his money at usury"

The last two statements deal with one's attitude towards money. So the ideal worshiper does "not put his money at usury." It has been estimated that in contemporary societies interest rates could be as high as fifty percent a year.³² So it was not uncommon for debtors to eventually become slaves. So lending money or goods at interest to a fellow Israelite was strictly forbidden by the Hebrew law. The rationale is that one should not take advantage of a person in distress to make profit. Such a financial maneuver, which was largely practiced in the ancient Near East, was to be shunned by the Israelites (cf. Exod 22:25; Lev 25:35-38; Deut 23:19-20). Fraternal love expressed in disposition to help those in need stands as a prerequisite for those who enter the presence of Yahweh in worship.

11. "Does not take a bribe against the innocent"

Keeping the focus on financial matters, the last injunction affirms that the person seeking the presence of Yahweh "does not take a bribe against the innocent." The Bible warns against accepting money to pervert the right of the innocent and thus favor the wicked party in a legal dispute (Exod 23:6; Deut 16:19; 27:25). Bribery perverts justice, destroys relationships, and corrodes the very foundation of the community. However, as specific as this injunction may appear in regards to money, it transcends financial matters since it reveals the ultimate loyalty and devotion of the worshiper.

Psalms 15 concludes with a summarizing statement: "the one who does these things shall never be moved." The first part refers back to the general statements of v. 2 and by extension to the more specific qualifications required from the true worshiper. And the last phrase "shall never be moved" functions as an *inclusio* pointing

back to the opening questions: “Who shall abide/dwell?” At its very end, the psalm promises that those who live a life of integrity become unshakable and unmovable like Mount Zion (Ps 125:1). What Mount Zion is at the beginning, the worshiper becomes at the end.

Summing up, theologically Psalm 15 testifies of the inseparable connection between “temple and conduct, worship and life, holy place and righteous person.”³³ In doing so, this Psalm resonates with other Biblical texts where worship transcends formality, and nearness to God goes beyond ritual³⁴ (e.g.: Ps 24; Isa 33:14–16; Hos 6:6).

Conclusion

It may be somehow surprising that a psalm devoted to worship may be so concerned with ethical issues affecting social and communal relationships and virtually uninterested in the formal procedures of temple/sanctuary ritual. In so doing, however, Psalm 15 does not deny the importance of ritual and liturgy, but brings the focus upon an area that risks to be neglected. The people of God since times past have been tempted to divorce spirituality from daily life, and worship from social and communal relationships. This psalm reminds us that God is as interested in the way we treat others as He is in our formal worship service. From a biblical perspective, worship is expressed in liturgy and conduct, doctrine and obedience. So in a true worship experience we relate to God both in cult and life. True worship means to offer ourselves as “living sacrifices” expressed in a life of obedience. And such obedience reveals its true character in the way we relate to others.

God expects not only the best formal worship service that we can offer to Him, but He also expects to be praised by the life we live outside the church building. Our daily lives have a deep cultic meaning since they define the quality of the offering we bring to God. And this is not legalistic theology. It is not a *quid pro quo*. Such theology as deeply and concisely expressed in Psalm 15 must be understood within the framework of sanctuary/temple service, where atonement was granted through the sacrificial system. The psalm invites us to acknowledge our limitations, incapacities, and failures. As we do so, we plead for God’s forgiveness and healing so that He will make us able to offer Him the kind of life and relationships he expects from us. Ultimately Psalm 15 is not a prescription for access to God’s presence, but a description of those living within the bounds of God’s covenantal grace. But as we genuinely experience God’s presence in the place of worship, we mirror God in other places. And we should not forget that in order to arrive safely at Psalm 150 we need to make a stop at Psalm 15.

¹Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 61.

²E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols (Hengstenberg, E. W. *Commentary on the Psalms*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), 1:20); H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, H. C. Leupold Commentary Collection (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), 142.

³E.g., John Day confidently asserts that “Psalm 15 is the only psalm which in its entirety may be said to constitute an entrance liturgy. The same structure is to be found in Ps. 24:3–6 and, by way of prophetic imitation, in Isa. 33:14–16” (John Day, *Psalms* [London: T&T Clark, 1999], 60). See also Claus Westerman, *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message* (Augsburg: Minneapolis, 1980), 103; Cas J. A. Vos, “Theopoetical and Liturgical Patterns of the Psalms in *Psalms and Liturgy*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 410* (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 253.

⁴García de la Fuente, O. “Liturgias de entrada, normas de asilo o exhortaciones proféticas: A propósito de los Salmos 15 y 24,” *Augustinianum* 9, (1969): 266–298.

⁵An argument advanced against such an interpretation is the total absence of ritual and physical requirements from the list of qualities mentioned in Psalm 15. The characteristics of the ideal worshiper emphasized in this psalm are personal and ethical, which makes it difficult for the priest or cultic functionary to evaluate an individual on such a basis. Only the worshiper could know whether those conditions have been met (Ronald E. Clements, “Worship And Ethics: A Re-Examination of Psalm 15” in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of John T. Willis*, ed. Matt Patrick Graham, Rick R. Marrs, and Steven L.

- McKenzie, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 284* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 83. In addition, it must be noted that the worshiper addresses the questions directly to Yahweh, which, as Gerstenberger has observed, “is unusual when compared with the unspecified addressees in related texts (Ps 24:3; Isa 33:14c–d; Mic 6:6–7)” (Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 1: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*. The Forms of the Old Testament Literature 14 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 15).
- ⁶Hans-Joachim Kraus, *A Continental Commentary: Psalms 1–59* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 227. See also Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, The NIV Application Commentary, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1:296.
- ⁷Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998), 56.
- ⁸Willem VanGemeren, “Psalms,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 5:148.
- ⁹Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), s.v. “מָזַר.”
- ¹⁰James Luther Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1994), 85.
- ¹¹Ibid, 85; John Goldingay, *Psalms*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 1:219.
- ¹²George A. F. Knight, *Psalms: Volume 1*, The Daily Study Bible series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 70-71; Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: 1988), 56; Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906-07), 112.
- ¹³Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), Tractate Makkot 3:15-16.
- ¹⁴Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary 19 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 150.
- ¹⁵Craigie conflates #7 and 8 into one condition and regards v 4c as positive condition due to his interpretation of the underlying Hebrew text. Craigie, 150.
- ¹⁶Lloyd M. Barré, “Recovering the Literary Structure of Psalm 15,” *Vetus Testamentum* 34, no. 2 (1984): 207-211.
- ¹⁷Ibid, 208.
- ¹⁸Davidson, 57. Emphasis supplied.
- ¹⁹Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), s.v. מַמַּן.
- ²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Ibid, 1427.
- ²²R. Laird Harris, Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 752, s.v. קָדַשׁ (*šādēq*) be just, righteous.”
- ²³David J. Reimer, “קָדַשׁ (*šādaq*)” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. W. A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 3:746.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, translated by Margaret Kohl (London: S.C.M. Press, 1974), 51.
- ²⁷William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 332, s.v. רָגַל.
- ²⁸So Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1-50: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 84.
- ²⁹Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms*, 2 vols., The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1:299.
- ³⁰Barnes interprets this injunction in the sense of not giving credit to accusations raised by others against the neighbor (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms, Volume 1* [London: Blackie & Son, 1870-1872], 121).
- ³¹The Hebrew text has been variously translated as “to do no wrong” (Dahood, 83; Craigie, 149), “to his neighbor” (LXX) and to “to [his own] hurt” or similar idea (NKJV, ESV, NASB, NIV). Since the context is an oath, the latter option seems more likely, since the fulfillment of an oath might sometimes demand some personal loss.
- ³²Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reayburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 137.
- ³³Mays, 85.
- ³⁴S. Edward Tesh and Walter D. Zorn, *Psalms*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 163.