



Psalms I, 1-50 (Anchor Bible Series, Vol. 16)

Mitchell Dahood

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This is Volume 16 of The Anchor Bible, a new book-by-book translation of the Bible, each complete with an introduction and notes. *Psalms I (1-50)* is translated and edited by Mitchell Dahood, S.J., Professor of Ugaritic Language and Literature at The Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

With *Psalms*, any new translation will be considered in the context of the literary achievement of the King James Version, and in the light of more recent renderings. A word of explanation is, therefore, appropriate.

"The translation offered here," Father Dahood writes, "differs from earlier efforts in that it is not the fruit of a confrontation of the Hebrew text with the ancient versions, from which the least objectionable reading is plucked." Rather, from a close examination of the original text, a unique translation has been attempted, one which relies heavily on contemporary linguistic evidence. It is a translation "accompanied by philological commentary, that lays heavy stress on the Ras-Shamra texts and other epigraphic discoveries made along the Phoenician littoral," a translation prepared in direct response to W.F. Albright's statement (made a quarter of a century ago) "that all future investigations of the book of Psalms must deal intensively with the Ugaritic texts."

This translation tries to capture as much as possible the poetic qualities of the original Hebrew. Its attempt is to render accurately not only the meaning of the Psalms but their poetic forms and rhythms as well. In this process of probing the original, Father Dahood unearths some striking examples of passages previously mistranslated, and arrives at many provocative readings.

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