



The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament

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The Lord is my Shepherd

Drawing on a diverse body of scholarship as well as his own years teaching and researching in the Middle East, Middle Eastern New Testament scholar Ken Bailey offers a wealth of fresh insights in *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament*. With characteristic erudition, Bailey explores the Good Shepherd motif as it occurs throughout Scripture, starting with the well-known Psalm 23. Bailey then traces this theme through eight other texts, including passages from Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah, as well as from the four gospel writers and the book of First Peter.

While there have been no shortage of books on the various passages studied here, none can offer the unique synthesis of scholarship by Middle Easterners—who in their earlier years actually herded sheep—and extant Arabic writings on the good shepherd texts that Bailey has procured. In addition, Bailey relies on his collection of twenty versions of the New Testament into Arabic and four versions of the Old Testament.

“How have Eastern Christians understood this text? This question can often be answered by noting how they translated the verses in question. An interpretive flow from these centuries of Eastern Bible translation has constantly influenced this study,” Bailey notes.

In addition to drawing on remarkable and rare resources, Bailey can refer to his own unique experiences. “For nearly fifty years, Middle Eastern shepherds with their flocks were a part of the larger context in which I grew up and then lived and taught the New Testament,” Bailey explains. “It was my privilege to have laymen and clergy in three countries as my students who had herded sheep for extended periods in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

Though Psalm 23 is often read in isolation, it is wise to study it in context of the eight other major biblical texts on the good shepherd. As Bailey notes in the introduction, “Regarding the good shepherd, the Bible invites its readers on a thousand-year theological journey that can be likened to a movie consisting of nine major episodes. Anyone who enters the movie theater in the middle of the showing of a film may find the scene on display of interest—like watching a preview of some ‘coming attractions.’ Yet the viewer knows that the full story can only be understood when one views the film from the beginning to the end.”

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Kenneth E. Bailey, author of *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament*

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Acclaimed Middle Eastern New Testament Scholar

Kenneth E. Bailey (ThD, Concordia Theological Seminary) is an author and lecturer in Middle Eastern New Testament studies. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he also serves as Canon Theologian of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh. The author of more than 150 articles in English and in Arabic, Bailey has written a number of books including *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, *Jacob & the Prodigal* and *Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15*.

Bailey spent forty years living and teaching in seminaries and institutes in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem and Cyprus. For twenty of those years he was professor of New Testament and head of the Biblical department of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut where he founded and directed the Institute for Middle Eastern New Testament Studies. Bailey was also on the faculty of the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research in Jerusalem.

Traveling around the globe to lecture and teach, Bailey has spoken in theological colleges and seminaries in England (Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol) Ireland, Canada, Egypt, Finland, Latvia, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia and Jerusalem. He has also taught at Columbia, Princeton and Fuller Seminary.

Bailey and his wife Ethel now reside in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, where he continues to write and lecture on the New Testament.